



No. 45

N° 45

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 39th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 39^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 14 May 2008

Mercredi 14 mai 2008

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 14 May 2008

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 14 mai 2008

*The House met at 0900.
Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ACCESS TO ADOPTION RECORDS ACT
(VITAL STATISTICS STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT), 2008
LOI DE 2008 SUR L'ACCÈS
AUX DOSSIERS D'ADOPTION
(MODIFICATION DE LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LES STATISTIQUES DE L'ÉTAT CIVIL)

Mrs. Meilleur moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 12, An Act to amend the Vital Statistics Act in relation to adoption information and to make consequential amendments to the Child and Family Services Act / Projet de loi 12, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil en ce qui a trait aux renseignements sur les adoptions et apportant des modifications corrélatives à la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 12, 2008, I am now required to put the question.

Madam Meilleur has moved third reading of Bill 12. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

Pursuant to the standing orders, the vote is deferred to routine proceedings this afternoon.

Third reading vote deferred.

SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO
AMENDMENT ACT, 2008
LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT LA LOI
FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 13, 2008, on the motion for second reading of Bill 69, An Act to protect children from second-hand tobacco smoke in motor vehicles by amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act / Projet de loi 69, Loi modifiant la Loi favorisant un Ontario

sans fumée pour protéger les enfants contre le tabagisme passif dans les véhicules automobiles.

Mr. Peter Kormos: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Perhaps we could recess for five minutes to give government members a chance to arrive in the chamber.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That is not a point of order.

Mr. John O'Toole: Could we have a quorum call, please?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Madam Clerk, is there a quorum present?

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): There is a quorum present, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.
Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I am delighted to be talking about Bill 69, the Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act. It is An Act to protect children from second-hand tobacco smoke in motor vehicles by amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

There are two parts to this bill. The first is that we want to protect children. I think this is something that everybody in this House has always and will always agree upon: Everybody wants to protect our children. The issue of rights, that is, the right of a child to health and clean air, should supersede an adult's right to his addiction. I think this is something that many members who have spoken before me said they agreed with. It's like apple pie and, where I come from, maple syrup: Everybody likes it; everybody agrees to it. We are trying to protect children from the health hazards of second-hand smoke. This is something good and this is something that should go forward.

The second part of the bill has to do with smokers. We all agree that smoking is an addiction, that a lot of people are smokers and a lot of people smoke in their cars. If we want to change human behaviour, if we want to change the habit of a smoker who gets in his car, a place where he or she is allowed to smoke, and lights up, we have to do more than just pass laws; we have to do health promotion. Within the residents of Ontario, there are groups that are more at risk of being a smoker and more at risk of lighting up in their cars when their children are present. When we talk about populations at risk, I talk about aboriginals, First Nations, low-income, people with mental illness and homeless people. Those are hard-to-reach groups within our community who need our help in order to be able to quit smoking and in order to be able to comply with this bill.

I have talked, in the past, about the special relationship that exists between the First Nations and tobacco, but I think it's worth repeating. For First Nations, tobacco is part of the four sacred elements, the first one being cedar. First Nations use cedar to try to keep sickness away; they use tobacco to give thanks to Mother Earth and for their lives; they use sage to chase away negativity and help bring back healing if they have fallen sick; and they use sweet grass to bring their minds as one, looking into mental health. When they do smudging, they will use all of those four elements. I always talk about, whenever we talk about smoking and First Nations, that we have to realize that they have a different relationship to tobacco than non-First Nations do. If we want to help First Nations comply with this bill, we have to be cognizant of that cultural difference, and we have to help them.

I agree that some of what Ontario smoking prevention has done has had some success. The rates of Ontarians who smoke has decreased over the years, and this is a good thing. Unfortunately, it has not decreased for every group in our community equally. Unfortunately, as I mentioned, First Nations, aboriginal people, still have a higher smoking rate. Francophones in Ontario have a high smoking rate. The programs presently in place to help them quit smoking don't seem to be as effective. There are also other groups, such as homeless and low-income people, who continue to have higher smoking rates than the rest of the population in Ontario. If we are serious that we want to protect children from second-hand smoke, then not only do we have to create smoke-free areas—we also have to help people stop smoking.

0910

Il me fait plaisir ce matin de vous parler du projet de loi 69, Loi modifiant la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée pour protéger les enfants contre le tabagisme passif dans les véhicules automobiles.

On pourrait dire que ce projet de loi a vraiment deux parties. Dans la première partie, on essaie de protéger les enfants. Je pense à la protection des enfants, et tous les membres, tous les députés, de tous les partis sont d'accord avec ça. C'est quelque chose que tout le monde va appuyer. Protéger les enfants, c'est quelque chose qu'on prend pour acquis. Tous les adultes ont un devoir de protéger les enfants. Les protéger de la fumée secondaire est quelque chose d'important.

La deuxième partie de ce projet de loi est de vraiment regarder quelles sont les populations, à même la population de l'Ontario, ou les projets et les programmes pour encourager les gens à arrêter de fumer. Quels sont ceux qui ont eu du succès et quels sont ceux qui ont eu moins de succès? Certainement, au cours des années, on a vu une diminution du nombre de gens qui fument en Ontario, et ça ce quelque chose de bien. Mais quand on regarde les statistiques un peu plus précisément, on se rend compte que c'est n'est pas tous les groupes qui ont eu le même succès. Si on pense aux Premières Nations, les Premières Nations fument encore beaucoup plus que le restant des gens en Ontario. Si on pense aux francophones de l'Ontario, les Franco-Ontariens fument beau-

coup plus que le restant des Ontariens. Les personnes à revenu bas ainsi que les personnes sans abri ont tendance à fumer plus que le restant des Ontariens. Donc, si on veut avoir du succès avec ce projet de loi-là, il faut non seulement être tous d'accord que l'on veut protéger les enfants de la fumée secondaire, mais il faut également être d'accord qu'il faut des programmes pour aider les groupes à risque à cesser de fumer.

Quand je parle des groupes à risques et que je parle des Premières Nations, je veux toujours faire le lien particulier qui existe entre les Premières Nations et le tabac. Pour les Premières Nations, il existe quatre éléments sacrés. Le premier est le cèdre. Le cèdre est utilisé pour demeurer en santé et pour s'assurer qu'on ne devienne pas malade. Le tabac est utilisé pour remercier la terre, remercier la communauté, remercier pour qui on est et ce qu'on a. Le sage est utilisé pour éloigner les effets négatifs. Si quelqu'un est tombé malade, tu peux utiliser le sage pour regagner la santé et pour chasser la maladie. Et le sweetgrass, on utilise ça pour le côté de la santé mentale, pour se sentir bien et pour se sentir « un ».

J'en parle toujours parce que la relation culturelle qui existe entre les Premières Nations et le tabac est unique et doit être prise en considération si on veut les aider à arrêter de fumer. C'est sûr que l'utilisation du tabac dans les cérémonies sacrées des Premières Nations est quelque chose qui va continuer pour toujours. Mais fumer la cigarette, ça, c'est différent. Le lien entre les deux est fort, le lien entre les deux est culturel et il existe, mais il faut quand même faire attention. Mon collègue vient de me passer un message pour me faire rire et il a bien réussi.

My colleague just sent me a little message there and had me laughing. To answer you, no.

I'm now talking about how to help the people who have higher smoking rates. One of the first things that we as New Democrats want is more community health centres that focus on the populations at risk. When we talk about populations at risk, we're talking about the same populations: people who have more trouble quitting smoking because of a whole array of reasons. We're talking about francophones and the First Nations; those are target groups of many community health centres. In the community health centres, we're giving them the resources. They could certainly help bring forward those communities to help them quit smoking.

Another way to protect children from second-hand smoke is to educate the parents. We have a wonderful program in Ontario, called Best Start, where every single child born in Ontario will be seen by a professional from the health unit in the catchment area. There is an opportunity here to fund programs and resources so that every single parent or guardian of a child who is born in Ontario gets special education on the risks and horrifying effects of second-hand smoke on children. As children are born and as parents get educated, this is one of the best ways to protect children from second-hand smoke, not only in vehicles but everywhere that children live. Although this bill addresses one confined area, a car,

which certainly is harmful to a child, there are lots of other areas this bill does not cover at all.

Un autre élément de ce projet de loi que j'aimerais discuter, face à aider les populations à risque, serait de financer des programmes dans les centres de santé communautaire existants, les centres d'accès aux soins pour les Premières Nations, pour qu'ils aient les ressources nécessaires pour aider les populations à risque à arrêter de fumer. Ce financement servirait à diminuer le nombre de fumeurs en général, ce qui aurait l'effet de diminuer la fumée secondaire chez les enfants.

Un autre programme qui irait dans la même direction serait le programme Meilleur départ. Le programme Meilleur départ est un très bon programme qui existe en Ontario et qui permet à tous les enfants qui sont nés en Ontario, leurs parents ou leurs gardiens de recevoir la visite d'un professionnel du bureau de santé publique. Ce professionnel-là, si on lui donne l'argent pour les programmes nécessaires, peut faire l'éducation envers les méfaits de la fumée secondaire chez les enfants, certainement dans les voitures parce que ce sera la loi, mais également partout où ces enfants-là vont vivre et respirer.

On connaît très bien les effets néfastes de la fumée secondaire chez les enfants, et un programme visant les parents et les gardiens des enfants qui naissent en Ontario pourrait les assurer que, à la longue, tous les parents auront reçu l'éducation et que tous les parents comprennent et sont en mesure de prendre des choix éclairés pour leurs enfants.

Another part of the bill that I would like to talk about is the age cut-off. This is something that bothers me tremendously. Right now, the bill sets the cut-off at 16 years of age. Although you need to be 19 to buy tobacco, only children 16 years of age and under are going to be protected. To me, we are missing out on a great opportunity. A lot of kids between the ages of 16 and 19 will be experimenting with tobacco, will start smoking and will become addicted to smoking. At the same time, during that age period most of them learn how to drive through graduated licensing—the G1, the G2 and the G.

There is such strong motivation for kids who want to learn to drive. They are ready to learn; they are ready to do just about anything. We've all been teenagers; we've all been there. Lots of us in this House have teenage sons and daughters, and we know that when they want to learn how to drive and when they want to borrow the car, they're ready to wash the car for you, they're ready to babysit their brothers and sisters, they're ready to come to grandma's and to church, if they get to drive. What a strong motivation. Why don't we extend the cut-off to 19, so that as they are learning how to drive, they are also learning that they cannot smoke in the car, and neither can their friends?

0920

As they are developing the habits of a driver, they won't associate driving with cigarette smoking, which a lot of smokers do. They cannot smoke at work anymore. They cannot smoke in public places. They get in their car and what's the first thing they do? They light up. New

drivers learn the same patterns. What a missed opportunity. If we were to expand this bill to include up to 19, all of those new drivers would not develop this habit.

In health promotion, we talk about pre-contemplation, contemplation, decision-making and action. Those are the steps that motivate people to make changes, to take healthier habits in their lives. We have a golden opportunity here to help young people between the ages of 16 and 19 to not pick up the habit of smoking in their cars. It wouldn't be hard to make an amendment to this bill to make it 19 years old rather than 16.

A lot of other jurisdictions that have put in place similar bills have done the same thing. I have done some research on that and found that in places like Nova Scotia, they already have a bill that does this—in the town of Wolfville, Nova Scotia, to be more precise. In Arkansas, we can see that a similar bill has been put in place, but the age limit is higher. It has been done elsewhere. It is a good way to do health promotion. It is an opportunity that we should not let pass by.

Une autre partie de ce projet de loi qui me porte un petit peu de confusion est la raison pour laquelle on a fixé l'âge limite à 16 ans.

En Ontario, il faut avoir 19 ans pour acheter des produits de tabac, mais, pour une raison qui m'échappe, on a décidé que la loi ne s'appliquerait qu'à ceux qui ont 16 ans ou moins. Pour moi, c'est une opportunité manquée. Si vous pensez aux fumeurs et aux fumeuses en Ontario, ils n'ont pas le droit de fumer au travail et ils n'ont pas le droit de fumer dans les endroits publics. La minute qu'ils rentrent dans leur véhicule, la première chose qu'ils font, c'est d'allumer une cigarette. Ils ont maintenant connecté les deux.

Tous les adolescents entre l'âge de 16 ans et 19 ans qui apprennent à conduire sont dans une période où ils sont prêts à faire des choix parce qu'ils veulent avoir un permis de conduire. On a tous été adolescents, et on se souvient de la motivation qu'on avait à avoir un permis de conduire et à pouvoir conduire. On a des adolescents, la plupart d'entre nous, qui ont vécu le même processus d'avoir leur G2, leur G1 et puis leur permis de conduire. Quand un adolescent veut son permis de conduire, il est prêt à faire beaucoup de sacrifices. Il est prêt à laver la voiture pour avoir le droit de la conduire. Il est prêt à peut-être garder son frère et sa sœur si ça veut dire qu'il va avoir le droit de conduire. Il est prêt à aller à la messe si ça veut dire que c'est lui, ou elle, qui va conduire, puis il est même prêt d'aller visiter grand-papa et grand-maman si c'est lui ou elle qui va conduire. C'est une opportunité en or. Quand tu penses aux éléments à succès d'une campagne de promotion de la santé, tous les éléments à succès sont là : ils sont motivés, ils veulent apprendre et ils vont développer de bonnes habitudes.

Pour le fumeur qui a déjà associé, « Je rentre dans mon auto; j'allume ma cigarette », ça va être très, très, difficile de désassocier ces deux idées. Pourquoi ne s'assure-t-on pas que les jeunes de 16 ans à 19 ans, quand ils apprennent à conduire, apprennent en associant, « On ne fume pas dans l'auto »? C'est aussi simple que ça. On

change le projet de loi. Plutôt que faire à ce que ça s'applique aux enfants jusqu'à 16 ans, ça s'appliquerait aux adolescents de moins de 19 ans—la même chose que pour l'achat des produits de tabac.

J'avais fait un peu de recherche là-dessus—en fait, c'est mon collègue M. Peter Kormos qui a fait la recherche—qui démontre que dans plusieurs autres juridictions ça se passe comme ça. À la Nouvelle-Écosse, plus précisément dans la petite ville de Wolfville, ils ont passé un projet de loi similaire, et la limite d'âge est à 19 ans. Aux États-Unis, plusieurs États ont passé des projets de loi semblables : on parle de la Californie; en Arkansas, on voit qu'ils ont passé un projet de loi semblable où l'âge limite est plus élevé, ce qui a l'effet non seulement de protéger les enfants de la fumée secondaire, mais on continue de les protéger jusqu'à 19 ans et on les empêche d'associer, « Je rentre dans l'auto » avec « Je m'allume une cigarette ». Cela a un pouvoir extraordinaire pour empêcher les adolescents de commencer à fumer, de diminuer leur taux de tabagisme s'ils ont déjà commencé et de les empêcher d'associer les deux. En ce moment, c'est une association qui, pour ceux qui travaillent en promotion de la santé, est très, très difficile à désengager.

Donc, en général nous, les néo-démocrates, sommes en faveur du projet de loi 69, Loi modifiant la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée pour protéger les enfants contre le tabagisme passif dans les véhicules automobiles. Mais on pourrait suggérer des amendements pour rendre le projet de loi un pas encore plus loin. Protégeons également les adolescents jusqu'à l'âge de 19 ans. On est d'accord que le projet de loi a reçu l'appui d'une douzaine d'organismes, qu'on parle de l'association des médecins de l'Ontario, de l'Association des infirmières et des infirmiers autorisés de l'Ontario, de l'Association canadienne de santé publique, de l'Association pulmonaire, de la Société canadienne du cancer et des centres pour les dépendances et de la santé mentale.

Je crois qu'on est tous d'accord qu'il y a une bonne base d'appui pour le projet de loi. On a une opportunité de rendre le projet un peu meilleur, de lui faire faire un pas de plus pour contrôler le tabagisme en Ontario. Ne laissons pas passer des opportunités comme ça. Elles ne se présentent pas souvent.

The New Democrats support the spirit of Bill 69, An Act to protect children from second-hand tobacco smoke in motor vehicles by amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. This is a bill that is going in the right direction, and a bill we would support.

We have an opportunity, when this bill goes to committee, to make a few changes. One of the big opportunities is to change the age limit from 16 to 19 years old. This is a golden opportunity for anybody who works in health promotion to do more with the same bill by simply changing the cut-off from 16 to 19 years old.

We recognize that there is a lot of support out there for this bill. Whether it is the Ontario Medical Association, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, the Ontario Public Health Association, the lung association, the Canadian Cancer Society, the Centre for Addiction

and Mental Health, public health units or non-smokers' rights associations, the list goes on. There is a groundswell of support for this idea, and we, as New Democrats, also lend our support. It is a good idea, but we could take it a bit further and make it a bit better.

The other part that troubles me, and where we would like to see changes, is the enforcement. To give somebody a \$250 ticket does absolutely nothing to help that person change their habits. Health promoters all over Ontario will tell you that giving somebody a ticket because they have been caught smoking in a car will do nothing to help them change their habits. We have to do better.

Other jurisdictions have created ways to turn this disrespect of the law into a health promotion opportunity. Some of the opportunities that exist out there are: If you are caught smoking in a car with a child under 19—I take for granted that we'll accept my first amendment—then you would have the opportunity to join a smoking cessation group and participate in activities that will help you quit smoking. This is turning a fine—all a fine does is punish you; it does not help you change a habit such as smoking—into something positive, where you will actually help people make sound decisions for their health by offering them, “You won't have to pay the fine if you can show the court”—or whoever the authority is—“that you have enrolled in a smoking-cessation program and followed steps to help quit smoking.” To the New Democrats, that would be a way to turn this law into a health promotion vehicle.

0930

Une autre partie du projet de loi qui nous dérange, comme nouveaux-démocrates, c'est que se faire punir parce qu'on n'a pas respecté la loi n'aide en aucune façon les gens à arrêter de fumer. Te faire dire que tu dois payer 250 \$ parce qu'on t'a arrêté et que tu fumais dans ta voiture avec des gens, je vais dire de moins de 19 ans, parce que je prends pour acquis que mon premier amendement a été accepté, n'est pas un motivateur pour arrêter de fumer et n'est pas un motivateur pour changer tes habitudes envers le tabac.

Il y a d'autres juridictions qui ont des projets de loi très semblables à ce que l'Ontario s'apprête à mettre en place, mais qui prennent un focus sur la promotion de la santé. Donc, qu'est-ce que tu peux faire? Si la personne a fumé, avec un enfant ou un adolescent de moins de 19 ans dans sa voiture, tu peux lui offrir de se joindre à un programme pour cesser de fumer, et démontrer à la cour ou à l'instance qui a juridiction que, oui, il a fait les pas nécessaires pour essayer d'arrêter de fumer. Donc, plutôt que de devenir punitif, que tu viens de te faire punir et tu devras payer 250 \$, on prend le projet de loi et on lui ajoute une composante de promotion de la santé où l'on offre aux gens de se joindre à un programme pour arrêter de fumer.

Pour nous, les néo-démocrates, c'est d'amener le projet de loi un pas encore plus loin, envers le but qu'on est en train de se donner, de protéger les enfants et d'aider les gens à arrêter de fumer.

Comme je vois que le temps passe, je vais conclure.

I see that I've taken up longer than I thought I would, so I will conclude. The New Democrats will support this bill. We are looking forward to this bill going to committee, and we hope that you will be amenable to a few minor changes that could have a tremendous impact on making this bill an instrument of health promotion.

The first amendment would be with the age cut-off, raising it from 16 to 19. The second one would be to bring alternatives to the \$250 fine. Rather than having a \$250 fine, let's put alternatives: that people could join smoking-cessation plans, and take steps to stopping smoking. Rather than punishing them with a fine, we would encourage them to change their behaviour.

We're looking forward to this bill going to committee, and we're hoping that you will be amenable to a few amendments.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: I'm pleased to join in and comment on the debate on Bill 69. I want to first congratulate my colleague David Oraziotti for bringing forward this critically important issue and Minister Best for taking up the charge on a bill that builds upon the important work done in our first mandate with respect to bringing forward the Smoke-Free Ontario Act and bringing forward a motivation for change: to change behaviour, to change Ontarians' behaviour so that they can better protect their health.

The Smoke-Free Ontario Act is now going to be amended for yet another area. You're driving along the street and see someone in an automobile with their children, and you know how you, as an adult, feel when you jump into a taxicab or something like that and that vehicle is filled with smoke. Personally, I'll get right out of it, because I don't want to be in that atmosphere. But a young child who knows no different needs to be protected by their parents. This bill makes it clear that it is a decision that we are all going to work on together to ensure that those children are protected.

When we talk about changing behaviour, I think it's so important to talk about carrots and sticks, and information and knowledge that we need to impart to people. I know it is of critical importance that there is stick in this bill—that someone is punished, receives a fine if in fact they break the law. This bill also, though, starts to educate people about what happens to a small set of lungs in a child when they are closed into that vehicle and how much of those toxic chemicals they are breathing in. I think there is another important component, when it comes to those older children, older drivers—peer pressure.

I very much look forward to seeing this bill become law and I stand very much in support of the excellent work being moved forward by Bill 69.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to rise and compliment the member for Nickel Belt for her fine presentation this morning in this House, and certainly indicate my interest in this bill, Bill 69, An Act to protect children from second-hand tobacco smoke in motor vehicles by amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

I'm aware that this government bill was brought forward in this House on April 30 in response to the expressions of concern by the Ontario Medical Association as well as the expressions of interest from our member from Kitchener–Waterloo, who brought forward a private member's resolution with respect to this issue, I believe just before Christmas, which called upon the government to undertake an education campaign of some sort to ensure that people were aware of the dangers—if they weren't already—of smoking in their vehicle while they have children in the back seat.

My wife and I are privileged to be parents of three young boys. They're growing up fast now; they're almost 13, almost 11 and nine years old. We're obviously very well aware of the need at all times to protect our children from any kind of danger. We're not smokers, but I have in the past witnessed parents smoking in cars while they've got young children—hopefully in car seats, at least—in their vehicles. Obviously, those parents are just not aware of the risk that they're putting their children in, in terms of inhaling the second-hand smoke.

For all the years that I've been privileged to serve in the Legislature, I've always made it a point to support anti-tobacco legislation as it's been brought forward. I believe that it is the role of government from time to time to bring forward new legislation to discourage tobacco use and to ensure that especially young people are discouraged, knowledgeable and warned of the dangers. I see this bill as one of a long list of government bills that have been brought forward through the years by all governments, including the New Democrats when they were in office in the years 1990-1995, and I will be supporting this legislation as well.

Once again, I want to compliment the member for Nickel Belt for her presentation here this morning.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure to rise and also to compliment my colleague from Nickel Belt, who delivered a lengthy and very well-researched piece on smoking in cars, both in French and in English. We're very proud of her in the New Democratic Party caucus.

I want to pick up on something she said. She spoke about the inefficiency of fining someone who has an addiction issue—and let's face it, nicotine is an addiction issue. People who smoke in cars with children are doing it because they're addicts. They're doing it because they feel that they don't have any choice. One can only imagine the stress that goes into lives where you would put your own child at risk. We see this in a whole range of addictions. We know that the health response to addictions is not one of fines, it's one of treatment.

I certainly support her amendment—and it's a friendly amendment to this motion. She has already said and we in the New Democratic Party caucus have said that we are going to support this bill. We think it's an inch forward—we'd like to say it's a mile forward. It's certainly a step forward, and as such we will support it.

0940

But there are amendments that need to be added to this bill to strengthen it, to address the issue of addiction—in

this case addiction to nicotine, of course one of the most dangerous addictions that are out there, partly because it's legal and accessible. Again, we're looking at that amendment and we're also expressing concerns about the enforcement—period.

We know that our police are overworked, that they're under-resourced. We know, because I've spoken to my two divisions on this bill and they kind of threw up their hands and said, "We can't even enforce the laws we already have, never mind adding more laws to our already insane workload." We'd like to see those police officers, those community officers that were promised, delivered, certainly in the 11th and 14th. It gives me an opportunity to say thank you to those police associations and precincts in my riding.

Mr. Kuldip Kular: I'm pleased to participate in the debate on Bill 69. I want to congratulate the Minister of Health Promotion for bringing this bill forward. As a physician, I know that tobacco use is one of the leading causes of preventable diseases and deaths in Ontario.

Smoking, whether it's direct smoking or second-hand smoke, can lead to lung cancer. Lung cancer causes about 13,000 deaths in Ontario. It costs about \$1.4 billion in direct health care costs in this province. There's about \$4.4 billion in fiscal losses because of productivity losses. I understand that smoking not only causes lung cancer, it can also contribute to other types of cancers, for example, pancreatic cancer, esophageal cancer, bladder cancer, kidney cancer, or some other types of cancer. At this time, medical people don't know what other cancers can be caused by smoking.

As a physician, I support this; as a legislator of this House, I support this bill. The Ontario Medical Association supports this bill; the Ontario Lung Association supports this bill. I think this bill, if passed, is a step forward. It's a step in the right direction. I would urge all members, from any party, to support this bill. I definitely support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Member for Nickel Belt, you have two minutes to respond.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to start by thanking the members for Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Wellington–Halton Hills, my colleague from Parkdale–High Park and the MPP for Bramalea–Gore–Malton for their comments.

I think we all agree that children are particularly vulnerable to second-hand smoke. They have smaller lungs and a higher respiration rate. Second-hand smoke contributes to respiratory infections, sudden infant death syndrome, ear infections, asthma and, later, cancer, as a member just mentioned.

Second-hand smoke is 23 times more toxic than smoke in the home. Even with all four windows open, the concentration is still not acceptable. Also, second-hand smoke is absorbed into car furnishings and later let off as gases. We know that stale smoke is even more toxic than fresh cigarette smoke.

We also know that, despite public education, many smokers do not perceive exposure to smoke as a health risk. In Ontario right now, only 37% of smokers have

made their vehicles smoke-free. But we also know that there is a groundswell of support. Between 55% and 80% of the population, depending on the community, supports this bill. Smoke-free policies prevent youth from starting smoking and send a strong cultural message that this is not culturally acceptable.

But as I mentioned, there's room for improvement. There's room for improvement in the age cut-off, which should be moved from 16 to 19. There's room for improvement in the way that the bill is enforced, to take it from the punitive to more public awareness and education, with fines as a last resort only.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. David Oraziotti: I'm very pleased today to be speaking to Bill 69. I want to thank the Premier for moving this bill forward and also Minister Best for introducing the bill. It has been a bit of a long haul, I would say, but we're here today, and not to presuppose what we're going to do in here, but I want to say that this is going to be great news for kids if this bill is passed.

Over a year ago, I began working with a number of key stakeholders, who pretty much everybody has mentioned here today, and I just want to acknowledge their support. Dr. Janice Willett, who has just changed positions—she is the former president of the Ontario Medical Association—actually practises medicine in the riding of Sault Ste. Marie. I want to thank her very much for her support on this bill, as well as Patrick Nelson and the other folks at the OMA. Michael Perley, who is part of the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco, has been an incredible advocate on this issue. Rocco Rossi from the Heart and Stroke Foundation; George Habib, CEO of the Ontario Lung Association; Peter Goodhand, CEO of the Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario division; and a number of other individuals related to health as well as enforcement. Joanne Di Nardo, from the Ontario Tobacco-Free Network and who works at the Ontario Lung Association, has been instrumental in helping to facilitate a working table that we've had moving along for well over a year now, in consultation with all of the key advocates in the health sector. They were certainly very supportive of this legislation moving forward.

I also want to make reference to our enforcement folks. I made a number of calls to organizations representing the police, both union and management, and there was overwhelming support to move in this direction, and that enforcement was not going to be an issue. It's something that officers can look out for, just as they watch for those who are not wearing seat belts. It would be a matter of pulling someone over if they witness this and believe that someone under the age of 16 is in the vehicle, and they could be fined.

I want to extend my congratulations to the Premier and Minister Best, as well as my colleagues who have all been very supportive of this legislation passing. I want to thank them very much for their support, as well as the many organizations that have come forward.

The bill itself is really moving ahead at a great pace, because we're on the leading edge of this. Only one other

province in Canada has passed this legislation. Nova Scotia passed this in December. If we pass this legislation, we're going to be only the second province in Canada to have this type of legislation, so I think we're very much at the forefront of this debate.

There are three US states that have passed it: California, Arkansas, Louisiana. I might add that the fines are substantially less. In Arkansas, the fine is \$25; in Louisiana, it's \$150; in California, it's \$100. So a fine of \$250 I think sends a very clear message that we think this is an important issue and that we take it seriously. Six other US states are proposing this type of legislation.

In Canada, British Columbia has a private member's bill that is attempting to make its way forward as well, and in the Yukon, a private member's bill was introduced to do the same thing: to protect children and youth from second-hand smoke in automobiles, because we know what the research says and we know what the statistics say.

I'm also very pleased to see that the bill will be a primary enforcement mechanism. In the state of California, this type of legislation is only a secondary enforcement mechanism. In other words, an officer needs to see someone operating a vehicle doing something else that they believe is not keeping up with the law to also fine them for using tobacco products in the automobile. If an individual is speeding or has a headlight out or there's some other infraction involved, they can pull them over, but they can't pull them over if they stop beside them at a stop light and see young kids strapped in car seats while adults are using tobacco products in the car. They can't fine them. In Ontario, that would be the case if this legislation is passed.

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Support for this, according to statistics, has continued to increase over time. In 1995, only 55% of Ontarians supported this. In 2002, 68% supported this. In 2007, 80% of Ontarians indicated that they support some type of legislation that would protect children and youth from second-hand smoke. When it comes to non-smokers, it's 86%, and when you're talking about smokers, 66% of smokers in Ontario feel that we should have some type of legislation that addresses this issue. Clearly, public opinion on this and research that has been provided by many of the organizations I previously mentioned have been key in bringing to light the very severe and negative effects that individuals and young people experience in an automobile while tobacco products are being used. And I might just reference some of those.

The New England Journal of Medicine, in 1990, indicated that one out of every five instances of lung cancer in non-smokers can be attributed to childhood second-hand smoke exposure. So we know there is a correlation.

A 2004 Ontario Medical Association report indicated that the second-hand smoke inside an automobile, in a very confined space, can be 27 times more intense than in a home where tobacco products are used and, in fact, 60 times more intense than in a home where there are no tobacco products used. The exposure in small spaces in-

creases the risk of respiratory illnesses such as bronchitis and pneumonia in children, increases the number of emergency room visits made by asthmatic children, and also has a negative effect on behaviour and cognition in children.

The Harvard School of Public Health and the American Journal of Preventive Medicine 2006 report indicated that exposure to second-hand smoke for children is more likely to result in respiratory infections, sudden infant death syndrome, ear infections and severe asthma symptoms. Children are also more vulnerable to these diseases because of their smaller airways and greater demand for oxygen and higher respiratory rates, as well as their less mature immune system.

Exposure to second-hand smoke in a car for an hour for a child is the equivalent of a child smoking between 17 and 35 cigarettes. I don't know who would let their child smoke 17 to 35 cigarettes in an hour, but the average child in Ontario spends about 50 minutes a day in an automobile. So if you have children spending 50 minutes a day in an automobile, and you have adults using tobacco products in the car, and it's the equivalent of a child smoking, in an hour, 17 to 35 cigarettes, I think we all know just how intense and how severe the effects are when we are talking about our youngest Ontarians.

This leads to other illnesses, as I've indicated and as the research has indicated, being developed in these children at a much earlier stage in their life, and it leads to their having more frequent visits to our emergency rooms, putting more strain on our health care system. Frankly, these young children really don't have a choice. If mum and dad are going to get in the car and drive 600 miles to a relative's home and they are smokers, you can just imagine the effect on those children.

I have to say that when I introduced the private member's bill back in the fall, with the comments I received at our office—the e-mails, phone calls, letters—and the discussions from coast to coast in this country, from folks in Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and Halifax, the interest in this was very significant. I had many people tell me that when they were children their parents smoked in the car and they are very happy to see this moving forward, because they wish there had been a law in place when they were children growing up, because they really struggled, being in the vehicle while people were using tobacco products when they were kids. They have other illnesses now related to that. It's something that I suppose, as we continue to learn more about and get more research on, like many other issues related to health promotion, we'll move forward in the right direction.

I think Ontario is very much at the leading edge of this in terms of Canadian provinces. So I'm very pleased to see that; 80% of Ontarians support this.

I want to take a second and reference the issue around the fines. I heard the member from Nickel Belt say that fines aren't effective and we need education, but then say that the fines aren't high enough. I'm not sure what it's going to be here, but I think the fines are important because obviously education is not getting to everybody

who needs this message, because unfortunately to this day I still see people in my community, and I know other people see them as well, who are using tobacco products and have children in car seats.

With respect to the age, this was the age that I had proposed, and I'm pleased that our government is moving forward in this direction. Unless we're going to get serious with the 13-year-olds and 14-year-olds and 16-year-olds who are standing outside schools using tobacco products, I think we have to be realistic in what we're going to enforce. Are we really going to pull an 18-year-old over who's operating a vehicle by themselves and smoking a cigarette and say, "We're going to fine you for smoking in that vehicle," or pull over a 17-year-old who's operating a vehicle, having a cigarette, and say, "We're going to fine you for using tobacco in that automobile"? Unless we're going to get serious with much younger people in this province who are, we know, using tobacco products, I think we have to be realistic about the age. I think the age is appropriate. I think once individuals have their licence to drive, the legislation will address that. We know that in the province you need to be 19 years old to buy tobacco products, but there's no age limit to use tobacco products in the province.

So I support the legislation as it has been introduced. Again, I want to congratulate Minister Margaret Best for taking the leadership role to do this, and I know she'll do a very capable job of making sure that the bill is passed in this Legislature. As I hear opposition members talk about their support for this legislation, I hope this will be passed in a very timely fashion because I think we know that it has the potential to help save the lives of many children in this province and help reduce the negative health effects that they're exposed to by adults using tobacco products in their automobiles.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Kuldip Kular: I'll again say at the outset that I support Bill 69, which will ban smoking in cars when children are present.

Second-hand smoke is known to cause respiratory illnesses such as asthma and lung cancer. Even though children in a car do not smoke directly, it's second-hand smoke, so that's why the Minister of Health Promotion has brought Bill 69 forward to ban this.

If Bill 69 is passed as it is, it will definitely make sure that we prevent deaths and disease caused by tobacco use. Tobacco use is known to cause not only asthma and respiratory illnesses, but also lung cancer and other types of cancers like esophageal cancer, bladder cancer and kidney cancer.

Whether it's a direct or indirect type of smoking, it's costing our province \$1.4 billion in direct health care costs. It's also costing our province \$4.4 billion in productivity loss. When people are sick, whether it's asthma or respiratory illnesses, they lose work and the province loses out on productivity.

I think this bill is a step forward, and I fully support it.

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Mr. Peter Shurman: I'd like to respond briefly to the comments of my friend from Sault Ste. Marie.

This bill amazes me. On the one hand, yes, your opposition friends will support the bill. It's apple pie and motherhood, and I support apple pie and motherhood. Don't smoke in cars with children: It's nanny-state legislation, like so much on the agenda this year, and it bothers me—

Interjections.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I'm sorry. It bothers me for a reason. It's like saying you're going to introduce a bill that makes it illegal to be a moron in Ontario because only a moron would smoke in a car with a kid. I never did, even when I was a smoker, 25 years or so ago. Yes, there are morons in the province.

Now, let's go to point two: How do you police it? Well, we'll send the OPP, tearing down the 401, looking for people smoking in cars where they have kids in car seats. Is that going to happen? I don't think so.

We hear about the good work of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act and the Minister of Health Promotion bringing in a bill like this to protect our children and yet, for—what?—two months in this House, I have repeatedly asked questions about cigarettes getting into the hands of children on an illicit basis.

There are studies that have been done by the Ontario Convenience Stores Association that take a look at the butts of cigarettes found in school yards, and what have we got? We've got 40% usage of illicit cigarettes in Aurora and 40% usage in Mississauga, and yet we have legislation here that's going to make it illegal to smoke in a car with a kid because we want to protect our children. Of course we want to protect our children. But can we do something with teeth? Can we potentially put something into play that actually helps our children by shutting down illegal smoke shops that put these cigarettes into their hands, not passing meaningless, moron legislation?

Interjection.

Mr. Ted Arnott: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I distinctly heard the Minister of Transportation, in his interjection, talking about dogs barking. I believe the Speaker has ruled that out of order on more than one occasion. I would ask you to call him to order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I think your point is well made. That is a point of order, and I would ask all of us in this House to take heed to it.

The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to make a few comments following the member from Sault Ste. Marie's remarks, and maybe follow up a little bit on the comments from the member from Thornhill.

First, I agree with the member from Thornhill that this is not a bill that will shatter all bills; it's pretty light. We've already agreed that there is a 55% to 80% groundswell of support behind it. So, whether we pass this law or not, people are getting the message that smoking when there are kids in the car is not a good idea. At the end of the day, are we going to change a whole lot

of things? Not that much. But we have a health promotion opportunity here. The law can become a powerful public education tool to raise awareness about the risk. To say right off the bat that we're not going to consider moving it to 19 years old because all of a sudden enforcement becomes the be-all and end-all of this bill—like you said, are we going to stop a 17-year-old because he's smoking? Are we going to stop an 18-year-old in a car because he's smoking? No. And we're not going to stop a 35-, 65- or 85-year-old in his car because he's smoking with a kid in the car.

This is not what the spirit of the bill is about. The spirit of the bill is about health promotion. It's about sending a message that, yes, people here in this Legislature are concerned about second-hand smoke for children and want to send a powerful message. None of us believes that law enforcement officers are going to be chasing down cars and handing out fines, whether it be for a 17-year-old or an 18-year-old. I want you to think about that.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I would like to again rise in this House in support of this Bill 69, and congratulate our colleague from Sault Ste. Marie for his great initiative in the previous Parliament in bringing this private member's bill forward.

I certainly feel that a number of the comments of our colleague from Nickel Belt in relation to health promotion are interesting and important comments as they relate to cultural issues, in particular. As I think about this bill—in my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham we have so many newer Canadians in the community, specifically the Asian and South Asian communities—certainly, the efforts of the local public health units in their health promotion activities will need to focus very much on those particular communities, which may need some additional explanation as to the importance of this bill, so that they fully understand the health benefits of not smoking in a vehicle, in terms of the risks to their children.

I think it's very important to emphasize the impact that tobacco smoking can have on a young child's lungs—the harm it can do. We have certainly seen asthma rates rising in children, and I have no doubt whatsoever that the habit some parents have of smoking in their cars with their children there has contributed to that. As so many have said, no parent knowingly wishes to put their child at risk. Very often public education and health promotion activities will ensure voluntary compliance.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Member for Sault Ste. Marie, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. David Oraziotti: I want to thank the members for Bramalea–Gore–Malton, Nickel Belt and Oak Ridges–Markham for their comments.

We know that the public supports this legislation. And how long have we known that smoking is bad for us? Forty years? Your party had an opportunity to pass this. You didn't. So let's not sit here and say this is “meaningless, moron legislation,” to quote the member

from Thornhill—that's what he said. I would expect you're going to be voting against this, with that kind of comment, right? You had an opportunity to pass it; you didn't pass it. I want to congratulate our Premier and our minister for showing the leadership to introduce this bill and ensure that we protect kids in the province of Ontario.

Smoking has cost the lives of 13,000 Ontarians every year, and costs our health care system \$1.7 billion every year. Yet I hear the member from Thornhill say this is “meaningless, moron legislation.” I can't believe the comments from the opposition. Either you're for it or against it. You had an opportunity to introduce it; you didn't do it. Let's get it straight: We are on the side of young people who need their quality of life protected in an environment where adults continue to use tobacco products in automobiles. It's not healthy—we know that; the research has been there for many years—and so we're moving forward with it. We know that an adult exposing a child to second-hand smoke for one hour in an automobile has the effect of that child's using 17 to 35 cigarettes in that hour. The research is there; we're supporting it. I'd like to hear the opposition members stand up and say, “This is good legislation, and we support it,” not, “This is meaningless, moron legislation.” I can't believe it.

I'm very thankful that our Premier and our minister are showing the leadership on this to ensure it's passed.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I am very pleased, personally, to be able to support this bill. In fact, this particular bill was one I had also prepared. Legislative counsel would know that I was also set to introduce a very similar bill, and the member from Sault Ste. Marie got out there just ahead of me. Anyway, I do support it.

As a former health minister, I put in place many initiatives to do what we could to eliminate smoking and, hopefully, raise the awareness of people in Ontario to the impact of smoking on the health of people. Anyway, I support this bill.

When the member introduced his bill and my bill was not going anywhere, I decided that one way I could help move his bill forward was to introduce a resolution that would support him and also, hopefully, convince his Premier, who initially said he didn't support the member's bill, to recognize that the opposition supported the bill as well. So one week later, on December 13, I introduced a resolution, “That, in the opinion of this House, the government ... should protect the children and youth of this province from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke in automobiles by immediately implementing an effective province-wide campaign to educate parents about the dangers of smoking in vehicles when a person who is less than 16 years of age is present.”

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You know, sometimes I believe there are opportunities for the government member who has a private member's bill to be supported by a member of the opposition. I

hope that I, in the way that I introduced my resolution, made the Premier reconsider his initial reaction, which was simply to indicate that he was not going to go down this—he called it a “slippery slope.” Originally, he didn’t see it as a necessary bill, to protect children from second-hand smoking in cars.

When he continued to object to the bill that had been introduced by the member from Sault Ste. Marie, I wrote him another letter, after the introduction of my resolution on December 13. On January 24, in fact, I had an open letter to the Premier stating:

“Dear Premier McGuinty,

“As we recognize National Non-Smoking Week, I call on your government to take action to immediately implement a new anti-smoking initiative to introduce an effective province-wide campaign to educate parents and others of the dangers of smoking in motor vehicles while children are inside.” I told him that I supported the ban on smoking in vehicles while children are present. I said that I believed it was time for our province to do what had already been done in Nova Scotia last year, when that province became the first in Canada to ban smoking in vehicles with children.

I also indicated at that time that I was disappointed because the health promotion minister had indicated that we weren’t going to do anything about this until the end of the year, and I wanted him to make this a priority for his government. I said that if you wait until the end of the year, which would have been 2008—I reminded him that second-hand smoke in a vehicle is 23 times more toxic than in a house because of that smaller space. I said, “If you’re not going to move forward on introducing the ban that has been proposed, then will you at least institute a province-wide campaign to educate parents and others of the danger of smoking in vehicles while children under the age of 16 are inside?”

I think we can all say, “Well, it makes sense. Why would anybody do that?” The reality is that people do smoke in cars when their children are in those cars, and obviously it’s extremely dangerous to their health. All of the research shows that children and youth are particularly susceptible to the harmful effects of second-hand smoke. I said to the Premier, “Can we afford to gamble with the health of even one child?”—the answer being “no.”

I went on in my letter to say that we’ve known for a long time that smoking is a significant cause of preventable illness, disability and premature death in Canada. In fact, second-hand smoke continues to claim the lives of more than 1,000 Canadians each year—and to think that that is almost totally preventable. This initiative is just one more step in taking action that would prevent the illness, the disability and the premature deaths.

I concluded my remarks to the Premier in my letter of January 24 by saying, “Unless we take a more aggressive and immediate approach to promote healthier lifestyles, our health system will be further consumed by preventable chronic diseases and needless deaths.” Then I asked him to deal with this issue of great importance to our children.

I hope that the introduction of the bill by the member for Sault Ste. Marie, my supportive resolution, my letter, plus, I believe, the flood of letters and e-mails that probably all MPPs received, influenced the Premier in making the decision to move forward with this bill.

I would have to say to you personally, as a former health minister and as a mother, that I appreciate the fact that this initiative has come forward. The reality is, we need to make sure that we protect our children. We already, as you know, have banned smoking in workplaces and in public areas such as bars and restaurants. It seemed that the next step simply was this ban in cars. I don’t know how anybody can object to it. That’s my personal opinion. We all know that our children are totally defenceless. They depend on adults to make responsible decisions on their behalf. This really is the least that we could do.

We know that we have seen widespread support, certainly from those who deal with people who suffer from illnesses, disease and death as a result of smoking. We’ve heard the lung association being supportive, the Ontario Medical Association—our doctors see the consequences every day—Canadian cancer, heart and stroke. The reality is, there’s no evidence to the contrary. We need to move forward and we need to make sure that this happens.

Since the introduction of the ban in Nova Scotia, and now the introduction of a bill by ourselves, of course, we know that British Columbia has also taken the initiative to move forward. We know that New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island are considering a similar ban. So this is an issue—I don’t see it as being partisan. I see us moving forward on behalf of all of the children in the province of Ontario, to give them the protection that they need.

I think, though, at the same time, we also need to continue to educate people about the consequences of smoking. We sometimes assume in this House that it’s common sense. I don’t think it’s necessarily common sense. There are all sorts of things that adults do without always considering the consequences. For example, we know people who drink—mothers, when they’re pregnant. That has an impact, obviously, on some of the children. So we have to alert them to what the dangers of smoking in a car are. In fact, I hope we can take whatever steps are possible to educate all people about the need to refrain from smoking. It’s tough.

Hon. James J. Bradley: What a positive voice they have over there.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Thank you very much.

We could go on and on and talk about this bill, but the reality is, I think most of it has been said. It’s common sense. We know there are health consequences. I can remember, when I was Minister of Health, the different initiatives that we did undertake in order to ensure that we could move this agenda forward. It’s an agenda that has been moving forward in all of the provinces in Canada. As I indicated, Ontario is just one of the most recent provinces to move forward, but others are going there too.

I could read you off lists of all of the dangers of smoking, but I think, again, most people know that it is a major cause of heart disease, it is a major cause of strokes, it is a major cause of cancer, vascular system—in fact, smoking-related cardiovascular disease is responsible for more than 6,000 deaths in Ontario each year. That's a significant number of people who are dying because of smoking-related cardiovascular deaths. When you consider that number, it would just make sense that we wouldn't expose our children to smoking, because later on in life this will continue to have an impact on them.

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I support the age under 16. I think that is an appropriate age. I believe that once someone starts to drive in a car—I mean, we assume that they're capable of making the appropriate decisions regarding the operation of that vehicle, so I believe that is important.

There are other states in the United States that have actually banned smoking. I would just share with you that the Yukon, Arkansas, California, Maine, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, South Australia and Tasmania have. We are simply doing what others have already done before us. We weren't the leaders, but nonetheless the government recognized that the public supported this bill.

I think that's the other thing that was most interesting: If you take a look at any of the research that was done, there was actually widespread public support for this particular piece of legislation. I would also just say that if you take a look at preventable deaths, tobacco use is the number one preventable cause of death in Ontario. It kills 13,000 people every year in Ontario. To date, no scientific authority or regulatory health body in the world has established a safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke. We know that second-hand smoke contains 4,000 chemicals, and more than 50 are known or suspected carcinogens. Children are especially vulnerable to second-hand smoke because they have higher respiration rates than adults and their respiratory, immune and nervous systems are still developing. Going back to the poll and the fact that there is public support for protecting these children who are so vulnerable, there was agreement in a 2007 Ipsos Reid poll that 80% of Ontarians agree that children should be protected from second-hand smoke in a vehicle. This is a 25% increase in public support from 1996.

I'd just like to remind the audience that when I was Minister of Health between 1997 and 2001, I did promote an agenda. In fact, we put in place a continuum of what we believed to be health services. It began with health promotion. It then focused on primary care, making sure people had access to a family doctor. It then focused on the hospitals. But then it focused, afterwards, on long-term care and home care. Part of the agenda for wellness and health promotion and disease prevention was to focus and develop a strategy. We worked with partners to make sure that we did everything we could in order to eliminate smoking and encourage people to not start smoking, particularly young people. We also focused on

the need to eat healthy and, of course, on the need for clean air and the need for exercise. These are all parts of a healthy life.

We cannot sustain our health system. We can't afford our health system to continue paying for preventable deaths. If you take a look at the number of people who are dying every year in the province of Ontario because of tobacco—13,000—we need to do everything we possibly can. We need to continue to move forward. I'm glad that the government is continuing to move forward on some of the steps that we put in place regarding disease prevention, health promotion, encouraging people not to smoke and educating them about why it shouldn't happen. Today, this bill is just a logical step forward in that process.

We've already banned, as I said before, smoking in workplaces. In this instance, we're simply focusing our attention on a very vulnerable group of people: children under the age of 16 who don't have their own voice when traveling in a car with a parent, or perhaps with a grandparent, a family friend or someone else who may be carpooling them to some event or to school. We're simply saying that once this bill is passed, those children would no longer have to be exposed to second-hand smoke in cars.

I'm pleased the bill is moving forward. I certainly support it. The sooner the bill is passed, the sooner we can put in place the framework, and the sooner it becomes law, I personally will be grateful. As I say, it's something as a former health minister I strongly support, and I hope we can continue to do more.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I want to thank and support the member from Kitchener–Waterloo for her comments. We in the New Democratic Party also will be in support of this bill. It is a small step on a long road, but a step in the right direction.

The damage done by second-hand smoke cannot be underestimated. Twenty years ago when I started my career, if you went into any primary school and there was a group of 30 children in front of you, you would talk to the kids and ask, "Do any of you have asthma?" They didn't know what the word meant. Maybe one of their siblings or neighbours had asthma. Now if you walk into any elementary school and there is a group—it doesn't have to be a big group—of 12 to 30, you ask the kids if any of them have asthma and you are guaranteed that at least one out of four will raise their hand. They know what asthma is all about. They have all seen it. They've all seen puffers. They know what they're used for. They know the symptoms and they know what to do.

Things have changed, but not for the better. There shouldn't be an epidemic of asthma among young children in Ontario, but there is. We can't help but link the fact that as children get exposed to second-hand smoke, it just contributes to more respiratory infections, more asthma and, we all know, chances of cancer later in life. This is a small step, but a step that's worthy of our support.

Mr. John O'Toole: I am always pleased to respond to the remarks made by our member from Kitchener–Waterloo, Ms. Witmer. She comes at this with a great deal of experience, as well as respect in the health industry. I know when she spoke to caucus very passionately about this issue, it reminded all of us how important the issue is.

I think it's important to recognize the work done by the member from Sault Ste. Marie, in all due respect, as a young person with an athletic background setting a good example in his community. I know he played hockey and things like that. To set that example is very good and important in your riding.

The member from Thornhill, when he took exception to it, was really trying to point to the issue that Minister Best, the Minister of Health Promotion, brought in this bill. I think it was brought in to deflect some issues that were on the agenda, on the horizon, right across the whole economy. I see the Minister of Agriculture is here and the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal and other people are in the chamber this morning. It's important to know that there's a lot of downside in the economy right now. I think this was really a way of getting something off the radar screen without actually doing anything that would be controversial.

And yet the Minister of Agriculture knows that they haven't solved the issue of how to get the agricultural industry problem solved for the tobacco growers. How are they going to move them to other commodities? It is an industry. It's a legal product. I don't particularly enjoy it. I'm a reformed smoker so I'd be even harsher. But they have no plan. That's one of the issues that Mrs. Witmer tried to bring out. It's a bit of a smokescreen to the economy.

I do want to be on record as supporting this. As a grandparent with four grandchildren, I would be remiss not to say that we should all be doing the right thing. The issue of enforcement is going to be the right thing, by educating the public to do the right thing and not put our children at risk.

1030

Mr. David Oraziotti: It is a pleasure to be able to add some comments to the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, the health critic for the Conservatives. I thank her for her support of this legislation. I know that she has put forward a resolution and I did receive her news release and some of the other commentary, so I want to thank her for that. She has been vocal about her support for this legislation as well.

The member from Thornhill perhaps needs to make sure that he's speaking to his health critic, because there might be some mixed signals over there. I don't want to see people calling this bill meaningless, moronic legislation. I'm not sure if the member from Thornhill took his briefing from Mychoice, backed by Imperial Tobacco, because we know that Mychoice has been very actively pursuing our members and is out there talking about how it's okay to have adults using tobacco products with kids in cars. I was contacted by Mychoice and they don't think there's anything wrong with this.

This is still a serious issue. I still see this in my community. I saw this several weeks ago. I saw it several months ago. Every now and then when you pull up at a stop light, you see an adult using tobacco products, with kids strapped in car seats and the windows cracked the customary inch or two, and there is a haze of smoke in the car. We want to do the right thing, and I know members of the opposition want to do the right thing as well. I hear their comments and I welcome those comments. I think this is a much-needed initiative in this province.

Let's not forget that we're still very much on the leading edge of doing this. There's only one other province in this country that has passed this legislation, about six or seven months ago. No other provinces have passed this. There are only three US states that have passed this and some counties that passed it as well. So it's something that is still not being driven home to people, so to speak. Education can only take us so far, and we do need enforcement on this issue. I want to encourage all members of the House to support this legislation.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm very pleased to compliment the member for Kitchener–Waterloo on her fine presentation this morning with respect to Bill 69. It's unfortunate that the member for Sault Ste. Marie tried to introduce a tone of partisanship into the questions and comments that followed her speech, because clearly our caucus is quite supportive of this legislation. I remember, immediately after the election—in speaking with the member from Kitchener–Waterloo and, certainly, within our caucus—her advocacy for this issue, indicating her intention to bring forward legislation to discourage adults smoking in cars when kids are in the back seat. Certainly that was her intention, and I was pleased that she followed up with her resolution right before Christmas.

It was, I think, a very good example of where we can work across the aisle in the public interest. When we take that approach, we're serving the public interest, I would argue. The private member's bill being brought forward, introduced by the member for Sault Ste. Marie, was criticized immediately by the Premier. But apparently after he received the polling data that some of his staff people probably showed him, indicating the strong level of support for this legislation, as well as the advocacy by the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, we see ultimately a government bill introduced on April 30—more than six months after the election, I would add.

I think the member for Kitchener–Waterloo has brought an important perspective to the debate. As a Minister of Health, she brought forward a number of very important wellness initiatives, a whole agenda surrounding the issue of wellness and how we could promote wellness, as opposed to just treating illness. I think the work she did in that regard is something that our party is very proud of as we look back at our legacy in government. In her capacity as health critic, she continues to bring forward meaningful initiatives within this Legislature that the Minister of Health should listen to and heed. Again, I would encourage all members of the House to listen to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo

with respect to this issue and all the issues that she brings forward in the House, especially the issues revolving around health care.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Member for Kitchener–Waterloo, you have two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I appreciate the words from the member from Nickel Belt, someone who has certainly demonstrated her concern for the health and well-being of people in the province of Ontario; obviously, my colleague from Durham, who indicated that as a grandfather of four and a reformed smoker, he recognizes the need for this type of legislation to protect our children; and the person, of course, who introduced the private member's bill, the member from Sault Ste. Marie.

As I say, I just think it's really interesting that two people from different parts of the province both were prepared at the same time to introduce similar legislation. I'm glad it happened. It is an example of us being able to work together in order to make something possible to improve the quality of life of, in this case, the children of our province. I hope that my support for his bill and my resolution and then, of course, subsequent feedback helped persuade the Premier to take action and move this bill to where it is today.

Of course, I thank my colleague the member from Wellington–Halton Hills very much for his comments. He works very hard on behalf of his constituents. I know he has three children. Each day, he certainly tries to make sure that he improves the quality of life, not only for his own family, but for people in the province of Ontario.

I would just hearken back to what I said before, and that is that as Minister of Health, my focus very much was on the wellness agenda, the need to focus on disease prevention, health promotion. Besides focusing on this, I focused on providing the free flu vaccine, which I know has prevented illness and death.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to rise to correct my record. Yesterday in estimates, I made reference to a company called Koolatron as being in financial difficulty. I'm happy to report that the company is solvent and operating happily in Brantford, Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): That is a point of order, and we thank you for that.

Further debate?

Mr. Mike Colle: I'm here today to support Bill 69, An Act to protect children from second-hand tobacco smoke in motor vehicles by amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

First of all, I want to point out the incredible leadership that the member from Sault Ste. Marie, David Oraziotti, has shown, in that when nobody was willing to take this battle on, he did so when there weren't many people who were interested enough or who were not aware of the dangers of second-hand smoke in a confined space and what it was doing to children.

I see there are children here from one of the local schools, and I think it's very important for them to under-

stand that this legislation ensures that adults who are driving automobiles do not use tobacco products, because it intensifies the harm of the tobacco smoke when it's in an enclosed space. So if a child is in the car and the adult is smoking, I think the member from Sault Ste. Marie mentioned it's almost like forcing that child to smoke 10 or 12 cigarettes.

We know unequivocally, after years of denial by big tobacco—big tobacco paid billions of dollars trying to persuade people that smoking was good for them. They denied the fact that smoking was causing cancer. Literally millions of people in the world died as big tobacco was trying to persuade people that tobacco did not cause cancer. In fact, there are still some people out there today who will deny that there's a linkage between smoking tobacco products and cancer, despite the fact that right now in Ontario hospitals there are thousands of people who are on respirators, who have lung cancer, throat cancer, mouth cancer, cancers of all sorts, caused by using tobacco products.

1040

The member from Sault Ste. Marie added to our very strong Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which was a new paradigm in educating and prohibiting the use of tobacco products in public spaces. That means that whether you're in a restaurant, whether you're in some kind of public space, in a hockey arena or wherever you are, you cannot use tobacco products. So the Smoke-Free Ontario Act covers most of the prohibitions in public spaces. It is a piece of legislation which sets the groundwork for protecting the health of Ontarians, and not only protecting their health, but there are billions of dollars used to treat people who are victims of cancerous tobacco.

I think there are over 450 hospitals in Ontario, and you'll find in every hospital—maybe some of the young children here today should visit a hospital and talk to some of the victims of cancerous tobacco so they can see what this awful, addictive drug does to people. It is not only costing the health of those people in these hospitals—killing people—but it is costing the health care system billions of dollars every year to treat the victims of cancerous tobacco. So there's almost a double whammy: the unfortunate individuals who are dying of cancer because of tobacco, and their families, and then also—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Why don't you ban it?

Mr. Mike Colle: I know the members of the Conservatives are for the tobacco industry and they keep on heckling me in favour of it, but on this side we think that cancer is caused by tobacco and children in the back seats of cars should not be exposed to cancerous tobacco smoke. That's why the member from Sault Ste. Marie was brave enough to bring forward this piece of legislation, against much opposition from the Conservative side. He has put this forward and now the government of Ontario has taken on this bill—Bill 69—which will ensure that innocent children will not be exposed to cancerous tobacco, which the Conservatives are heckling in favour of, because they don't see the danger and they don't read the medical records of the thousands and millions of people who have died as a result of tobacco.

This is another strong step that our government is taking to ensure that this kind of dangerous behaviour does not occur, because it puts the danger of cancer into a confined space in an intensified fashion, and that is why this legislation is important.

I know the Conservatives talk about this being part of a “nanny state.” They say the government is going too far by doing this: “Why do they have to do this?” Well, they said the same thing about the Smoke-Free Ontario Act: “Why do you have to have a smoke-free Ontario? We want the right to smoke in Ontario.”

This is all about ensuring that the people of Ontario are protected from this hazardous product. They don’t have to go into a restaurant and a child doesn’t have to be in a car and exposed to this hazardous product. This is the type of thing that Bill 69 does. It protects those who cannot, in some cases because they may be small children, stop the adult from smoking in the car. Therefore, we ask the help of all members of society to ensure that this practice, which many Conservatives condone, should not be allowed in this province. It is part of educating, fining people and telling them that this is something that is not allowed in Ontario.

Again, I congratulate the member from Sault Ste. Marie for having the courage of his conviction to do this. He fought for this private member’s bill to the point where the government adopted it because of his hard work, his vision and his caring for children across Ontario. I think all of us in this province should be thankful to the member from Sault Ste. Marie for having the vision and the courage to do this when big tobacco said it wasn’t necessary. Big tobacco still says that these measures are not necessary.

We need more members like the member from Sault Ste. Marie, who fight for what they believe in and make this a better province

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The hour being 10:45, the debate stands adjourned.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On behalf of the member from Toronto Centre, we would like to welcome representatives from the Campaign to Control Cancer group, including patients, survivors, advocates and health care professionals.

On behalf of the member from Oakville: in the west public gallery, the grade 5 class and teachers from Brookdale Public School.

On behalf of the member from Mississauga–Erindale: the grade 10 class from Erindale Secondary School, seated in the east public gallery.

On behalf of page Sheilagh Brenegan: in the west members’ gallery, Lynn Brenegan, her aunt; Georgia Brenegan, her nana; and Stan Brenegan, her papa.

On behalf of page Matthew Wilson: in the west members’ gallery, Andrew Wilson, his brother; Fraser Wilson, his father; and Kim Wilson, his mother.

On behalf of the member from Eglinton–Lawrence and the member from York West, we’ll be joined later this morning by Gianni Bardini, the consul general of Italy, who will be seated in the east members’ gallery.

On behalf of the member from Toronto Centre, we’d like to welcome the parents of page Rafaël Lemmens-Chapdelaine: Trudo Lemmens, his father; Pascale Lemmens-Chapdelaine, his mother; and Alberic Lemmens-Chapdelaine, his sibling, in the east members’ gallery.

As well, on behalf of page Matthew Chaput: in the east members’ gallery, Mary Shay, his grandmother, and Gerry Chaput, his father.

On behalf of Premier McGuinty and Minister Watson, I’d like to introduce Emma Brownlie of Ottawa, a student of D. Roy Kennedy Public School, who’s accompanied by her mother, Cheryl Brownlie; her grandparents, Leila and Forrest Buckingham; and her aunt, Nancy Tilt. Emma is the CanWest CanSpell National Spelling Bee champion, and she’s representing Canada at the world spelling bee championship next week in Washington. She’s in the east members’ gallery. Welcome, and welcome to all our guests to Queen’s Park today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is to the Premier, again dealing with his government’s relationship with General Motors. Given that General Motors is one of the largest beneficiaries of what in many cases seems to be a bottomless bowl of money, the government, in our view, has fumbled their strategy in this regard. We’re seeing job loss after job loss. I think it’s raising legitimate questions about their approach. We believe it’s time to shine a light on the deals that this government has made with automakers. Taxpayers have a right to know how their monies are being used and what net gain there is for this province. Premier, will you immediately release the details of your funding agreements with automakers?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It’s hard to figure out from one day to the next where the official opposition is coming from on this score, and I’ll tell you why. Just recently—in fact, on April 28—the member for Oshawa stood up in this House and asked a question about the auto sector. He said: “It’s extremely important that we come forward with a plan that’ll give initiatives to make sure that we build a stronger economy....”

“What are you specifically going to do to aid the auto sector?”

A little while ago, the leader of the official opposition said the following: “[A]ny Premier of Ontario must keep in his toolbox all of the tools necessary to make sure we maintain and attract automobile investment in the province of Ontario....”

"I would consider direct investment, in appropriate cases, to be something that you could use and should use...."

So I say to the official opposition: Are they in favour of supporting the Ontario auto sector or are they not?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Speaker, I'm not sure if you heard an answer there; I didn't. We're talking about specifics with respect to contracts made with General Motors and other automakers. I think we're talking about significant taxpayers' dollars that are going into these funds. Taxpayers have a right to know what the net benefit is.

1050

What we are seeing today is 1,400 jobs now being lost in Windsor, a city that is already facing 10% unemployment, and significant layoffs in Oshawa with General Motors. You are very quick to forget that the money you're handing out with no strings attached is taxpayers' hard-earned money. Taxpayers have a right to know what value they're getting for the money that's gone to General Motors. Based on the job notices, it appears that we're getting the raw end of the deal. Why won't you disclose the details of these contracts?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think the results are pretty important. And I think it's important to understand what's happening to the auto sector in the North American economy. Our three biggest competitors in this regard are Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. From 1999 to 2005, Michigan lost 90,000 jobs, a 30% decline; Ohio lost 29,000 jobs, a 19% decline; Indiana lost 16,000 jobs, a 15% decline. It is true that we have lost jobs in the province of Ontario. We've lost 6,000 jobs; that's a 4% decline. But at the same time, of those massive losses, we've secured a \$1-billion new investment from Ford, a \$2.5-billion new investment from GM and a \$768-million new investment from DaimlerChrysler. And contrary to Michigan, we have Toyota and Honda in our province.

We've been doing very well, given the competition, given global economic circumstances, and we continue to press forward to secure even more new investment to create more jobs in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: In the bigger picture, they've lost 207,000 manufacturing jobs in the last three and a half years—and growing.

I think a quote I put on the record yesterday from David Adams, the president of the Association of International Automobile Manufacturers, bears repeating: "As it currently stands, Ontario is now one of the most expensive jurisdictions in the world to manufacture vehicles." That's because of your policies over the last four years, and shoving taxpayers' money out the door is not going to solve that problem.

What Ontarians are seeing is that the deal you've made with General Motors has gone badly for taxpayers and for General Motors workers in Oshawa and Windsor. It demands scrutiny; it demands transparency and accountability.

Now we find out General Motors is looking for even more taxpayer money. Before we can trust you again in going into an agreement with this company or others, I think it's clear that you must disclose the details of past contracts. Will you do that?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The leader of the official opposition really should get hold of his counterparts in Michigan, Ohio and Indiana, because I can tell you what they're asking their governors is, why is Ontario eating their lunch? Why is it that when they've lost 90,000 jobs, 29,000 jobs and 16,000 jobs, experiencing anything from a 15% to a 30% decline in jobs, Ontario has emerged with only a 4% decline in jobs? Why is it that we secured the greatest amount of new investment in North America here in Ontario in the last four years? Why do we have a brand new greenfield Toyota assembly plant? Why did we land that here in Ontario?

There is undoubtedly a real challenge facing the global economy when it comes to the auto sector, but we have more than held our own. We've gleaned an unfair share. We intend to pursue as aggressively as possible a still further share of the limited auto sector economy. We want more new investment and more new jobs here in Ontario.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is to the Attorney General. It's regarding the letter sent by Six Nations Council Chief William Montour clearly suggesting that the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs intervened in an ongoing police investigation and prevented the laying of charges. That's potentially a serious criminal offence. Minister, given the clear and serious implications of what Chief Montour is saying in his letter—and you were copied on that letter as well—what did you do about it?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: That's right, I was copied on the letter.

The issue in the letter that the Leader of the Opposition makes reference to is answered directly by OPP Commissioner Julian Fantino in his letter to the Dunnville Chronicle, which the member should have had a copy of before raising the question. He says, "At no time during this event, or in relation to any police operation, did anyone in government or elsewhere tell the OPP to stand down or direct the operations of the OPP."

That thoroughly and completely addresses the issues raised by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I would suggest that's an abdication of responsibility on the part of the Attorney General. Certainly we appreciate Commissioner Fantino's perspective, but what about Chief Montour's perspective? You're going to completely ignore it.

Given the seriousness of Chief Montour's comments and his request for further interventions with the police, can the Attorney General explain why he didn't bother to correct them? These are written criminal allegations made by a credible individual. Now you're getting up

and the minister's getting up later and saying, "Well, now we're going to do it," after the letter became public. Why didn't you act? It was your responsibility to react.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I'm not sure what part of Commissioner Fantino's letter you disagree with, so let me continue.

In the third paragraph: "The decisions that resulted in the peaceful resolution of the road closure in Caledonia were based on ongoing dialogue between the OPP and Six Nations leadership and on the OPP commitment to resolve such situations in the safest manner possible."

I'll continue on with the next paragraph: "The suggestion that political interference played a part is regrettable and untrue. OPP operational decisions are the purview of the police officers in charge. Decision-making is influenced by factors related to the event and the overall need to maintain order and preserve the peace. This is fully in keeping with the police role and authority."

This government does not direct the police. We do not direct the OPP. The commissioner is on the record. What part of that letter do you disagree with? Stand up and be counted.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I don't know who you're performing for, but it's certainly not the people of the province in terms of upholding the rule of law.

Chief Montour is a respected, credible individual. He's not someone who would fabricate a story about a minister of the crown interfering with police. He has nothing to gain, but this Minister of Aboriginal Affairs has a lot to lose even if he left the impression with Chief Montour that he was influencing police decisions.

Again, these are serious allegations coming from a credible source. They merit a full investigation, and I ask the Attorney General to take off his political hat, do the right thing, stop protecting a colleague and call in the RCMP.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: We have the commissioner of the OPP, who has not only called in but written in to the Chronicle on the very—

Mr. Peter Kormos: You're in the back pocket of the police.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just ask the member for Welland to withdraw the comment that he directed to the Attorney General, please.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Withdrawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: He has written on the very issue that is raised by the Leader of the Opposition, making clear the suggestion political interference played a part is regrettable and untrue. It is direct, it is clear, it is unequivocal.

We have lots of letters that are received in lots of places over lots of issues. You've heard from the ministers involved. Now you've heard from the OPP commissioner. I say to you again, what part of the OPP commissioner's direct response to the direct suggestion do you disagree with?

Interjection: Rumours.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: That's right. You want me to act on rumours.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Howard Hampton: A question to the Premier. Shortly after the McGuinty government announced the automotive investment strategy, you also announced a \$235-million investment in General Motors. I want to quote from the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. This is what he had to say, "And yesterday we built on our success. In partnership with General Motors of Canada ... the Premier announced Ontario's investment" Then he goes on to say, "Our investment will support expansions and vehicle design manufacturing capabilities at GM plants right across this province ... This is great news for thousands of workers and their families who will benefit from new and secure jobs at General Motors." It sounded, when you made this announcement, as if General Motors workers across the province were going to benefit.

Premier, can you tell us how 5,500 General Motors workers could be laid off in the context of that announcement?

1100

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I don't know where that last number came from; I've never heard of it before. The leader of the NDP may want to substantiate that. But there is some truth to the release he made reference to.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just want to remind the members of standing order 23(h) when it comes to allegations. I just remind the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal of that standing order.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: There is some real merit to the release he referenced, which referred to "new and secure jobs." We inherited an auto sector infrastructure, so to speak, which was not bound by any guarantees, any securities. In the face of literally dozens of plants being closed throughout North America, it was inevitable that Ontario would be affected. But we're proud of the record that we established on a go-forward basis.

Mr. Howard Hampton: If the Premier can make aspersions of truth and untruth—I'm not quoting from a release; I'm quoting from what the Minister of Economic Development and Trade said here in this Legislature, in Hansard, on March 3, 2005. If the Premier says that Hansard isn't telling the truth, then we've got a problem. But I suggest that Hansard does tell the truth. The problem here is the Premier's problem.

You went out and you told workers and communities across this province that your \$235-million investment was going to guarantee General Motors jobs in General Motors communities across this province. But as we found out on Monday, you forgot all about the workers in Windsor. How could the McGuinty government say here in this Legislature that you were guaranteeing thousands of General Motors' workers' jobs, yet, we find out now

there was not even any thought given to the General Motors workers at the transmission plant in—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We never said that, and that Hansard doesn't say that. What I would recommend to my honourable colleague—and I'm prepared to arrange this for him—is a meeting with Buzz Hargrove. I'm offering to set that up. I'm prepared to serve as a mediator to reconcile, to actively do my best to reconcile, the differences.

But I can say that—and I do want to acknowledge the presence of Bill Reeves, who's with CAW Local 1973; he's the president. I had a chance to chat with him. One of the most important things he asked me to do was to ensure that GM had a continuing strong presence here in Ontario. We are absolutely committed to finding new ways to help GM grow still further in our province.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I just want to tell the Premier that it's not Mr. Hargrove who's supposed to be looking after the public finances of Ontario. It's not Mr. Hargrove who said that this \$235-million investment in General Motors is going to guarantee General Motors workers jobs at plants across Ontario. It was the McGuinty government that said that. You didn't just say it in this release in the Legislature; you said it elsewhere.

My question again is this: Your Minister of Economic Development and Trade said that this investment was going to guarantee GM jobs across Ontario. They were going to have more secure jobs. In that context, how could 5,500 GM workers lose their jobs after you made the \$235-million investment and all the announcements that went with it? How can those two things be squared, Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, we've never said—and the fact is we can't guarantee all existing auto sector jobs that are presently found in Ontario. We can make new arrangements, with new investments, on a go-forward basis.

Again, I would want to remind my honourable colleague, since 1999 Michigan lost 90,000 jobs, Ohio lost 29,000 jobs, all in the auto sector, Indiana lost 16,000 jobs.

During that time, when the Big Three shut down dozens of plants in North America, given the fact that here in Ontario about 90% of our product is sold south of the border, notwithstanding those challenges, we landed a billion dollars' worth of new investment from Ford, \$2.5 billion in new investment from GM, \$768 million from DaimlerChrysler, and a \$1.1-billion brand new greenfield assembly plant from Toyota.

I think, given our circumstances, we've been very aggressive and very effective.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Howard Hampton: To the Premier: This is not about Michigan or Indiana. This is about the McGuinty government promising something in Ontario and now

thousands of workers find out that what they were promised just hasn't turned out to be the fact.

Here is another comment from Mr. Cordiano, where he said to the Toronto Globe and Mail that, under the agreement, General Motors of Canada has pledged to maintain an average of 16,000 employees over the nine-year life of the project. That means it can trim its workforce by 4,000. General Motors has already trimmed their workforce by 5,500.

Again, Premier, these are the words of you and your cabinet ministers. Why don't they ring true today when 1,400 workers at the GM plant in Windsor are being told "You're out the door"?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think it's important, when we're talking about numbers like this, that every one of those numbers represents a person who has a family to support. I don't appreciate that the leader of the third party wants to stand up and add thousands whenever he feels it adds to his argument.

The truth is, a few weeks ago GM did announce 900 jobs, not due to take effect in layoffs until September. So don't add 900 to the total. Last year they announced 1,200 in layoffs. What the number actually was when it happened was 400. That means that, thankfully, there were thousands more who didn't receive a layoff notice. This is important, because these families are important to us.

We want GM to do well, and doing well means that we've got to help fight for product against other jurisdictions that we compete with in North America. When we're competing with other jurisdictions around this continent, Ontario is winning, and they're winning because Ontario is prepared to be there—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Minister. Supplementary.

Mr. Howard Hampton: One of the reasons I'm asking these questions is because a lot of workers saw the money go out the door, but they're wondering where their job is now. For example, Ford committed to retaining 4,000 jobs in return for a \$100-million investment from the McGuinty government. Well, Ford has announced layoffs totalling 2,700 workers since that investment. And I think what those workers want to know—and those workers were told pretty much the same thing, that these investments are going to guarantee their jobs, just as your predecessor said here in the Legislature.

I'm asking now: We see the money go out the door. Why were there not, in fact, real job guarantees? Why are 2,700 workers out of a job now?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: This member is interested in asking questions. I want to ask this member, if he was supportive of Ontario's role in reopening the Windsor-Essex engine plant for Ford, the first opportunity for the Ford Motor Company to reverse their decision and re-invest in Windsor—where were you on that decision? Do you support those jobs that are coming back to the Windsor area? And what about the Oakville facility

that's now hiring 500 positions? We have to understand what's happening in the world of the automotive sector, but when that sector is facing challenges, that's when it needs a champion in government, not someone who's prepared to blow all over it and make things worse than they ever were.

We are there for automotive sector today, and we'll be with it again tomorrow. Those are great jobs for Ontarians and we support them.

1110

Mr. Howard Hampton: Obviously, the minister and the McGuinty government don't want to answer this question. I will tell the minister, I actually support government investment to sustain jobs, but government investment should come with job guarantees, and that is something the McGuinty government has failed at miserably. For example, Chrysler committed to retaining 5,200 jobs in return for a \$76.8-million government investment, but since that government investment, Chrysler has sent 2,000 workers out on the street.

I say to the Premier again, if you're going to make these investments, shouldn't you at least look them in the eye and say, "We want a guarantee that our workers are going to continue to have jobs in Ontario," and not have 2,000 workers go out the door immediately or within the next two years after the signing of the agreement?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: Let me reiterate that when we sit down with the automotive companies, all five of them that are assembling here in Ontario—Ford, GM, Chrysler, Toyota and Honda—we work with them because we understand the world market for the automotive sector. We recognize that there are changes afoot. There's a high Canadian dollar. There's a high price for a barrel of oil. We know that the US sales are slumping right now. We know that this is a tough year, but we also know that we're going to pull out of this, and when we do, it's because we helped our companies become productive—that we will solidify jobs to make great cars in the future right here in Ontario, including the city of Windsor.

We're proud of our relationship with the auto sector. It's built this country and it's built our manufacturing sector. We want to ask this member: Do you really support the Canadian auto workers who work in this province?

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade: Despite over 2,000 recent job cuts at General Motors, the minister has all but agreed to hand out another \$140 million to GM's engine plant in St. Catharines. That's on top of the \$135 million they received in 2005. In fact, the minister said that recent layoffs and losses would have no impact on her decision to dole out more money. I find that unbelievable. To enter so hastily into large agreements, with questionable job guarantees and no accountability, is not a responsible way to look after taxpayers' hard-earned money.

Minister, with this new expenditure, can you guarantee that there will be no more job losses at General Motors in Ontario?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: Let me read this: "I have said repeatedly ... that I think any Premier of Ontario must keep in his toolbox all of the tools necessary to make sure we maintain and attract automobile investment in the province of Ontario.... I would consider direct investment, in appropriate cases, to be something you could use and should use, because to me, what is important for the province of Ontario is we attract and maintain that investment...."

Interjection: Who said that?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: John Tory, your leader.

I think you guys need to get it together, because your MPP who comes from Oshawa knows full well that that plant must be viable. We want it to grow in the future. So you tell me today, if GM makes an application to the province of Ontario, does your colleague from Oshawa support that application? I'm going to wait and hear what that member has to say.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Sadly, I'll have to take that as a no. A lot of the tools you have in that toolbox are giving this government a lot of skinned knuckles when they try to use them. There's no guarantee that General Motors won't take the money and run.

I understand the need to partner with industry and to leverage investment, and I value GM as an important Ontario employer. However, there are two ways to support the private sector: the correct way and the Liberal way. The correct way is to soberly and frugally assess the situation and make certain that recipients are upholding their end of the bargain. The Liberal way is to shovel the money out the door to large corporations as fast as they can, regardless of what those corporations are extorting from this government.

Minister, how can Ontarians trust a government that recklessly spends their hard-earned tax dollars and refuses to be publicly accountable for that money?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think it's important, because the MPP from Ottawa said—

Interjection: Oshawa.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: Oshawa—and GM is important to this member. He fully supports support for General Motors.

I want to speak about what Christine Elliott, also from Whitby–Ajax—a very important region for the automotive sector—had to say: "I certainly wouldn't dismiss the help out of hand. I think it's important that we be given whatever support they can give."

I think it's important that we say right now, when the automotive sector is facing challenges in Ontario, this is not the time that we're going to pile on—not this government that planted its flag in automotive, not this government that has been so supportive of an industry that has fed this nation for decades.

We are having a tough year and we acknowledge that, but we also know that when it gets tough, that's when the

government gets tough too, and we will help to build this automotive sector and it will be great again.

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE BOARD

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Minister of Labour.

When I met the minister several weeks ago, I asked him to make some demands of WSIB Chair Mahoney, to which he said that he has an arm's-length relationship with the agency, so he couldn't do that. Yesterday, the minister said he had spoken to Chair Mahoney about his lavish spending and had a letter reporting the details of his frolic.

When will the minister exercise his powers and direct Chair Mahoney to cancel the experience rating program and direct those billions of dollars to injured workers, where they belong?

Hon. Brad Duguid: If the NDP really cared about injured workers, one would think that they would want to be informed by the review that's going on at the WSIB right now regarding experience rating.

For those who don't know, experience rating is an incentive program brought in originally by the NDP, utilized by the Conservatives as well, when they were in power, and it's a system that's still in place today, that we've acknowledged has flaws and needs to be fixed.

There's a review going on with the WSIB now. Why the NDP would want to pre-empt that review is beyond me. That they would not want to be informed by the recommendations that come from the review tells me that their priority isn't people or injured workers; their priority with this issue appears to be politics.

Mr. Paul Miller: Once again, the minister is incorrect. We didn't do that.

On April 17, I asked the minister to use the powers he has under the memorandum of understanding between his ministry and the WSIB and bring in the Auditor General to review this deeply flawed, worker-adverse experience rating program. He said that the WSIB chair is reviewing the program. Well, that's going to be a year down the road, and we've been asking for 10 years to have that done. Really, the chair reviewing a program that he has said is here to stay is like asking employers to willingly give up their lottery winnings.

Again, I ask when this minister will finally do the right thing and immediately cancel the experience rating program, immediately redirect the money to injured workers, where it belongs, and immediately bring in the Provincial Auditor to investigate this program and the labour ministry's fines for workplace injury and publicly report—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'll say it again: Why would the NDP not want to be informed by the WSIB review that's going on right now regarding this incentive program?

If this incentive program can be improved, it's going to encourage workplaces across this province and employers across this province to provide healthier and safer workplaces. That is the goal that all of us should be working toward, not trying to score political points on an issue that we're well aware of.

We support the review because we know there are flaws with this particular program, a program, as I said, that the NDP had when they were in power, a program that continued under the Tories, and a program that is in need of improvement. That's why we support the review.

We're not a government of half measures like the NDP would suggest we be. We're a government that wants to do everything we possibly can to improve the health and safety of workplaces across this province. That includes, if needed, incentives for employers. It includes education programs, as well—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Mr. David Zimmer: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

My riding of Willowdale is very diverse. I often meet with Iranian, Chinese and Korean Canadian constituents who were trained as doctors, pharmacists and engineers before coming to Canada. They tell me how very crucial it is for them to quickly integrate into Ontario's economy.

On Monday of this week, I was pleased to join the minister at the launch of Ontario's expanded bridge training program. Minister, can you tell us what bridge training is and what sectors of the economy will benefit from these programs?

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Hon. Michael Chan: My thanks to the honourable member for bringing this matter to the House. I'm very pleased to share this information with my honourable colleagues. Bridge training programs are the next generation of language and skills training for newcomers in this province. The bridge training project provides job-specific language training, mentorship, skills assessment and work experience, which are needed to succeed in many Ontario professions. That's why the McGuinty government is investing \$27.4 million into 40 bridge training programs across Ontario. This will help 3,000 additional skilled newcomers to land a job that matches their qualifications and experience. This brings our government total to \$85 million and 140 bridge training programs.

Mr. David Zimmer: Ontario is renowned throughout the world for the diversity of its population. We know that the majority of newcomers who settle in this province make the greater Toronto area their home. Minister, how will this important investment help newcomers in my riding of Willowdale and in other ridings in the greater Toronto area?

Hon. Michael Chan: Newcomers from all over the world choose Ontario as their home because it's a great place to live. I'm very proud of the investments that the McGuinty government has made to support Ontario's newcomers. In the greater Toronto area alone, there are 20 different bridge training programs offered to newcomers. Bridge training programs yield an excellent return on the investment we have made in them.

The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers has designed a pre-exam course to prepare internationally trained engineers to write a professional practice examination, a part of the licensing process for engineers. Programs such as these allow Ontario full access and utilize our most important resource—our minds. The McGuinty government's five-point economic plan is helping Ontario move forward, and my ministry is proud to assist internationally trained individuals with integration into the Ontario market.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs: Mike Corrado is the owner of a multi-residential site in Cayuga and he met with HDI several weeks ago, along with municipal and provincial officials. HDI requested this meeting after protesters blocked access to Mr. Corrado's land. In addition to a demand for a \$3,000 application fee, they also demanded Mr. Corrado transfer title to his property to HDI and lease it back from them for the next 50 years.

You're a lawyer; you're the government. Is this not illegal? Is this not extortion? More specifically, Minister, are home builders now required to transfer title of their lands to Six Nations?

Hon. Michael Bryant: No.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Mr. Corrado would really appreciate a more fulsome answer. We've spoken with Mr. Corrado this morning. The blockades at his construction site are still up in spite of your "no." He's been told by Ruby Montour that the protesters will not leave and they'll never leave until he complies with HDI's demands, meaning transferring title of his land.

Again, Minister, is this not blackmail? Are deeds worth nothing? How many thousands of jobs are going to be lost; how many millions of dollars have to be spent on policing? The OPP have told Mr. Corrado they will merely act as peacekeepers; they will not intervene. My question is, do you agree with Mr. Corrado asking the OPP to lay criminal charges, asking the OPP to enforce the Criminal Code of Canada?

Hon. Michael Bryant: I spoke to the mayor of Brantford to discuss the municipal council's great frustration, the community's great frustration and the developer's great frustration with respect to what is taking place. A lot of efforts have been made to try and bring people together, to get them off of the streets and on to the negotiating table.

As the mayor said to me yesterday, at the heart of this are, in fact, unresolved claims, primarily along the

Haldimand tract. Both the mayor and I agreed that it really is time for the federal government to set a deadline and say, "We're going to put all of our resources into resolving these claims. It is through that, that we are going to achieve justice." So I certainly want to add my voice to the mayor's and the local members when we say to the federal government, with respect to this 200-year-old dispute, that it is time for them to set a deadline and set it now.

PICKERING NUCLEAR GENERATION STATION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To the Minister of Energy: Today a leaked letter in the Toronto Star from the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission to OPG says that safety margins are eroding at the Pickering B nuclear power plant. Why has your government allowed safety margins to erode at Pickering B?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I appreciate the question from the member from Toronto—Danforth. Clearly, the public wants to have confidence in the safety of our plants. Ontario Power Generation, which runs the plant, works very hard at that.

I think, more importantly, for the confidence, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission has, as the member knows, the prime responsibility here. They actually have an office on-site. They have access to the plant at any time. They monitor it very carefully. To provide some confidence, I hope, to the public, recently the staff at the nuclear safety commission recommended that the licence be renewed at this plant for five years. That's the maximum time that these licences can be renewed.

So I think, clearly, safety is very important. The commission has a big responsibility there. As a measure of some confidence, I hope this five-year renewal provides some reassurance to the public of Ontario.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: You certainly didn't answer why you've allowed the safety margins to erode. So the second question I have for you, given that this nuclear power plant is one of the closest in the world to a population centre like ours: What are you going to do to restore fully the safety margins that should exist at that plant?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: Again, it's a very legitimate question that the member raised. I want to once again say that we, the public, rely on the nuclear safety commission, an independent federal board with this prime responsibility. The public, I think, appreciates that. They have an office on-site, as I said.

Furthermore, they constantly monitor this. The staff there, as I said earlier, are recommending a five-year renewal on the licence. We certainly will follow the recommendations of the nuclear safety commission. They will provide advice to OPG on what things should be done, if any. I just want to assure the House and the public—have some confidence in the nuclear safety commission. They monitor this regularly. They're on-site and they are recommending, as I say, a five-year extension of the

licence, which I hope provides some confidence to the people of Ontario and the people—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question?

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. For the past several months, the cattle, hog and horticulture sectors have suffered greatly from low prices. The increase in the Canadian dollar has also added challenges to their sectors as well. In the 2007 fall economic statement, our government announced \$150 million to help farmers in these sectors.

Some farmers in my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex have expressed concerns over the eligibility requirements for the cattle, hog and horticulture payment program. Another member of this House had recently asked questions about a farmer who had been out of business for over 40 years and had still received a payment.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, could the minister please clarify for this House, and for my farm constituents, the eligibility requirements that were required for the cattle, hog and horticultural payment program?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Good question.

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Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I agree, it is a very good question. I'm happy to have the opportunity to make some clarification.

We worked very carefully with stakeholders who came to us and said there was an immediate need in the agriculture community. So what we agreed upon was that we would use the most recent ad hoc payment, which was provided by the federal government and matched by the provincial government, as the basis. I would remind all producers in the province that they had until September 2007 to make application to participate in that. That is the most current information we had available to us, and it was that information that we used to flow payments to farmers. So they had until September 2007 to receive it. It was based on that information that cheques were flowed. I can assure the people of Ontario that if people had not farmed in 2004, 2005 or 2006, they would not have received—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I appreciate the minister taking the time to make that clarification. Hog and cattle producers and related processing industries are still facing significant financial pressure due to the higher feed and energy costs, the impact of the new federal enhanced feed ban regulations and the enhanced US border regulations.

The eligibility requirements, as clarified by the minister today, still leave some of my cattle, hog and horticulture producers ineligible for this program. Could the

minister please tell this House what support programs are available to producers who began farming in 2007 or who did not qualify under the 50% rule of their eligible net sales coming from cattle, hogs or horticulture production?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Again, I think it's very important for people in Ontario to know that, yes, for those farmers who started in the industry in 2007, there are federal and provincial dollars available to support them in the case of difficulty. The way that works is that for anyone who did start farming in 2007 or later, they are eligible for what are called interim payments under the AgriStability program. That's the joint program that we have with the federal government. Those programs are triggered by a phone call to Agricorp. Those are upfront payments that are provided to farmers. Farmers who started farming in 2007 would be eligible for those interim payments. For the 2007 production year, I would report to this House that \$18.3 million in interim payments has been delivered to farmers, and that so far in 2008, \$11.7 million has been delivered to farmers who have found themselves in difficulty. So there are dollars flowing to new farmers—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is for the Premier. Premier, your government continues to deny patients access to PET scans despite the fact that they're available in other provinces and other countries. We have a patient, Roman Gawur, a 57-year-old male who's fighting colon cancer. He's here today. He must now pay \$2,000 for a PET scan, after he has already spent \$25,000 on drugs that you will not cover, to determine if he can declare victory over his cancer or needs more cancer treatment.

I ask you, Premier, why will you not pay for his PET scan, as is done in most other provinces and countries in the world?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: This could be fairly categorized as a "spend" question, and I take it as such.

The member does know that we've been working to get wait times down for our MRIs and CT scans. For MRIs, they're down 11% or 13 days; for our CT scans, they're down by 27% or 22 days.

PET scans are still considered experimental by Health Canada. The member knows that we are currently conducting trials. We need to better understand the clinical value of these scans. I know the member well understands, having been a former Minister of Health, that there are an incredible number of competing demands for limited resources in our health care budget. What we're doing is approaching this carefully and thoughtfully, and we look forward to the outcome of those trials.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: As a former health minister, I know that these trials were to have been over by now and that we should have had full and equal access to PET scans for every person in the province of Ontario.

I want to tell the Premier about Perry Brodtkin, a former lawyer for OHIP. He is quoted in the Sudbury Star on April 21 as saying that OHIP must reimburse patients for the cost of PET scans, in accordance with the decision of the Health Services Appeal and Review Board on December 20, 2007, so long as the scan is provided in a public hospital in another province.

I ask you, Premier: Is it true that the province is now forced to pay for PET scans obtained in hospitals in other provinces, and if so, why have you held back and not given this information to the patients and doctors in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that there are PET scans being done—in fact, a considerable number here in Ontario. Dr. Bill Evans, who's chair of the Ontario PET scan steering committee, offered this observation. He said: "There's been criticism in Ontario in its seeming tardiness to adopt. But it's a decision taken by cancer specialists of the province, various surgeons and medical and radiation oncologists."

It's probably a healthy thing for us to debate as lay-people and as political representatives on the value of PET scans. But at the end of the day, we have to place our continuing faith in our experts. Dr. Evans says that it's best for us to leave it to cancer specialists, surgeons, and medical and radiation oncologists. We await their very best advice on this, and we look forward to that.

NATURAL GAS RATES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Minister of Energy, reports today suggest that Enbridge gas may be increasing their charges to their customers by 20%. There's an expectation that there will be increases in gas costs to customers across Ontario and, at other utilities, a comparable amount. What are you going to do to protect Ontario consumers from a dramatic increase in their gas bills?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: The public should be aware, although they may not be aware, that the Ontario Energy Board, on a quarterly basis—every three months—reviews the price of natural gas. None of the companies that distribute natural gas benefit from this. They review the price of natural gas as it's traded across North America, and reflect that price in the price that the companies are allowed to charge. They will review that price, I gather—the Ontario Energy Board—in June, to make a decision on July 1.

That is driven, I might say, very much by their estimate of what the price of natural gas will be over the next 12 months. So I would say: That's a decision that will be made by the independent Ontario Energy Board on the basis of the future price of natural gas. The challenge will be that natural gas has gone up. There very well may be an increase in price, but that is done through legislation—an independent board making that decision on the basis of the cost of natural gas—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The minister disowns responsibility, disowns his ability to have some impact when he

let the \$22-million lawsuit for late payment fees that's going to come out of ratepayers go ahead. He could do something about the unscrupulous practices of direct energy marketers, but he hasn't done any of that. Those people, in particular, affect the seniors and the uninformed. What are you going to do to protect the most vulnerable people in this society from gouging through those energy costs?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: If there's any evidence of gouging, we will take action. In the particular case you're talking about, this is the Ontario Energy Board, with the legislated mandate to reflect the price of natural gas costs around North America. So if you're asking me to violate the legislation that we have passed here in the Legislature mandating them to do that, I can't do that, and you would be the first to say that I shouldn't do that.

I'd just say to the public: The Ontario Energy Board has the legislated mandate to reflect these costs, and they will make that decision in June, effective July 1. I hope the member is not advocating that I, in some way, violate the legislation that we've passed here mandating the Ontario Energy Board to carry that out.

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LA JEUNESSE FRANCOPHONE

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Ma question s'adresse à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones.

Madame la ministre, l'engagement de notre gouvernement envers la jeunesse franco-ontarienne s'est fait sentir à plusieurs reprises depuis l'arrivée du gouvernement McGuinty à Queen's Park. Je pense aux investissements sans précédents dans le domaine de l'éducation et à la mise en œuvre de la politique d'aménagement linguistique.

Il est primordial que notre gouvernement continue son travail auprès de la jeunesse et prenne des mesures pour conscientiser nos jeunes francophones sur le besoin de s'impliquer dans leur communauté pour se bâtir un avenir.

Quelles sont les intentions du gouvernement pour engager davantage la jeunesse francophone de l'Ontario à s'impliquer au niveau communautaire?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je voudrais remercier le député de Glengarry—Prescott—Russell pour son excellente question.

Le 1^{er} mars dernier, dans le cadre du Banquet de la francophonie qui se déroulait à Embrun, j'ai annoncé que la relève est présentement l'un des plus grands défis de la francophonie ontarienne. Il faut donc redoubler nos efforts pour mobiliser les jeunes de l'élémentaire, du secondaire, les collégiaux et universitaires puis les jeunes travailleurs. Il faut former plus de professionnels qui vont travailler en français. Il faut appuyer nos jeunes entrepreneurs francophones qui offrent une main-d'œuvre bilingue.

C'est donc avec fierté que j'ai annoncé que notre gouvernement se propose de créer une stratégie jeunesse francophone qui sera élaborée et mise en œuvre par

l'Office des affaires francophones. Et je suis remplie d'espoir quand je regarde nos jeunes francophones de souche ou immigrants dans le sud-ouest de la province, là où la francophonie de l'Ontario connaît son plus grand essor démographique.

Le gouvernement McGuinty fait—

Le Président (L'hon. Steve Peters): Merci.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Madame la ministre, les Ontariens et Ontariennes francophones ont accueilli avec enthousiasme votre annonce récente à l'effet que votre ministère allait mettre en place une stratégie pour la jeunesse francophone. C'est très apprécié de voir la coopération qui existe entre votre ministère et le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités. Pourriez-vous nous donner les grandes lignes de cette nouvelle stratégie?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: La stratégie francophone de notre gouvernement aura pour mission de mobiliser la jeunesse franco-ontarienne et d'assurer une relève pour l'épanouissement de la communauté franco-ontarienne.

L'Office des affaires francophones, en collaboration avec nos partenaires francophones, entreprendra des consultations auprès de la communauté pour faire en sorte que notre stratégie jeunesse corresponde aux besoins des jeunes partout en Ontario, car notre jeunesse franco-ontarienne est présente en grand nombre dans le nord, dans l'est et dans le sud de la province. Elle doit composer avec des milieux variés selon sa situation démographique, géographique, économique et sociale. Alors, j'ai confiance que partout en Ontario cette énergie renouvelée chez nos jeunes va trouver sa plus belle inspiration.

En février dernier, j'ai annoncé avec le ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités un investissement majeur de 20 \$ millions pour le centre d'excellence pour l'éducation postsecondaire au Collège Glendon à l'Université York, en collaboration avec le Collège Boréal. Et je pourrais—

Le Président (L'hon. Steve Peters): Merci.

STEVEN TRUSCOTT

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Attorney General. Minister, as you know, the previous Attorney General asked Justice Robins to consider the question of whether compensation for Steven Truscott for wrongful conviction would be appropriate. Curiously, the member for Guelph is bringing forward a resolution tomorrow for debate supporting compensation. Will the members of this House be finding out tomorrow the contents of Justice Robins' report through debate on this issue?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I thank the member for the question. It's a very important issue. I do have the advice from Justice Robins. I'm looking forward to the opportunity to speak to this matter in the not-too-distant future.

The member is quite right: There is a resolution before the House tomorrow brought by my colleague the mem-

ber for Guelph. The House will have the opportunity to debate that. I will, of course, hear the result of that discussion tomorrow.

I look forward to speaking to the matter in the not-too-distant future. I really do thank the member for the question about this very important issue.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I look forward to hearing from the Attorney General and wonder if he can give us some definite timelines about when he will be bringing forward this important report.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Once again, I know this is a matter in which all members of the House are very interested and I thank the member for the question. There is going to be a debate here tomorrow and I don't want to say anything. That's a private member's debate. Let that go. I will receive the results of that. I have the advice from Justice Robins and I'm looking forward to speaking to this matter in the not-too-distant future. I don't have a specific timeline, but in the not-too-distant future.

Again, I know the member and others will want to participate in the debate tomorrow on the resolution brought by my colleague the member for Guelph, who has been very interested in this very important matter, as have all members of the House.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Why is it that yet another province has announced a major provincial investment in child care, some \$244 million, and Ontario doesn't even have a child care line in the budget?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thanks for the opportunity to talk about the great progress we've made in child care in Ontario. Since the election in 2003, since we came to office, we've created 22,000 new child care spaces in the province. The member opposite will also know that in last year's budget, we allocated \$25 million for last year and an additional \$25 million for this year. So the province of Ontario is moving forward aggressively on child care.

Another very important change that we've made is that we've really streamlined the child care subsidy program so that more people in Ontario have access to high-quality child care.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This minister will know that the vast majority of funding that came to child care in Ontario came from the federal government. That's just the reality. The \$300 million that this government pledged years and years ago still hasn't seen the light of day in Ontario. Not only will Alberta be investing \$244 million to expand child care, they're also going to be enhancing child care subsidies significantly in that province. By comparison, here in Ontario, we have the waiting list expanding in massive ways. Some 23,000 families are on waiting lists for a child care subsidy here in Ontario.

My question is this: Why is Alberta able to expand child care but in Ontario the minister can't even point to a physical line item in the budget that says "child care"?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I can't believe that the member opposite is so naive as not to understand why Alberta is able to invest more in child care than Ontario. However, the important thing is that access to high-quality child care is a very high priority for us. As we move forward on a poverty reduction strategy, having access to high-quality child care at a cost that parents can afford is a very important component of getting everyone who is able to work working in this province.

PETITIONS

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition headed "Freeze Gas Prices."

"Whereas gasoline prices have increased at alarming rates during the past year; and

"Whereas the high and different gas prices in different areas of Ontario have caused confusion and unfair hardship on hard-working Cambridge families; and

"Whereas the false promises of Premier McGuinty adversely affect the trust between Ontarians and their elected representatives;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"(1) That the Ontario McGuinty Liberal government immediately freeze gas prices for a temporary period until world oil prices moderate; and

"(2) That the Ontario McGuinty Liberal government and the federal government immediately lower their taxes on gas for a temporary period until world oil prices moderate; and

"(3) That the Ontario McGuinty Liberal government immediately initiate a royal commission to investigate the predatory gas prices charged by oil companies operating in Ontario."

As I agree with this petition, I affix my name thereto.

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HOME CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have a petition from the SEIU and the people of the greater Toronto area.

"Whereas the Ontario government has continued the practice of competitive bidding for home care services; and

"Whereas the competitive bidding process has increased the privatization of Ontario's health care delivery, in direct violation of the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act, 2004; and

"Whereas competitive bidding for home care services has decreased both the continuity and quality of care available to home care clients; and

"Whereas home care workers do not enjoy the same employment rights, such as successor rights, as all other Ontario workers have, which deprives them of termin-

ation rights, seniority rights and the right to move with their work when their employer agency loses a contract;"

They ask the Ontario government:

"(1) to immediately stop the competitive bidding for home care services so home care clients can receive the continuity and quality of care they deserve; and

"(2) to extend successor rights under the Labour Relations Act to home care workers to ensure the home care sector is able to retain a workforce that is responsive to clients' needs."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerk with Evelyn.

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. Mario Sergio: Before I read this petition, I would like to introduce to the House, on behalf of every member, and especially the Italian members on both sides, the new consul general of Italy, Mr. Gianni Bardini, who is with us today in the west gallery. I would like to welcome him to Toronto. Consul Bardini is not new to Toronto or to the Italian community.

I have a petition from many residents of my constituency, with respect to maintaining the Lord's Prayer. It is signed by many thousands of people in my area, and I'm much in favour of it and will affix my signature to it.

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. John Yakabuski: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord's Prayer from its place at the beginning of daily proceedings in the Legislature; and

"Whereas the recitation of the Lord's Prayer has opened the Legislature every day since the 19th century; and

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer's message of forgiveness and the avoidance of evil is universal to the human condition: It is a valuable guide and lesson for a chamber that is too often an arena of conflict; and

"Whereas recognizing the diversity of the people of Ontario should be an inclusive process, not one which excludes traditions such as the Lord's Prayer;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord's Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature."

I support this petition, affix my signature and send it to the table with Naomi.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Joe Dickson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Central East Local Health Integration Network (CE-LHIN) board of directors has approved the Rouge Valley Health System's deficit elimination plan, subject to public meetings; and

“Whereas, despite the significant expansion of the Ajax-Pickering hospital, the largest in its 53-year history, a project that could reach \$100 million, of which 90% is funded by the Ontario government, this plan now calls for the ill-advised transfer of 20 mental health unit beds from Ajax-Pickering hospital to the Centenary health centre in Scarborough; and

“Whereas one of the factors for the successful treatment of patients in the mental health unit is support from family and friends, and the distance to Centenary health centre would negatively impact on the quality of care for residents of Ajax and Pickering; and

“Whereas it is also imperative for Rouge Valley Health System to balance its budget, eliminate its deficit and debt and realize the benefits of additional Ontario government funding;

“We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Rouge Valley Health System continue to provide the current level of service to our Ajax-Pickering hospital, which now serves the fastest-growing communities of west Durham; and

“That the Ajax-Pickering hospital retain the badly needed 20-bed mental health unit.”

I shall affix my signature to that and pass it to Sheilagh.

LORD’S PRAYER

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty has called on the Ontario Legislature to consider removing the Lord’s Prayer from its daily proceedings; and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer has been an integral part of our parliamentary heritage that was first established in 1793 under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe; and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer is today a significant part of the religious heritage of millions of Ontarians of culturally diverse backgrounds;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to continue its long-standing practice of using the Lord’s Prayer as part of its daily proceedings.”

As I agree with this petition, I affix my name thereto and provide it to Joanna.

GRAFFITI

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: A petition to the Legislature of Ontario:

“Whereas graffiti creates a nuisance that can adversely affect property values, business opportunities and the enjoyment of community life;

“Whereas graffiti promotes a sense of disrespect for private property, and a perception that laws protecting public and private property can be disregarded with impunity;

“Whereas it is important that everyone do their part in keeping both public and private properties free of graffiti in order to maintain community pride and confidence;

“Whereas the quick removal of graffiti from walls, fences and other structures is critical to maintaining community cleanliness and beauty; it is always true that the prevention is the best policy;

“Accordingly we, the undersigned, petition the Legislature:

“To impose certain conditions on the sale of spray paint, broad-tipped marker pens, paint pens, glass-cutting tools and glass-etching tools or instruments of graffiti and to make it be unlawful for any person, other than a parent, legal guardian, school teacher or law enforcement officer in the performance of duty, to sell, exchange, give, deliver, loan, or otherwise furnish or permit to be sold, exchanged, given, delivered or loaned any prohibited graffiti material to any minor unless the minor is accompanied by their parent or legal guardian.”

I agree with this petition and I’ll be signing my name to it.

ALMA COLLEGE

Mr. Khalil Ramal: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas historic Alma College, designed in the High Victorian Gothic style, chartered by an act of Ontario passed March 2, 1877, opened in October 1881, located in the city of St. Thomas, county of Elgin, province of Ontario, has fallen into a dire state of disrepair; and

“Whereas Alma College continues to be threatened with demolition by its current owners despite the efforts of many concerned citizens, alumni and various officials; and

“Whereas a historical plaque commemorating Alma College was unveiled at the college on Thursday, October 28, 1976, by the Ontario Heritage Trust, an agency within the Ministry of Culture and Recreation; and

“Whereas the city of St. Thomas designated Alma College under part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act (bylaw 167-94), in 1994; and

“Whereas recent amendments (2005) to the Ontario Heritage Act allow the Minister of Culture to designate property as being provincially significant;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“The Minister of Culture immediately designate Alma College as a building of provincial significance and, in the event of a demolition order being issued for Alma, to immediately intervene by issue of a stop order, and to further identify provincial partnerships and possible funding to protect the existing buildings from further deterioration while financial resources are generated to restore the property to its former glory.”

I agree with this petition. I want to sign my signature to it and give it to Arjun.

GYPSY MOTHS

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm pleased to present yet more petitions to protect Ontario properties from gypsy moth infestations. They read as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas gypsy moths are a dangerous pest because they can nest in more than 500 different native plant species; and

"Whereas professional arborists have estimated that thousands of acres in Ontario have been deforested by gypsy moths; and

"Whereas many properties in Binbrook, West Niagara, Haldimand and surrounding areas have been dramatically harmed by gypsy moths; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario has previously funded a cost-shared gypsy moth spraying program;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources immediately fund a gypsy moth spraying program to assist landowners and municipalities attempting to control further gypsy moth infestation."

In support, I affix my signature.

1200

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I would like to thank Dr. Nguyen from Mississauga and also Mary Lou Kiss of Melissa Court in Mississauga for their efforts in collecting the signatures on this petition. It reads as follows:

"Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA area served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the vigorous capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

"Whereas 'day surgery' procedures could be performed in an off-site facility, thus greatly increasing the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, alleviating wait times for patients, and freeing up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2008-09 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to 'day surgery' procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed."

I am pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Rafaël to carry it for me.

GAS WELLS

Mr. Tim Hudak: I am pleased to present a petition to "Preserve Our Gas Wells." I've read in a number like this. It reads, to conclude:

"We, the undersigned, request as follows:

"That the McGuinty government investigate the Ministry of Natural Resources petroleum division and direct civil servants to work proactively and positively with landowners and farmers to review the government's approach based on the following principles:

"(a) respect for property owners, and

"(b) consistent and fair treatment of gas well owners."

In support, I affix my signature.

MARY FIX PARK

Mr. Kuldip Kular: The petition is to the Ontario Legislative Assembly for the rehabilitation of Mary Fix Park.

"Whereas the province of Ontario has acquired public and private lands for the reconstruction and upgrading of the QEW/Hurontario interchange; and

"Whereas some of the acquired lands will be in excess of the requirements for the interchange; and

"Whereas the city of Mississauga has stated that these lands in excess of the interchange requirements have no developmental value; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Transportation and highways has stated that excess lands from this project will be conveyed to the city of Mississauga for parkland; and

"Whereas the Mary Fix Park property was originally donated to the city of Mississauga exclusively for parkland to preserve natural woodland; and

"Whereas this development has caused the loss of century-old trees, natural woodland and wildlife habitat from Mary Fix Park, and has substantially increased noise and traffic to local residences; and

"Whereas the lands on the south and west side of Pinetree Way are no longer the subject of further construction;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Transportation and highways, remediate the lands surrounding the south and west areas of Pinetree Way between Hurontario Street and Glenburnie Road by planting trees and constructing berms within this year, and convey all excess lands from the QEW/Hurontario interchange to the city of Mississauga upon completion of the project."

I agree with the petitioners, so I put my signature on it.

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have petitions provided to me by Dr. Kent D.L. McKinnon and Ms. Lynn B. Schamon.

“Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty has called on the Ontario Legislature to consider removing the Lord’s Prayer from its daily proceedings;

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer has been an integral part of our parliamentary heritage that was first established in 1793 under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe;

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer is today a significant part of the religious heritage of millions of Ontarians of culturally diverse backgrounds;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to continue its long-standing practice of using the Lord’s Prayer as part of its daily proceedings.”

As I agree with the petition, I affix my name thereto.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1204 to 1500.

MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS

EVENTS IN PENETANGUISHENE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: On Saturday, May 17, 2008, I will be attending what will no doubt be an exciting day for citizens of the town of Penetanguishene, the members of the Ontario Provincial Police and two very special families who reside in the wonderful southern bay community.

An Emergency Services Day will take place at the town dock in Penetanguishene between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., which will showcase the resources of the Ontario Provincial Police that include the Central Region Canine Unit, the OPP helicopter, bicycle patrol officers, police vehicles, the Penetanguishene fire service, the County of Simcoe Paramedic Services and the Canadian Armed Forces. Also joining in the display will be the local Mothers Against Drunk Driving and the VCARS of Simcoe county.

Ontario Provincial Police Commissioner Julian Fantino will be on hand to proudly dedicate and commission the newest vessel being added to the OPP fleet. This vessel, which is a 32-foot, state-of-the-art boat, will become the cornerstone of the detachment’s marine enforcement unit. It will be officially named in memory of Provincial Constable Thomas P. Coffin, who was murdered on May 31, 1997, in the town of Penetanguishene.

Also attending will be members of the OPP central region command staff and the men and women of the southern Georgia Bay detachment. The dockside ceremony will honour Tom’s memory. Members of his family will also be present to share in this momentous occasion.

Prior to this, the town of Penetanguishene will honour the memory of Mr. Gil Robillard, who was born and raised in Penetanguishene and has affectionately been referred to as “Mr. Penetanguishene.” To honour his dedication to the town and service to the community, a

mural, along with a historical marker, will be unveiled at the visitors’ information centre in an official ceremony scheduled to take place at 11:30 a.m. I fully expect this day will be a day, for all those attending, to remember, and one that I will be looking forward to as well.

Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, I’d like to introduce Mr. Jim Christie, who is with us today. He’s the newly elected vice-president of the Ontario Provincial Police Association. He’s joined by his wife, Caroline, who’s a civilian dispatcher with the Midland Police Service in Midland. I’d like to welcome them to Queen’s Park. Welcome, Jim and Caroline.

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I rise today to share with the members of this chamber the exciting events that are taking place in my riding of Ottawa Centre in celebration of Asian Heritage Month. The Ottawa Asian Heritage Month Society is a non-profit organization made up of volunteers who are passionate about sharing Asian and Asian-Canadian heritage with everyone in the national capital region.

This month, I had the pleasure of participating in the Era 21 Networking Breakfast for Young Canadians, hosted by Senator Vivienne Poy, in partnership with the Black History Month society. This event brought together a diverse group of 100 young Canadians in grades 11 and 12 to network with parliamentarians and community leaders. The purpose of the breakfast is to encourage the idea of networking across the diverse cultures that reflect Canada’s unique multicultural heritage and to help the students understand the great advantage of Canada’s diversity, in terms of the opportunities it provides them as global citizens. I shared a panel with Adrian Harewood and Bettina Choo and became inspired by their ideas.

I thank Alek Choo, Sam Sey, Can Le, Katie Ng, Mary Lee and Patrick Cuenco, among many volunteers, for the work they do in promoting Asian Heritage Month in the riding of Ottawa Centre. Their efforts go a long way towards ensuring the spirit of Asian Heritage Month is shared throughout Ottawa.

ALMA COLLEGE

Mrs. Julia Munro: Residents of St. Thomas, Ontario, are still waiting to find out if the Minister of Culture will save Alma College from the wrecking ball. This historic High Victorian Gothic building is an Elgin county treasure, and only this government can save it.

Thousands of people from Elgin county and across Ontario have been signing petitions to “immediately designate Alma College as a building of provincial significance and, in the event of a demolition order being issued for Alma, to immediately intervene by issue of a stop order, and to further identify provincial partnerships and possible funding to protect the existing buildings

from further deterioration while financial resources are generated to restore the property to its former glory.”

When the government amended the Heritage Act four years ago, they gave themselves the power to bring demolitions of historic buildings to a complete halt. People all over Ontario want to know why the minister has not used her powers to save Alma College. If this beautiful old gothic structure is not important enough to you to save, then what historic building would you save?

SAULT STE. MARIE ECONOMY

Mr. David Oraziotti: I'd like to share great news about my riding, with new jobs and economic development. This past week, with officials from the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp., I had the pleasure to welcome Pollard Banknote's \$150-million ticket finishing plant to our city. The new 22,000-square-foot facility will convert rolls of printed lottery tickets into finished books of tickets ready for distribution and sale across Ontario.

In addition to the OLG, this facility will be processing lottery tickets for other Pollard Banknote customers, including the New Jersey Lottery and national lotteries in France and Ireland. The plant opened with 33 employees, including machine operator positions, and will be expanding to approximately 60 employees as production demands increase. The ticket finishing operation will boost Sault Ste. Marie's economy by adding \$32 million to the community over the course of the contract.

Under poor leadership by the past NDP representative, the BABN ticket finishing plant closed, but today we've taken a positive step toward the opening of the new plant and creating new jobs in Sault Ste. Marie.

The opening of this facility is part of the ongoing commitment provincial Liberal governments have shown to our community. Former Premier David Peterson made the decision to move the Ontario Lottery Corp. to Sault Ste. Marie in 1986, and today, with the new ticket finishing plant that has opened, in addition to that there are nearly 900 corporate and casino OLG employee jobs in Sault Ste. Marie, with an estimated annual payroll of \$48 million. Great news for Sault Ste. Marie.

DURHAM SUPPORT OUR TROOPS RALLY

Mr. John O'Toole: I rise to inform the House of a rally on Saturday, May 31, in Bowmanville, to support the men and women of the Canadian Forces.

The Durham Support Our Troops Rally starts at 11:30 a.m. at Clarington Fields in Bowmanville. Volunteers from across Durham have made this event possible. I would like to thank the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 178 in Bowmanville, Branch 419 in Port Perry and Branch 170 in Uxbridge for their leadership and participation in this rally. Participants also include the Royal Ontario Regiment, cadet units, the Clarington Concert Band, ROSE volunteers and the Team Red Take a Stand organization.

The day will include pipes, bands and colour parties, military displays and, of course, a barbecue and music. Special guests include Lieutenant-General Walter Natynczyk, vice-chief of defence staff, as well as Lieutenant-Colonel John Conrad. Dan Carter from channel 12 will be the master of ceremonies. There's an opportunity to view the Highway of Heroes, the repatriation drive, from Trenton to Toronto. I look forward to joining my federal counterpart, Bev Oda, for Durham and this community event. Everyone is invited to visit Bowmanville on May 31, to show their support for the Canadian Armed Forces who serve our nation at home and abroad.

NURSES

M^{me} France Gélinas: This week is Nursing Week. We tried to get unanimous consent, but couldn't get there, but I'm still going to recognize those nurses. They are at the heart of our health care system. They are the only 24/7 profession at the bedside in our hospitals. They ensure that Ontarians receive the excellent health care that we need and deserve. New Democrats are on the side of nurses.

I'm proud that nurses are at the forefront of fighting for better health care. For example, like nurses, the NDP is opposed to any form of privatization in health care, including Liberal P3 hospitals and competitive bidding in home care. Nurses know the true cost of privatization of our health care system. Just last week, the RNAO study showed that Ontario taxpayers could be saddled with \$585 million more due to Liberal P3 hospitals.

This week being Nursing Week, it's important to highlight how we can better support our nurses. First, the scope of practice for nurse practitioners must be extended. We have yet to recognize the full role that can be taken by nurse practitioners. Second, we need to create more community-governed health care centres that allow nurses to practise to their full scope of training. Third, we must better protect nurses from workplace harassment and violence, as my colleague Andrea Horwath's bill has tried to do.

Our nurses deserve that we stay focused on their needs while they continue to look after our needs. Thank you, nurses. Merci à toutes les infirmières.

1510

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Phil McNeely: After four years of working with the great staff at the Orleans Urgent Care Clinic to correct the funding crisis, a legacy of the Tory era, we will soon announce a solution to the funding crisis, and the great local services we enjoy in Orléans will be restored. Thanks, Yak, for being there yesterday.

Since coming to office in 2003, the McGuinty Liberals have invested \$74 million in new funding for Ottawa-area hospitals to provide 89,000 additional procedures, improve quality of care and reduce wait times.

Since 2005, wait times in Ottawa have decreased: At the Ottawa Hospital, cancer surgery wait times are down 24% and cataract surgery 42%; at the heart institute, angiography wait times are down 64% and angioplasty 75%. At CHEO, we have the fifth-lowest wait times in Ontario. MRI exam wait times are down 62%. At the Montfort, we didn't close it, we doubled it in size and we got a new MRI last week. These are just samples of the results of the major investments made by the McGuinty Liberals in the hospitals of the Ottawa area.

I want to thank all the front-line workers who have done a great job working with our government. Also, special thanks to Rainer Bloess for meeting with John Tory and his cohorts yesterday. I hope he showed them all the great improvements our government has made in Ottawa.

Health care in Ontario is on the mend. Reduced wait times, improved services and better care are achievements this government can be proud of. Stay tuned, John Tory, and your new buddy Rainer. New health announcements are coming to Orléans.

CERTIFIED MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANTS OF ONTARIO

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to rise in the House today to announce that we have some very special guests with us in the Legislature. I'm sure that all members will join me in welcoming members of the Certified Management Accountants of Ontario, who are visiting Queen's Park today and are sitting in the east members' gallery.

The Certified Management Accountants of Ontario is a self-governing professional organization of some 24,000 members, and is a significant contributor to the provincial economy. As the leaders in strategic management accounting, CMAs adhere to a strict code of ethics and rigorous standards to uphold protection of the public interest.

CMA Ontario members want to be part of a solution for a prosperous Ontario, and their annual reception at Queen's Park today is an opportunity for all MPPs to engage in important policy discussions.

I agree with CMA Ontario in their positive outlook for Ontario's economy and workforce, that we are capable of withstanding the challenges ahead and that innovative leadership is closely connected to economic success in Ontario.

Please join me in attending the annual CMA reception tonight. It's in committee room 2. We should all be there to show our appreciation for this very, very important profession.

LE TRAITEMENT DU CANCER CANCER TREATMENT

M. Shafiq Qadri: Je suis très heureux maintenant de saluer et d'accueillir les représentants de la Campagne

d'action contre le cancer à l'Assemblée législative de Queen's Park.

I am pleased to rise today to welcome to Queen's Park representatives of the Campaign to Control Cancer.

These individuals come from across the cancer community, from patients and survivors to health care professionals and advocates. They are here at Queen's Park to meet with MPPs from each political party to raise awareness of cancer. The Campaign to Control Cancer is working to champion a new response to cancer: more control and less cancer.

I am proud to be part of a government that launched Canada's first province-wide colorectal cancer screening program; that introduced a free vaccine to protect young women against HPV or human papillomavirus, which, as you'll know, is a cause of cervical cancer; that has increased access to provincial breast cancer screening programs; and, very importantly, that will be funding the PSA prostate cancer test for men as of January 2009.

The McGuinty government has also tripled funding for cancer-fighting drugs under the new drug-funding program since the Transparent Drug System for Patients Act came into effect, and we have in fact listed 10 new cancer drugs.

I think these are all important steps as we seek to transform, enhance and resource the health care system for Ontarians.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'll take this opportunity to welcome, in the west members' gallery, Bob Huget from Sarnia, a member of the 35th Parliament. Welcome back to Queen's Park today, Bob.

DEFERRED VOTES

BUDGET MEASURES AND INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES ET L'AFFECTATION ANTICIPÉE DE CRÉDITS

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 44, An Act respecting Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters / Projet de loi 44, Loi concernant les mesures budgétaires, l'affectation anticipée de crédits et d'autres questions.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1515 to 1520.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia
 Albanese, Laura
 Balkissoon, Bas
 Bartolucci, Rick
 Best, Margaret
 Bradley, James J.
 Broten, Laurel C.
 Brown, Michael A.
 Brownell, Jim
 Bryant, Michael
 Cansfield, Donna H.
 Caplan, David
 Carroll, Aileen
 Colle, Mike
 Craitor, Kim
 Crozier, Bruce
 Delaney, Bob
 Dhillon, Vic

Dickson, Joe
 Duguid, Brad
 Duncan, Dwight
 Flynn, Kevin Daniel
 Fonseca, Peter
 Gerretsen, John
 Hoy, Pat
 Jaczek, Helena
 Jeffrey, Linda
 Kular, Kuldip
 Mangat, Amrit
 Matthews, Deborah
 Mauro, Bill
 McMeekin, Ted
 McNeely, Phil
 Meilleur, Madeleine
 Milloy, John
 Mitchell, Carol

Naqvi, Yasir
 Orazietti, David
 Phillips, Gerry
 Papatello, Sandra
 Qaadri, Shafiq
 Ramal, Khalil
 Rinaldi, Lou
 Sergio, Mario
 Smith, Monique
 Smitherman, George
 Sousa, Charles
 Takhar, Harinder S.
 Van Bommel, Maria
 Watson, Jim
 Wilkinson, John
 Wynne, Kathleen O.
 Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those opposed?

Nays

Bisson, Gilles
 DiNovo, Cheri
 Elliott, Christine
 Gélinas, France
 Hardeman, Ernie
 Horwath, Andrea
 Jones, Sylvia

Kormos, Peter
 Marchese, Rosario
 Martiniuk, Gerry
 Miller, Norm
 Miller, Paul
 Munro, Julia
 O'Toole, John

Prue, Michael
 Runciman, Robert W.
 Shurman, Peter
 Sterling, Norman W.
 Tabuns, Peter
 Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 53; the nays are 20.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

ACCESS TO ADOPTION RECORDS ACT
 (VITAL STATISTICS STATUTE LAW
 AMENDMENT), 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR L'ACCÈS
 AUX DOSSIERS D'ADOPTION
 (MODIFICATION DE LOIS
 EN CE QUI CONCERNE
 LES STATISTIQUES DE L'ÉTAT CIVIL)

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 12, An Act to amend the Vital Statistics Act in relation to adoption information and to make consequential amendments to the Child and Family Services Act / Projet de loi 12, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil en ce qui a trait aux renseignements sur les adoptions et apportant des modifications corrélatives à la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1523 to 1528.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia
 Albanese, Laura

Duguid, Brad
 Duncan, Dwight

Orazietti, David
 Phillips, Gerry

Balkissoon, Bas
 Bartolucci, Rick
 Best, Margaret
 Bisson, Gilles
 Broten, Laurel C.
 Brown, Michael A.
 Brownell, Jim
 Bryant, Michael
 Cansfield, Donna H.
 Caplan, David
 Carroll, Aileen
 Colle, Mike
 Craitor, Kim
 Crozier, Bruce
 Delaney, Bob
 Dhillon, Vic
 Dickson, Joe

Flynn, Kevin Daniel
 Fonseca, Peter
 Gerretsen, John
 Gélinas, France
 Hoy, Pat
 Jaczek, Helena
 Jeffrey, Linda
 Kular, Kuldip
 Mangat, Amrit
 Marchese, Rosario
 Matthews, Deborah
 McMeekin, Ted
 McNeely, Phil
 Meilleur, Madeleine
 Milloy, John
 Mitchell, Carol
 Naqvi, Yasir

Prue, Michael
 Papatello, Sandra
 Qaadri, Shafiq
 Ramal, Khalil
 Rinaldi, Lou
 Sergio, Mario
 Smith, Monique
 Smitherman, George
 Sousa, Charles
 Takhar, Harinder S.
 Van Bommel, Maria
 Watson, Jim
 Wilkinson, John
 Wynne, Kathleen O.
 Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those opposed?

Nays

Arnott, Ted
 Bailey, Robert
 Elliott, Christine
 Hardeman, Ernie
 Jones, Sylvia

Martiniuk, Gerry
 Miller, Norm
 Munro, Julia
 O'Toole, John
 Runciman, Robert W.

Shurman, Peter
 Sterling, Norman W.
 Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 55; the nays are 13.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

OPPOSITION DAY

WORKPLACE SAFETY
 AND INSURANCE BOARD

Mr. Howard Hampton: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the McGuinty government must:

—immediately direct the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) to eliminate the flawed experience rating program;

—immediately direct the Provincial Auditor to conduct an audit of the flawed experience rating program;

—recognize the fact that tens of millions of dollars have been drained out of the WSIB's accident fund each year by employers who have learned how to play the game of experience rating;

—recognize the fact that experience rating reduces employer claims, not worker injuries;

—recognize the fact that the practice of experience rating actually encourages employers to misreport or under-report injuries and occupational disease, force injured workers back to work before they are medically ready and pay workers sick pay rather than have them receive compensation benefits;

—recognize that this hides the true extent of workplace injuries and illnesses in Ontario;

—recognize that employers actually receive rebates after they have been penalized for workplace injuries and occupational diseases and deaths; and

—recognize that the rebates flowing to employers under the program often exceed the cost of the original fine.

This is addressed to the Premier of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Mr. Hampton has moved opposition day motion number 3. Debate? Mr. Hampton.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I want to indicate, right off the bat, that I'll be sharing my time with my colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

I'm very pleased to be able to present this motion before the Legislature today because this is a most important debate, and I especially want to thank the many injured workers who have come here to Queen's Park today because they care, and care deeply, about this issue. I'd particularly like to welcome Halima Tato and D'Jamal Salhi, two injured workers who were kind enough and courageous enough to share their stories with the media just before this debate began. I encourage all members to hear their stories, because their stories are particularly tragic in the perverse and absurd way in which the experience rating system has treated them.

I'd also like to begin by thanking the Ontario Federation of Labour, which has done months and years of work documenting the absurd and bizarre results that have come under the experience rating program. I especially want to thank Wayne Samuelson, the president of the OFL, who is here with us today.

I briefly want to point out how the experience rating system actually works. Employers who are able to hide their serious workplace injuries as something called “no-lost-time medical-aid accidents” not only reduce their compensation costs, they also become eligible to receive a rebate from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board—a cash payment. The other side of this perverse program sets out financial penalties for employers who actually report their on-the-job accidents, employers who actually come forward and say, “We've had these on-the-job accidents, these on-the-job injuries.” What they get is a higher level of lost-time injury statistics and, therefore, higher costs.

The difference between these two scenarios—employers who under-report their workplace accidents, and then get a cash payment for doing so, and employers who actually report the number of lost-time accidents they've had in their workplace—amounts to roughly \$200 million a year. In fact, it's been estimated that over \$2 billion in rebates have gone to companies in the past 10 years with no evidence that the experience rating program has actually reduced workplace injuries.

The important point is that the two sides of the experience rating program skew the lost-time injury statistics for Ontario by providing a powerful incentive for employers to under-report. In other words, no matter how

badly injured a worker is on the job, as long as he or she comes to work, their employers are rewarded financially under the experience rating system. Employers have responded to this perverse incentive by pushing injured workers back to work as soon as possible, even when the injured worker's doctor is of the opinion that the injured worker is not fit to return to work. Employer efforts to get injured workers back to work often see injured workers coming back to the workplace the next day to some sort of modified work, often long before they're ready to return to the workplace. As a result, injuries that should be recorded as lost-time accidents, lost-time injuries, that at one time would have been reported as lost-time accidents, lost-time injuries, are now being reported by employers as no-lost-time medical-aid accidents.

From the point of view of the program, it does not matter whether legitimate, modified, meaningful work is being provided or if the employer is simply hiding the claim. The result is the same: an under-reporting of lost-time accidents and more cash rebates for the employer. The truth is that if it is cheaper to hide the injuries than to prevent them, many employers with an eye to the bottom line will do just that. They won't focus on preventing workplace accidents or injuries; they'll focus on hiding them. That is one of the perverse results of this system.

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In addition to these perverse employer financial incentives, the Ministry of Labour uses both lost-time and no-lost-time injury statistics as a means to target workplaces for inspections. These are all tremendous incentives for employers to reduce both sets of statistics. So imagine: You've got a perverse system which drives employers to under-report lost-time accidents, and not only do they get reduced compensation costs for that but they get financial incentives. Then there's a follow-up process, which says, “Well, if you under-report, you will be inspected less often by occupational health and safety inspectors from the Ministry of Labour.” So it's perversion on top of perversion in terms of the incentives that are here.

There are numerous examples of employers who operate internal incentive programs and engage in intimidation, all to keep injured workers from reporting their claim. Many employers have programs to get workers back to work immediately after an injury so that no lost time is recorded, even if the worker does no actual work or if returning to work so soon delays the injured worker's ultimate recovery. One technique that can be used to hide lost-time injuries is to use the employers' sickness and accident benefit plan. Workers or lower-level management whose job performance evaluation can be affected by the lost-time injury rates may have an incentive to see work-related injuries listed as lost time wholly unrelated to workplace injury or illness.

Things are made worse by cash bonuses that are provided to work crews who do not report any lost-time injuries. This could result in significant peer pressure to use the benefit plan rather than report the injury to WSIB.

Moreover, in the health care sector, consultants advise that hospital administrators routinely keep the wages of the workers whole and encourage them not to file claims with WSIB.

Other schemes to maximize experience rating incentives include draws for prizes. One such example, provided by the United Steelworkers, was a fishing boat and trailer located at the plant gate. Everyone who did not have a lost-time injury reported had their name go into the draw for the boat and the trailer. Another example is from Sarnia. Each week, all workers who did not incur or cause a recordable injury had their name put into a draw for gasoline coupons ranging in value from \$100 to \$1,000. For every week that they “qualified”—meaning no accident was reported—their name was put into the final draw for a vehicle valued at \$30,000 to \$40,000.

It’s our opinion, the opinion of New Democrats, that these experience rating programs are more effective in reducing the number of claims than they are in reducing the number of workplace injuries. If there were a true reduction in workplace injuries through better health and safety in the workplace, we would expect to see a significant reduction in fatalities and serious injuries. But a reduction in fatalities and serious injuries has not occurred, which leads us to believe that the reduction in overall reported lost time has little to do with Ontario becoming a safer place to work.

It is also clear that experience rating has led to an increase in claims abandoned by workers. The rate of claim abandonment as a percentage of registered claims has increased substantially since the introduction of experience rating, from just under 7% in 1988 to a high of just under 18% in 1998. The rate has settled to between 15.5% and 16.5% in the last few years.

In 2007, 14,416 lost-time injury claims were abandoned. In addition, there were 41,821 no-lost-time claims abandoned. These are significant numbers of injury statistics that are not part of any performance measure.

That’s the case. That’s the perverse way in which experience rating works, and that is why New Democrats argue that this experience rating system must be ended now, and why we call on all members of the Legislature to support this resolution.

I know my colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has many details that he wants to add to this discussion.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Further debate?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I am pleased to rise today to speak to this issue. Just to be clear on what we’re talking about, we’re talking about a motion to “immediately direct the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board to eliminate the flawed experience rating program.” That doesn’t mean review it; that doesn’t mean get rid of it, cut it, scrap it and replace it with something else. That means get rid of it altogether.

I think that’s the problem we have with this motion. We’ve heard no suggestions about how to improve it.

We’ve heard no suggestions about waiting until the review that’s currently taking place with the WSIB, in terms of information that may come forward that could inform this debate. All we’re hearing today is a desire to scrap it altogether. That’s disappointing, because I think it limits the tools at our disposal to work toward a reduction in workplace injuries across this province.

I’m disappointed, not that a motion would come forward regarding experience rating; I’m disappointed that a motion would come forward in this way that suggests we should scrap it altogether. Had the motion said something like, “We should review it,” or had the motion said something like, “We should consider some way to replace it with a better program,” I would have been happy to support it, Madam Speaker, because as you know, and as everybody in this Legislature knows, our position as a government from the beginning has been that this experience rating program has flaws, that this experience rating program needs to be improved. That’s why we support the WSIB in its review of this program. We think it’s important that the WSIB does review this program, does make every effort to make this program better, does make some of the improvements the leader of the third party pointed out in his speech.

We’re open to those suggestions, and I think that’s one of the good things about having this debate. Perhaps by the end of the day some good suggestions will come forward. Certainly, some of the things the NDP, my own colleagues and the Conservative Party say may well be useful, in terms of that review, in identifying some of the problems that exist.

But let’s talk about what this motion really does. It really says, “To heck with the facts, to heck with getting the facts first, to heck with waiting to find out about the WSIB review; that just doesn’t matter.” That might be information that’s important to our consideration, but it just doesn’t matter. “To heck with any form of positive enforcement to encourage employers to invest in health and safety; let’s just scrap it altogether.” That’s the problem we have. I think the leader of the third party thinks he knows best—don’t let the facts get in the way of a good argument.

Let’s not be in a position where we say that if we scrap this particular program, workers are going to be better off. Our first priority—and it should be the third party’s first priority as well—is to do everything we can to reduce workplace injuries. That’s got to be our first priority. To suggest that we take an incentive program to encourage businesses to reduce workplace injuries and scrap it altogether, without suggesting that we should be improving upon that program, finding ways to make it work better, is, I think, frankly reckless; it’s putting politics ahead of people. That’s why we have a problem with this. That’s why this minister and this government are not going to buy in to this motion the way it’s written.

Let me begin by reminding members that the WSIB is indeed an arm’s-length agency of the Ministry of Labour. The WSIB has the statutory authority to determine its own practices and procedures. That independence is vital

to maintaining its role as a provider of no-fault insurance for both employers and workers. The WSIB must be, and must be seen to be, balanced, ensuring fair and reasonable compensation for injured workers and financial stability to employers.

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I should point out that the board has already recognized that this experience rating program needs to be reviewed, and more than that, about a month ago, that's exactly what they set out to do. I've listened carefully to some of the advocates who are here today and I welcome them here to this chamber. I've met with a number of them. I've listened very carefully to some of the concerns they've raised about this very issue. That's why this minister and this government are very much in favour of reviewing the experience rating system, reviewing the experience rating program, because we recognize that there are problems with the current system. We recognize that it needs to be improved.

The Toronto Star had a series of articles that identified a number of the problems with the current experience rating system. That information, I would expect, will be very helpful to the WSIB as they conduct this review.

I've made it clear that this government indeed recognizes that there are problems with the current system, and that's why we support this decision of the WSIB to review the experience rating system. That's why we support the WSIB's interim decision to immediately put in place a policy whereby employers whose workplaces experience a fatality should not be able to receive a rebate. I think that's important. It sends out a strong signal right off the bat that this isn't some window dressing type of review that's taking place. This is a serious review and we'll see what the results are. I can't prejudge what the results of the review will be. In fact, the results may be exactly what the leader of the NDP is looking for. It may be to scrap the system altogether, but it may also be a suggestion of an improved system that may in fact give the employers the incentives they need to continue to bring down workplace injuries. That would be a good thing for everybody, not just us here in this chamber, but for workers right across this province.

Our priority as a government when it comes to the WSIB and injured workers is to work with our health and safety partners to reduce workplace injuries. That's the key. In my view, that's the priority.

I think back to when I first had the privilege of serving in this position. It was probably within the first 48 hours that my BlackBerry went off to advise me of a workplace fatality. About 48 hours or 72 hours later, off it went again to advise me of another one. In my view and in the view of this government, as long as 261,000 workers are injured every single year, it's obvious that we together have more work to do. When 715 workers are injured every day, that tells me that's not appropriate, that's not good enough. We have more work to do. That's 30 an hour. That's one every two minutes. By the time I finish speaking here today, up to five, maybe six, workers will have been injured across this province. That's just not

acceptable to this government, I don't think it's acceptable to anybody here in this chamber.

We recognize that we still have more work to do. The key is that we have to do that work together, working with our health and safety partners out in the field, working with the WSIB and utilizing every single measure that we have at our disposal to bring down workplace injuries. That means that we have to look at education and awareness, and the WSIB is doing a pretty good job of trying to get the message out to people, both to employers—in particular employers—and workers, that we have to do everything we can to reduce workplace injuries.

The WSIB and our Ministry of Labour are working with our education system so that workers at a very young age can develop that culture of safety. That's where we need to go. Education and awareness are so important to ensuring that we reach our goals. So is enforcement. There is no government that has enforced the regulations and rules when it comes to workplace health and safety more than we have. We've doubled the number of occupational health and safety inspectors across this province; 200 more health and safety inspectors are out there now, going into workplaces, working with employers. There is a cost to that and that cost is paid for through business premiums, but it's a cost that I think is worth paying, because it's an opportunity to further reduce workplace injuries.

The third pillar of any approach thus far taken—taken by the NDP when they were in power. In fact, some would argue that they implemented much of what we see now in the experience rating system. I know there was some system in place before, but they implemented much of it somewhere around 1992. The Tories continued this system, and we've had that system that we inherited, as well. There's always been a system in place to give employers the incentive that some of them may need to improve the health and safety in their areas.

I would suggest that we're selling injured workers short if we're not using every measure at our disposal to reduce workplace injuries. We really have to be doing everything within our power to do that. To just completely dismiss a potential incentive program that could encourage employers to reduce workplace injuries I think is irresponsible and reckless. It's not something that I'm willing to support today, and I have a feeling that many of my colleagues will join me in opposing this motion simply because of that.

We have every confidence that the WSIB will be conducting a very serious review of this matter. That's what we're looking forward to seeing. We're looking forward to seeing what they recommend. As I said earlier, we can't prejudge where they're going to go with this. We can't prejudge whether they're going to go far enough. We can't prejudge whether they're going to eliminate the system altogether. I suspect that they're going to look at every way they can to utilize this measure to reduce workplace injuries as much as possible.

We've made some progress. We have reduced workplace injuries across this province over the last four

years. We're looking at what looks like about a 20% reduction in workplace injuries. That's an accomplishment and it's something that's been done in partnership with all of our stakeholders. But in my view and in the view of my colleagues—I think in the view of everybody here—that's not good enough. We've got to go further. We've got to do more, because every workplace injury is a family that's in distress. It's a huge impact on the life of a family and a huge impact on the life of workers. I know there are likely some injured workers in the galleries here with us today. They can attest to the huge impact, not only on them physically, but the psychological impact. The impact on their families is devastating. We share with them the concern that we have to do more. This government, while we've done a lot when it comes to enforcement—we're working very closely with our partners when it comes to awareness and education—doesn't feel that's enough. We want to do everything we possibly can. We're going to look at incentive programs as well. If an incentive program comes forward from the WSIB—they are a third party agency and they have the ability to bring this forward on their own, but we're going to be taking a close look at that review when it takes place.

I thank the leader of the third party for raising this issue. I don't support the approach that he wants to take, to scrap it all at once and scrap it altogether. I think it's reckless and irresponsible. At the same time, I am looking forward to seeing more reforms. I am looking forward to seeing some vast improvement to this experience rating system. Let's wait and see when this review report comes forward. I expect it will be sooner rather than later. We'll do what is responsible and we'll do what we believe is in the best interests of injured workers across this province.

Mr. Robert Bailey: It is a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to this motion brought forward by the leader of the third party regarding experience rating programs at the WSIB. I would like to start off by saying that our party will be voting against this motion.

It's important to understand the background of the experience rating program and why we support it being maintained. The experience rating program began in 1984 as an attempt to offer a positive incentive for employers to reduce workplace injuries and get injured workers back to work as quickly as possible.

I'd like to say that my experience in industry, both as an employee and in a management position, was that—in my industry, anyway—we had to report every single incident, no matter how small or minor, and full investigations were conducted at that time to prevent any further injuries or incidents. I know that was probably a more progressive employer than maybe some have had the advantage to work for, but I'd like to see us take those ideas forward and implement them across the province, to make other industries do the same. That was in the petrochemical sector, I might add, in Sarnia–Lambton.

Despite all of the reforms of the WSIB over the last 20 years, the experience rating program has had all-party support up until today. The Liberals, under David Peterson, expanded the program in 1986; the NDP, under the Bob Rae government, applied the program system-wide in 1992; and the Progressive Conservatives, under Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, saw no need to change that.

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The experience rating program is not the biggest problem that the WSIB is facing right now. What we should be spending our time talking about is financial controls that are currently in place at the WSIB, and pressing the current chairman on the importance of wiping out the board's massive unfunded liability by 2014, like they say they are going to do. However, the leader of the third party has chosen to focus on this one program offered by the WSIB, the experience rating program.

Let's look at some facts. First, how does the program actually work? On average, employers pay approximately a 2.25% payroll premium to the WSIB. If workplace safety and insurance claim costs are lower than expected, firms then have some of their WSIB premiums returned. If they are higher than expected, they pay more.

Experience rating promotes higher individual employer accountability without sacrificing basic workers' compensation insurance principles. This encourages companies to invest both in injury prevention and in early and safe return to work. In short, higher claim costs mean higher premiums; lower costs mean lower premiums.

A 2005 independent study by the Institute for Work and Health concluded, "Our research indicates that" experience rating "functions well, encourages prevention and contributes to positive workplace health and safety practices." In fact, for 2006, one in every four Ontario employers under this program were charged approximately \$169 million, with the largest of these firms seeing average charges of \$319,000. The average rebate under the experience rating program for large firms was \$135,000. The charges far outpace the average rebate by a margin of 2.5 to 1.

If a company gets a rebate this year, it would be for accidents that occurred two and three years ago, where they had brought employees back to work. Contrary to what appeared in the Toronto Star, the rebate Inco got had nothing to do with the worker who was killed, but it did have to do with the outstanding record that Inco had in getting injured workers back to work sooner in previous years.

That is the type of behaviour that the WSIB is attempting to support and encourage. Under the experience rating program, there will not be a rebate issued in the case of a fatality. Experience rating offers a positive financial incentive to employers to do the right thing and to get injured workers back to work sooner.

The current chair of the WSIB, the honourable Steve Mahoney, is reviewing the program to see how he can keep the program, but it has still not issued a payout in a year that a company has a fatality. Reviewing this pro-

gram is not a bad idea, but many business stakeholders believe that the changes being considered may ill-advisedly introduce concepts of blame into the system, upsetting the founding of the no-fault principles of workers' compensation that are integral to an effective, efficient and fair scheme.

We would be concerned that this may change the program enough that the effect will be that employers will either challenge and appeal claims more or will stop worrying about getting injured workers back to work sooner. In essence, many believe that this will have a detrimental effect on getting employees back to work sooner.

What our party would like to see is the Provincial Auditor do a complete audit of the WSIB. Our party is concerned by the fact that WSIB spending seems to be completely out of control.

The government likes to congratulate themselves by saying that when they took over in 2003, they found the WSIB in such a mess that they called in the auditor. When they called in the auditor, the unfunded liability was approximately \$7 billion. Today, after five years of this government, the McGuinty government, it is over \$8 billion. According to the chair of the WSIB, whom I personally visited a couple of weeks ago, it will peak at just over \$9 billion next year. The board is in worse financial shape today than when we left office in 2003. Those are the facts.

This week, on another note, we learned that the current chair hired some high-powered lobbyists in Ottawa to organize a swanky soiree at Hy's Steakhouse and martini bar. This party appears to have been thrown exclusively for the chairman's former colleagues on Parliament Hill. What we would like to know, on this side of the House, is how much the WSIB spends on lobbying every year. We want to know if the McGuinty government thinks that the WSIB should be hiring lobbyists to organize parties. Is that really a good way to spend injured workers' money? We don't think so.

We're also very concerned, on our side of the House, that the unfunded liability of the WSIB will be growing instead of shrinking. The unfunded liability is caused when the board's income doesn't meet projected expenses.

For years, the WSIB has said that this unfunded liability will be wiped out by 2014. What is happening? The unfunded liability is in fact growing and is expected to peak at just over \$9 billion. What we should be demanding is that the WSIB produce a concrete plan to wipe out the unfunded liability by 2014. This has to have realistic assumptions on the ways that they are going to get their financial house in order.

In closing, I'd like to say that our party is in favour of working with all parties in this House to see that there are no further injuries to workers. We want to improve programs. For all of those reasons, I am looking forward to listening to the rest of the debate.

Mr. Paul Miller: I also rise in the House and I'm pleased to participate in this very important debate. I

would like to welcome the many injured workers who have come to the Legislature to observe their elected representatives in action on this very important issue.

The Ontario Federation of Labour has documented cases of the instances in which workplaces in which fatal accidents have occurred have been deemed safe and worthy of rebates under the experience rating program. Recently, WSIB chairman Steve Mahoney ordered a freeze on any rebates to companies that kill.

In announcing this freeze, Mr. Mahoney reported that he was unaware of the issue. In fact, the OFL has been raising this issue for months in meetings with various people at the WSIB, including providing press releases from as early as October 5, 2007. It is clear that Mr. Mahoney, the WSIB board and the McGuinty government have been aware of the problems with the WSIB program for a very, very long time. It's time for action, not more studies.

Here's a personal story. "Cindy" works at Magna. Magna has a bonus system to discourage the reporting of accidents. Cindy was pressured by her company to keep on working to reduce claims costs, which is what is measured for experience rating purposes. The result of Cindy being forced to work too soon and the employer's lack of concern about the actual modifications that would be necessary for a suitably productive job is that Cindy suffered a number of other compensable injuries.

Over one million workers are denied WSIB coverage in this province. There is also the issue of the coverage under the WSIB. Entire segments of our population in the Ontario economy are not covered by workers' compensation, so statistics for them simply do not exist in the WSIB database. An estimated one third of the workforce in Ontario does not have the mandatory coverage by the WSIB. It is the NDP's conviction that it should be compulsory that all workers in all sectors in Ontario be covered by the WSIB.

There are also employers with a good health and safety program which encourage workers to report claims, but then get targeted by the WSIB and the Ministry of Labour and are called "high risk." This has been incredibly damaging to the health and safety programs in Ontario because it sends the message that those employers would have been better off suppressing claims, as many other employers do.

There are some initial indications that the MOL is moving away from the use of the WSIB claims statistics as a performance measure. If this is true, then this is a good first step. We would encourage the ministry to invest more resources to develop other performance measures it can use in deciding how best to direct its enforcement resources. The ministry must improve its communications and working relationship with the WSIB to probe deeper into health and safety, and use true measures of the strength of health and safety in the workplace.

The decline of Ontario's health and safety system—committee certification is wholly inadequate. The degeneration of Ontario's health and safety system can also be

seen in the widespread disregard for the heart and soul of occupational health and safety in this province: joint health and safety committees. These committees are required in all workplaces of 20 or more employees.

Ontario's health and safety efforts are based upon the concept of the internal responsibility system, IRS, which recognizes that there cannot be a ministry inspector at every workplace every day and therefore seeks to establish a joint labour management committee in every workplace of 20 or more workers.

This is how the committee system works. Workers have the right to inspect the premises; investigate critical injuries and fatalities; be informed when there is lost time, injury or illness; refuse unsafe work; and collectively participate in a joint committee with management. Employers are responsible for supporting joint committees; responding to committee recommendations; providing supervision, information and training to workers; and taking all reasonable precautions to protect workers from hazards in the workplace. Governments enforce the rights and responsibilities of both employers and employees. The thing that makes all this work is the certification of key members of the joint committee. Two members—one worker, one manager—of each joint committee must complete a two-part training process called certification. Certification rates are the only available measure of whether the internal responsibility system is working in Ontario's workplaces.

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In March 2007, Cheri DiNovo and Andrea Horwath asked Steve Mahoney about certification rates when he appeared at the government agencies committee. Mahoney responded that perhaps about one quarter of workplaces are not certification compliant.

In the summer of 2007, the WSIB established a phone bank to measure certification compliance. The results of this report have not been made public, but showed that less than one half of workplaces are certification compliant.

Employers provide the names of their certified members to the WSIB. The WSIB has completed lists of all premium remitters in Ontario. However, the WSIB refuses to provide to the Ministry of Labour the list of companies without certified members so that they can be inspected and enforced. Recommendation 10 of the recent government agencies review of the WSIB recommends that the WSIB do everything possible to ensure that all employers are in compliance with the certification requirements under the province's Occupational Health and Safety Act. There is little evidence that the WSIB has taken action on this recommendation.

In summary, the WSIB's experience rating program distorts and undermines the province's workplace health and safety system by distorting employer behaviour. The Ministry of Labour's efforts are severely hurt by a dysfunctional committee system, as manifested in the deplorable certification statistics.

Solutions: Short term, the NDP believes that there needs to be an immediate moratorium on all experience

rating surcharges and rebates until the WSIB review is completed. We also believe that regardless of the outcome of the review, never again should there be any incentive payments to employers that are not meeting their obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Long term, there are alternatives to experience rating. In the longer term, the labour movement has proposed a very constructive idea that we believe the minister should study seriously: an excellence fund. Such a fund would allow the board and employers to go forward with prevention and accommodation, promoting timely and safe return to work. Funding for the excellence program would be transferred from all annual expenditures from the current experience rating program. The excellence fund would be set up as a merit system, or incentive program, which would offer grants and loans to employers who want to make a real health and safety improvement beyond their obligation under the Occupational Health And Safety Act: for example, the addition of patient lifts in health care facilities, or the replacement of toxins with safe substances in workplaces. In order to qualify for a grant, the employer must undergo an extensive audit by the board through an accreditation process. The joint health and safety committee would be involved in the accreditation process. For purposes of the audit, employers would be required to record all lost-time injuries and know lost-time injuries and incident reports. Employers passing accreditation would be publicly recognized, much like the ISO-certified companies are, for example, with a banner. If an employer fails the audit, the board and the Ontario government would not purchase any goods or services from them. Grants would be amortized over a reasonable period of time.

Other activities of the excellence fund could include giving grants to employers to modify the workplace to accommodate an injured worker. This could be the accident employer or new employer willing to hire an injured worker. An employer may be given a prospective rate discount if accreditation is passed and no grant had been awarded during the deemed amortization period of the grant. Rate discounts would be adjusted through regular or spot audits. Audits could be triggered through a Ministry of Labour enforcement action and would allow the board to apply administrative penalties which would go to the excellence fund. Entitlement to grants for employers would modify the workplace to accommodate an injured worker, move with the injured worker on RTW—i.e., with the accident employer and/or a subsequent employer. Compensation for a loss of earnings should resume in the event of a job loss by the accommodated injured worker, which would be adjusted on the merits of each individual case.

I'd like to move to a personal thing that happened to me when I was working at Stelco as an industrial mechanic-ironworker-welder. We had a very high accident rate because of the nature of our trades, a lot of injuries: burns and things falling on us. I thought the company was being really nice letting me come back to

work when I was injured. They even sent a taxi to my house to pick me up. They'd asked other workers to do the same thing. I realize that it was only about their experience rating dollars and nothing to do with my health or safety, but when I did go to make a claim, the adjudicator at the WSIB, later on in life when my injuries caught up with me, said, "Mr. Miller, you couldn't have been hurt that badly; you went to work." Obviously, it wasn't a serious enough injury for them to consider my case. Wow.

What I'm saying here is that you do the company what you thought was a favour because you didn't know about the experience rating program. They make it look like they're doing you a favour by letting you come to work, answer phones and sit in a chair all day long. But it wasn't because they cared about me or what would happen to me 30 years down the road. That was obvious, because when I did have a knee problem and I did go to the board, "Mr. Miller, we can't help you. You went to work. You weren't that injured." Disgusting. Trickery. The public were not aware of it, and probably a lot still aren't aware of the system. Brutal.

As a good employee, I came to work and helped the company out even when I should have been at home convalescing, all the while thinking that it was me the company was worried about. No; I know that wasn't true. The company was receiving experience rating lottery winnings on my injured back.

I'll give you a couple of examples. These are actually from the OFL's own records.

"Waste Services ... Inc. (formerly Capital Environmental Resource Inc.)

"Fine: \$160,000

"Year: 2001

"Incident: A worker was standing on a riding step at the back of a reversing loading truck. He fell off and was run over by the truck, breaking his foot, ankle, collarbone and ribs. He suffered permanent ligament damage to his knee and neck. The Ministry of Labour investigator also found that only two seat belts were available, but three workers were assigned to the truck.

"The employer was convicted on three charges—failing to provide instruction to the injured worker on the correct use of the rear riding step, failing to take the responsible precaution of ensuring the injured worker did not ride on the rear riding step while the vehicle was reversing, and failing to ensure seat belts were available for all workers" involved in the process.

"Experience rating details:

"Waste Services ... participates in the NEER program. This incident would still be relevant to their 2004 calculations (but not 2005). In 2004, Waste Services ... Inc. received a rebate of \$247,995.58, more than enough to reimburse them for their considerable fine.

"Northern Sawmills Inc.

"Fine: \$65,000

"Year: 2003

"Incident: There was a logjam on an out-feed conveyer belt of a debarker machine. A worker locked the

out-feed machine and stood up on the conveyer belt, trying to clear the log. Even though the machine was locked, a log was somehow pushed through, and it knocked the worker unconscious, causing a fractured cheekbone, crushed sinus, dislocated jaw, cracked left forehead and a concussion.

"The employer was convicted of failing to ensure that cleaning/maintenance work was not performed on the conveyer until motion that may endanger a worker was stopped.

"Experience rating details:

"Northern Sawmills ... participates in the NEER program. This incident would still be relevant to their 2004 and 2005 calculations. In those two years, they received a net rebate of \$198,053.30, offsetting their fine by over three times" the amount. A shame, Madam Chair.

This has been happening all over our province, as far as we know, for the last 10 years, and it has been brought to this House on more than one occasion by the OFL and other leaders in the labour movement—ignored, put on the back burner. Even the head of the board didn't know about the \$5 million that was paid to a mining outfit up north. They were fined \$325,000 on a death, and they received in the same year \$5 million in rebates.

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"Newmont Canada Ltd.

"Fine: \$120,000....

"Incident: Two workers were performing electrical work on a starter motor. The side electrical contact short-circuited and resulted in critical flash burns to both workers. The first received first-, second- and third-degree burns to the face, hands and arms, and the second received first- and second-degree burns to the hands.

"The employer was convicted of failing to provide the workers with/ensure the use of personal protective equipment.

"Experience rating details:

"Newmont Canada participated in the NEER program. In 2005, the first relevant year following this incident, they received a rebate" of \$476,000, "four times the amount of their considerable fine.

"Semple-Gooder Roofing Ltd.

"Fine: \$150,000

"Year: 2001

"Incident: A construction worker was killed by a reversing tractor-trailer when he was struck and trapped under the wheels and dragged 10 metres. The employer was convicted of failing to ensure that operators of vehicles were assisted by a signaller when the operator's view is obstructed.

"Experience rating details:

"Semple-Gooder Roofing Ltd. participates in the CAD-7 and NEER experience rating programs. In 2005 and 2006 (the last two years that this incident would be relevant to their CAD-7 calculations) they received a net rebate" of \$648,000.00, "more than four times the amount of their considerable fine." They also received a rebate of \$336 from NEER because it was a co-program.

“General Electric Canada:

“Fine: \$50,000

“Year: 2003

“Incident: At a GE light bulb manufacturing plant in Oakville, a worker was caught in the rotating spindles of a fluorescent light bulb-making machine while trying to clear some bulbs that had gone askew. The worker suffered lacerations and tendon damage to the right forearm. A Ministry of Labour investigation found that it was standard operating procedure at the time to clear bulbs while the machine was in operation.”

Once again: a small fine; a large reward.

This system doesn't have to wait a year or even six months for more studies. The minister stands up and says, “We're working on it.”

His own chair didn't even know about the \$5-million payoff to the place in northern Ontario. How you can be running a board and not know about sizable payouts of public money on this, what I like to call, reward system?

What does this system do? This system attacks safety and health in the workplace. It undermines safety committees. It makes people forget about safety tours. Even the last year I was at Stelco, we constantly had to fight to get our monthly tours, which were mandatory in my place of employment for years. In the last couple of years, we were lucky if we got one every five months. How do you recognize that an accident or hazardous thing is going to happen in a workplace if you don't even take the safety tours any more? Mind you, Stelco receives some sizable rebate cheques.

I'm now going to share my last few minutes with two speakers. Mr. Prue and Mr. Tabuns would like to say a few words about their own personal situations when it goes in rotation.

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: I'm pleased to join in the debate and speak in respect of the opposition motion to eliminate the experience rating program.

As has been said on the floor of this Legislature, the experience rating program was established to encourage employers to reduce injuries and occupational health diseases and encourage workers to return to work—very good sentiments and things that I think all of us should be hoping for in terms of workplaces and for the constituents whom we represent here.

As the minister himself has said, both he and the Premier have acknowledged that the program is flawed and have stated that some real, serious changes are needed. In the very near term, the WSIB is undertaking an internal review of the program, as they announced on March 10, and that review is under way. In that time frame, the WSIB has placed a moratorium on providing rebates to companies that have had a fatality. That review team is going to report back, and decisions will be made with respect to the fundamental structure of the program.

I have to say that the minister spoke eloquently with respect to why the opposition day motion is irresponsible and uncalled-for. We know that safe workplaces and a strong workplace insurance system benefit everyone. We know that there are changes to be made, and we know

that we need to take guidance and study the issue to determine how that is best to go about. We need workplaces across the province to contribute to a strong and productive province and we are committed to improving the conditions for workers in communities right around the province.

We have invested in and brought forward serious reforms already to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act that have given more than 155,000 injured workers their first real benefit increase in 12 years. We will be reducing, as the minister has said, injuries by 20% through a comprehensive integrated health and safety strategy, but even at that, we know that there is much more work to do and that that is not enough.

In keeping with the need to be on-site in those communities, it is critical that we have kept our promise to hire 200 new health and safety inspectors, nearly doubling their ranks. That is so we can know what is happening in communities across the province. We can keep our finger on the pulse and we can enforce the rules and make sure that workers are not injured, that they are kept safe and that workplaces are good places to go to, so that those workers can return home safely to their families at the end of the day.

As we stand in this Legislature, we are committed to making sure that injured workers are well taken care of. More than anything, we are committed to making sure that there are fewer injured workers, that fewer families have to go through the very difficult circumstance of seeing their father or their mother come home injured or, even more tragically, not come home at all.

That is why it is critical that we take the time to get it right, to make sure that we do encourage employers to reduce injuries and occupational health diseases and that we encourage workers to return to work when they can. For all of us, that is our goal and our desire, and it is important to take the appropriate amount of time to study, reflect, seek expert advice and work with the WSIB and those experts who can bring this issue to the table to make sure that workers in all of our communities are safe and return home safely at the end of their shift.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this motion today.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: My friend from Beaches–East York didn't think we got up fast enough. He was ready—

Mr. Michael Prue: I thought you were already finished.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Gosh, no. I barely got started. Some days, people would wish I was finished before I got started.

Anyway, it's a pleasure to speak to this motion put forward by the leader of the third party, Mr. Hampton, with regard to the experience rating program of the WSIB.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Peter, I cannot share those feelings with you. The leader of the opposition, Mr. Runciman, is—

Mr. Peter Kormos: Bob's outstanding.

Mr. John Yakabuski:—outstanding.

Anyway, I've got to tell you that I'm going to be voting against this motion. While I appreciate the passion being displayed by the third party on this issue, that only tells some of the story.

This program has been in effect since 1985. In government, all parties have made the decision not to do away with it. That includes the New Democratic Party's government from 1990 to 1995.

I appreciate some of the statistics that my friend from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek was talking about relating to the fines that companies had assessed against them and balancing that against the rebate that they received in a subsequent time frame. They don't mesh very well, because those rebates sounded extremely large—I heard of one for some mining corporation that was in the \$5-million range—but we also have to ask ourselves what the actual premiums would have been that were paid by those companies that did receive a rebate.

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The justification or logic behind the rebate program is that it acts as an incentive to get workers back to work sooner. I understand what the NDP is talking about: It can be used in a wrongful way to encourage a worker to get back on the job, maybe in light-duty work or maybe just showing up and punching the clock, when they're not ready to be back to work. I can't say that doesn't happen, because in the real world, some things happen that shouldn't happen. But that's not the design of the program. The design is that there's an encouragement for the company to bring injured workers who are ready to come back to work, but who have not exhausted the time frame on their claim, back to work sooner.

Obviously, this program has worked.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I understand I'm going to have disagreements with my friends next door here, but I've had them before.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: That's okay.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Rosie and I have disagreed.

It has worked in the past. We in this House, and employers, employees and members of collective bargaining units across this province have a responsibility to ensure that the rules are working the way they should. I would have a concern if I had reason to believe there were shenanigans going on to bring a worker back on the job when they shouldn't be brought back on the job because their health doesn't allow them to do so and the employer was using the system to benefit themselves and hoping that the worker comes back. I presume it would have to be voluntarily. I have to assume that the worker would have to agree to come back.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: What else is he going to say?

Mr. John Yakabuski: That's easy to say.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Is he going to say no?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I guess anybody can say no. I've said no to many things in my life, and many people have said no to me. And sometimes there are conse-

quences, and sometimes there are not. But if there are any nefarious things going on, I would be concerned about that, and I hope any member of this assembly would be concerned about that, because that's not something we should be supporting in any way, shape or form.

I'm going to be voting against this motion, because it's something that, as I said, governments in the past have supported. Our government supported it. It's easy to say that we just get rid of this experience rating system because there are some instances that parties purport have not worked or have led to disadvantaging a worker. But there are also experiences that support it. Unless we have a system that is going to replace it and work better, then I think we're going to stick with the system we have.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: My friend Mr. Miller says, "Bad choice." My ears are too good.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Concentrate.

Mr. John Yakabuski: "Concentrate. Try to stay on subject," Rosie says.

Interjection: Focus, focus.

Mr. John Yakabuski: What I'd like to focus on right now is the head of the WSIB.

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing says I'm going on a personal attack. Well, not at all.

But I do have to ask members of this House and the people of Ontario how they feel about one of the highest-paid public servants—if you want to call it that—in the province making hundreds of thousands of dollars, double-dipping, going to Hy's Steakhouse and entertaining members of Parliament from across the country. Wayne Easter, the eastern feaster: Here he comes in from Prince Edward Island; he needed some beef to go with his potatoes up at Hy's Steakhouse, one of the swankiest joints in Ottawa, and maybe in the country. Steve Mahoney entertained these folks because he wanted to talk about something. What was it he wanted to talk about? I can't even remember what it was.

Mr. Michael Prue: Lowering the flag.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes: the lowering of the flag on the day of mourning. I guess all of those members in Ottawa have had their e-mail accounts cancelled. No longer does the post office go to the offices on the Hill. The only way you can talk to these people, I guess, is to get them together at Hy's Steakhouse. I know, Madam Speaker, that you're wondering how this relates to the motion, but by the sounds of it there were so many people at that steakhouse that night that it may have made it an unsafe workplace. Those guys, those Liberal MPs, Steve Mahoney and his friends, must have been tripping over one another, and that can certainly lead to an unsafe workplace.

Those are some of the concerns that have not been addressed. We asked questions the other day of the Minister of Labour, and he kind of pooh-poohed the whole thing, like it's a hands-off thing. But then, at the

end of the day, he was saying he wanted to speak to Mr. Mahoney about this. I think we need to have rules in place that quite simply prohibit that kind of practice—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That kind of practice at Hy's Steakhouse.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Order. I'm having difficulty hearing the speaker who has the floor. I would ask that we can get some order in the House, please. Thank you.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I appreciate the commentary from the minister. There are times that debate in this House is riveting and there are times that it's not quite so riveting. I've experienced both sides of it, and coming from both sides of the House as well. I don't want to dwell on this point too long.

Some of the concerns we have with the WSIB and workers in my riding—we deal with injured workers all the time—and the way they are dealt with by the WSIB: There have got to be better ways. There have got to be ways of streamlining the process, the waits, the appeals and the fighting back and forth. If Mr. Mahoney spent more time examining how they do their business at the WSIB, how it relates to injured workers and how they can improve the service to injured workers, both short-term and long, instead of taking Liberal MPs to Hy's Steakhouse for some beef, we'd probably see some improvement in the system. So cancel those trips to Ottawa and get down with reforming and working on the WSIB so that it actually addresses the concerns of injured workers across this province.

Getting back to the motion at hand—again, look, I do appreciate, and I always have a great deal of respect for, the passion and fervour with which the members of the third party go after issues. I was here a couple of weeks ago when we had an opposition day motion which they did not support, and yet their arguments had validity. I do respect the way they go at the issues. But while this experience rating system may require some reforms and improvements—I think that one of the reasons we are here is that we're always striving to improve systems that do exist. As it is, it's something that I don't think we should be dropping or getting rid of, but we should always be engaged in the ongoing process of trying to make this and any other system in Ontario work better.

I live in an area that is dominated by forestry. We all know what kind of business forestry is. It's tough, hard work. The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services comes from northern Ontario and he knows all about it. It's hard work, it's tough work, and the propensity for injury is high in that particular business, in that particular industry. We have to ensure that we are doing the very best for those workers, not only in that industry but in all industries. I speak about the forestry industry because of the pertinence to my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, where we have so many sawmills.

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What about the jobs at those sawmills? I've got some concerns about this government. They're not facing the

issues when it comes to jobs. We see job losses every day in the province of Ontario. The forestry industry is struggling like almost no other, but we don't see a real, concrete economic stimulus plan coming from this government. While the economy and all of the economists are saying we're in for some difficult times, the government seems to just be sitting there, biding their time and hoping that events elsewhere will save their bacon. You know, the MPs had beef at Hy's, and the MPPs in the Liberal party want somebody else to come along and save their bacon.

It's up to the government to bring forth some kind of an economic stimulus package. The leader of the NDP gets chastised by the Premier about not supporting the government's job plans with General Motors or Ford or anything like that. Those workers there—it's important for their safety as well. Healthy companies make healthy workers. There's no question about it.

I saw you looking at me like you may have thought I was drifting. Absolutely not, Madam Speaker. We're right on topic and we're going to stick right to it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): I'm glad to hear it.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Those economic plans that they've had with the large automakers—the leader of the third party I think has been unfairly criticized by the Premier in that regard, because there should be some kind of a connection between pouring public money into something and an expectation that it will actually lead to retaining jobs, not seeing jobs leave this country.

Anyway, I believe that I'm getting the evil eye from the whip. It's time for me to repeat that I will be voting against this motion, although I do appreciate the intentions of the leader of the NDP.

Mr. Michael Prue: I'd like to preface my remarks by thanking two groups that I believe may be here—the first is the Industrial Accident Victims' Group of Ontario, and the second is the Advocates for Injured Workers student legal clinic—for all the research they have done around this issue, not only for today but for many years.

The leader of the third party, Howard Hampton, has stated that experience rating is both absurd and bizarre. I have to echo those exact statements. Then I heard the Minister of Labour talking in what I think were also absurd and bizarre terms, in terms of how and why he was not going to support the particular motion here today.

Experience rating is a system that in effect rewards employers for treating their employees badly: those employees who may be killed on the job, those employees who may be injured on the job, those employees who are forced back to work all too early, those employees who never receive the benefits of the entire WSIB system.

Millions upon millions of dollars are handed out every single month to companies that have abysmal employment records in terms of health and safety. We've heard the statistic that some \$1.2 billion has been handed out to these selfsame companies in the past 10 years. This is, indeed, absurd and bizarre, and it is absurd and bizarre that we are even having to talk to this topic today, be-

cause the money should be flowing to those who need it—those who have been injured on the job, those who are in need of the support for which the system was originally designed all those years ago back in 1985.

I have two constituents who have been into my office in the last little while with tales that need to be told. I promised that if I could, I would tell them today. The first is Mr. Antonio Mauro. He was severely injured on the job back in 1972. He has been permanently unemployed since that time. From 1972 until 1985, there were no cost-of-living adjustments whatsoever. He saw his amount of money shrink and shrink over those many years. Since 1985, it was allowed to escalate at the cost of living, but you have to imagine, he was 13 years behind, and many of those years were where inflation was at 10%, 12%, 15% and one even, I believe, 20% during the year.

The bills that were put forward in this House, Bill 165 in 1996 and Bill 99 in 1998, did little or nothing to help him at all. He has spent his entire life since 1972 living in poverty. To add insult to injury, he has now turned 65 years of age and they are deducting his old age security benefits, as small as they are, from his WSIB. So even in old age, when one would expect to get a pension—and remember, everybody gets a pension—he is having his clawed back under this absurd and bizarre scheme.

We have written to the minister, we have written to the Premier, and all we get back are letters supporting the legislation as it exists and as it punishes Mr. Mauro. We've written some more letters. I'm hoping the minister takes the time to read and research this one. If he is going to support the legislation, then I think that something is very wrong with the Minister of Labour that would do that.

The second case is that of Mr. Harry Shaw. Harry Shaw was injured on duty in 2005. He was 63 years of age. He did what most workers do: He reported to duty the next day. They asked him if he was okay. He had a torn rotator cuff. He reported to work, and he continued to work. The pain got worse and worse. He finally went to the hospital. He had to have his surgery delayed because the hospital took a whole year to get him to an MRI machine. It took another six months for him to see a specialist. He finally agreed to have some surgery on his rotator cuff. He was told—the WSIB told them—that they won't pay because now he's 65 years of age and more than two years have passed. Now he's not eligible any more.

So he appealed. His lawyer wrote a letter and some people wrote a letter. They said yes, they would pay. He went and had the surgery done, and when he came out from having the surgery done, they told him that now they're not going to pay. His lawyer wrote a letter. I'd like to quote just a little. It's Michael S. Green, barrister and solicitor.

The WSIB is quoted: "Loss-of-earning payments continue until the earliest of ... two years after the date of injury if the worker was 63 years of age or older on the date of injury." Then the lawyer goes on to opine: "The

intention of this provision, I am quite sure, was to limit benefits to workers who are 63 years of age or older to two years on the basis that they can be presumed to have an intention to retire. I do not believe the intention was to punish older workers who continue working with pain. If Mr. Shaw had injured his shoulder in January 2008, at the age of 66, rather than in September 2005, he would have been entitled to up to two years of benefits rather than no loss-of-earnings benefit at all. It seems unlikely that legislators intended such an absurd result, but it would be helpful if it was clarified."

We have written to the minister and asked him to clarify it. I know that not a lot of time has gone by, but it has not been clarified. So here are two cases, workers getting the shaft, companies getting millions and millions of dollars when they force those workers back to work, and a WSIB system and a minister who don't seem to care a whole lot at all.

I'd like to leave some more time for my colleagues, but I'd just like to close with saying the experience rating system is absurd and it is bizarre, and so is the treatment that this government and this minister have given at least to my two constituents, these two injured workers. The treatment meted out to them is equally bizarre and equally absurd. I think this minister has a lot of work to do. He should start doing it.

1650

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to join the debate today. It certainly is an interesting and timely debate and a very important debate. I thank the leader of the third party for bringing it forward.

Having said that, when you take a look at the motion and the open-ended form in which it's presented, is it worthy of support? The answer would have to be no, because quite simply it tells you what, in his opinion—or in his party's opinion, perhaps—the leader of the third party thinks is wrong with the current system; it says nothing about what should be put in its place. If it's not experience rating, then what type of system should it be? Certainly, if we were just to get rid of experience rating, what does that do for injured workers?

Is there a better system that could be put in place? Perhaps. Are there changes that could be made to the current system that would aid injured workers? Perhaps. I think the answer to that would have to be "probably." When you take a look at the motion that was put before us, while it stimulates an important debate, it really does nothing for the injured workers in the province of Ontario.

The minister has been on his feet and said that he agrees that a review of this system is necessary. The chair of the WSIB also agrees that a review is necessary, and that review is going to take place. If you take a look at the history and you hear about some of the reasons that perhaps we shouldn't have an experience rating system anymore, I think any interested viewer, anybody who was in the House today, might want to know where the experience rating system came from. Surprisingly enough, it was brought in during the NDP government.

Interjections.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: That's exactly what we have here.

Interjection: That's the fact.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: That's the fact. Then—
Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Can I get some order in the House please? Order.

The member for Oakville.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Perhaps you should be ashamed of yourself. Then they decided to bring in the Friedland formula. Perhaps Mr. Kormos would like to tell us about the Friedland formula. Tell us what the Friedland formula did to injured workers in this province.

It's interesting that somehow we've scratched a little scab and there's a little bleeding going on on the other side of the House. But certainly, with the Friedland formula that was introduced by the third party and by the Conservative Party, which then brought in an adjusted Friedland formula, injured workers in this province—it's true—have fallen behind when you take inflation into account. The cost-of-living increase simply has not kept up with the payments that injured workers have received.

The motion, as I said, does say to get rid of it, but it doesn't say what it should be replaced with. In my days with the Ministry of Labour, I was privileged to serve under Minister Bentley and Minister Peters as their parliamentary assistant. I worked with good representatives from both labour and business. Despite what the issue was, there was generally agreement around one thing: that we should concentrate our efforts on the bad employers and we should leave the good employers alone. I think that's perhaps what the thinking was behind experience rating when it was first brought in under the third party.

The principle behind this is that safety is paramount in this province for all workers. We want to see people come home at night. We want to see injury prevention. We want to see a workplace that is safe. I think that's something we would all agree on.

Is the current system something we want to take a look at, that perhaps we could make better? I would say, probably that's true. I don't think anybody in this House is suggesting we don't do that; in fact, I think that's something we should do with a variety of programs.

If you look at the progress that has been made: When we inherited government, obviously, from the previous party, the Progressive Conservatives, we found out—that this is public knowledge—that they had cut inspectors by 25% during their term. Health and safety inspectors were cut. In fact, we had a lower number of health and safety inspectors in Ontario than any other province in all of Canada. When it came to health and safety inspectors, we were the worst in all of Canada when we took over. Since that time, everybody in this House will know that we've had an almost 100% increase in the number of health and safety inspectors in Ontario; 200 new health and safety inspectors have been hired. It's great progress; good progress. We're well on the road to reducing injuries by

20%. Everybody would like to see us get down to 0%—one injury is too many—but we know we have to work towards that goal.

The review is necessary. In 2003, when we assumed government, where was Canada when you looked at all the other OECD countries? Fifth from the bottom. We can do better than that. That's what we're trying to work toward, and that's what the minister has been talking about. Over the three-year period we've been in government, you look at \$1 billion in benefit enhancements for injured workers in this province—good progress. We're well on the road to reducing injuries by 20%.

We simply don't want to return to the days of damage: the cuts and neglect that were inflicted on this system and upon injured workers during the terms of previous governments. We know we can do better. We know that employers are prepared to work with us. We know that the labour movement is behind this; they want to see improvements made. I think Mr. Samuelson has suggested on a number of occasions that there's something wrong with experience rating that needs to be fixed. How big the fix will be is yet to be seen, but I certainly think it's a review that's worthy of consideration and one that is taking place.

Talking about the economy, a strong economy allows companies to have the confidence to invest, to know they are prepared to invest in the training and skills development of their workers and also in the health and safety of their own companies, because anybody who knows anything about health and safety knows that a profitable company is also a company that practises good health and safety. Upon investigation, you'll generally find that a company that has a good health and safety record is a very profitable and successful company, because they get it. They understand that in order to have a profitable workplace, you need to have employees who know they are working in a safe environment. That's something we've been attempting to foster through the Ministry of Labour and certainly through this government.

I'm going to close here. I thank other members of the House for bringing this issue forward. This has allowed us a period of time to talk about some of the issues that are impacting our own communities and that are impacting the workplaces in our own communities. But at the end of the day, when you take a look at the motion, all it does is take away from injured workers. Our intent on this side of the House is to add to the lives of injured workers in a way that's meaningful.

Mrs. Julia Munro: It's a pleasure to rise today in response to the motion of the third party.

I want to begin by saying that, very sadly, I have met on many occasions with injured workers in my riding. I say "sadly" simply because of the fact that their frustration and their very painful stories are certainly ones that I think every one of us, as members, are very conscious of and recognize the importance of being able to find legislative frameworks that are balanced and that provide fairness for everyone. I think that's the intent of today's motion.

By way of commenting on this, however, I must express some surprise at the way this motion is worded. The first point is, “Immediately direct the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board ... to eliminate the flawed experience rating program.” The second point is, “Immediately direct the Provincial Auditor to conduct an audit of the flawed experience rating program.” I suggest that those should be in the other order. Having the auditor do that would be a method of providing for the kind of debate and thought that needs to go into this.

I also want to take this opportunity to go back to the work done a short while ago by the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. The committee chose to review, as one of its agencies, the WSIB. I want to clarify the positions of some of the people who did come forward and explain some of the issues, particularly the one on experience rating. I think it's important to the discussion because, as I mentioned already, we need to have a balanced, fair and reasonable approach.

1700

The first one I'd like to read to you is from Mr. Ian Howcroft, who was the vice-president of the Ontario division of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters:

“Experience rating has been a long-standing system enshrined in legislation as a program of the WSIB. However, changes to the program have continually contributed to the financial erosion of the plan as a merit program, and hence the impact it can have to improve health and safety. At one time, the WSIB sought the advice of its experience rating working group prior to implementing any changes. That group, in our view, has become disbanded. The WSIB may not have formally disbanded this group, but in reality it has not been called or met in about three years. From a communication perspective, we believe the WSIB and employers would be better served to have us at the table to discuss these proposed changes. We would like to stress our continued support for experience rating and for the safety group program that exists at the WSIB. Safety groups is one of the most successful programs that we've seen, and we feel it still has a great deal of potential to improve health and safety throughout the province of Ontario.”

Of course, the issue around the people, then, who have taken advantage of this program is one that Mr. Howcroft responds to. He suggests that it has not been the experience: “Anybody who's hiding claims or not reporting as they should should be subject to the penalty provisions of the act. We take our role very seriously, educate our members as to what the requirements are and provide them assistance. We want them to report everything that they should be reporting. Our goal is to help them eliminate the accidents so that they don't have to report an accident because there wasn't one, not because they're trying to hide something.”

I also would like to take a moment to refer to another deputation, that made by Mr. Les Liversidge. He also had some comments to make about experience rating:

“There has always been a worry about experience rating that when you start to hold employers to account

for their actual performance, are they going to fudge the numbers? We heard that earlier today. Are they going to put cases under the table and not report them? That's why you have other mechanisms. If a company does do that—first of all, I'll explain two reasons why they ought not to do that; three, really. One is, it's just wrong. But it's also a crime. It's against the law; it's against the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. Whoever does it, that individual can face a fine of up to \$25,000 and up to six months' imprisonment, and the corporation could face a fine of up to \$100,000. So if somebody thinks they're going to save a few hundred dollars by doing that, they're mistaken. And the board ... takes that seriously and they do prosecute those cases. They prosecute a lot of those cases when they find them.

“Who would do that? Who's the individual who would engage in that type of behaviour? The experience rating model is designed to focus in on the rational, informed business person who's going to respond in a self-interested manner to look after their self-interest. That's supposed to translate into positive employer behaviour.... That means you're going to avoid an injury and you know there's going to be a reduction in premiums as a result.”

I offer these few comments because I think it's part of this discussion. I think it's an important part. I also want to include in the record one of the recommendations the Standing Committee on Government Agencies in its report had, and I quote, “The WSIB should re-establish the experience rating ... group and review the effectiveness of the experience rating program to ensure that it reflects the overall safety practices of businesses.”

I think it's very important, in the light of the comments made by some of the members of the government, that this was the work of the committee. This was as a result of varied people, and I don't have time to refer to all of them but certainly there was a balance. Some of the people visiting here also participated in this.

I wanted to bring to the attention of everyone that this was part of the recommendations that were made. A number of the government members have referred several times to the initiation of studies, and I think on this side of the House it is our responsibility to remind them of their commitment.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'll share my remaining time with Madame Gélinas.

The human spirit is an incredibly strong thing. We have injured workers here today who are living testimony to that reality, because when companies break or destroy workers and discard them, those workers find themselves at the mercy of the WSIB. They are plunged into a Kafkaesque world where they're offered retraining for jobs that don't exist, in fields where they have no interest. They find themselves in a situation where they're confronted with suspicion, where they're given confusing information.

I say to the Minister of Labour, come to my riding. In my riding, Injured Workers' Consultants has an organization within it called Women of Inspiration. It has

public speaking classes for injured workers so they can find their voice, express what has happened to them and tell the world what has happened to them, and it is not a pretty thing.

I say to the Minister of Labour, who has stood up and defended this system, which is wrong practically and wrong morally, that he should listen to those people who have physically gone through the system, who have physically lost a limb, who have been injured in a way that they cannot carry things, cannot carry their children, cannot carry on with their lives. And then I say to that Minister of Labour, come and listen and then vote in favour of the resolution put by our leader. Listen to them, because they speak every language under the sun and they speak with incredible power. You only have to be there a short time, you only have to listen to one or two stories, as my colleague from Beaches–East York set out. These stories are heart-rending.

This government knows what's going on. It knows this system leads to cover-up, leads to people abandoning their rights, leads to breaking of their lives as well as their bodies. This government could make a big difference. It has the power in its hands. It doesn't have to wait for a report. It could change the system now. It could bring in—and this is not directly related to the motion, but related to worker safety and health—card certifications so more people in this province could be unionized to protect themselves. This government could act. This government must act if it wants to show any moral fibre whatsoever.

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: I'm very pleased to enter into the debate and I want to state my position right at the very beginning. I will not be supporting the motion from the third party and I'd like to explain why I will not be supporting it.

I want to be very clear: I know the member who just spoke had a lot of passion in his voice when he spoke about the workers. Every member in this House recognizes that we want to ensure that we make the workplace as safe as possible. I can tell you from my own personal experiences—my husband works in mining—and it can be very difficult. To receive the phone call, when you hear that anyone in your family has been seriously hurt—I have received the phone call. It is a very traumatic time that you go through. Certainly, the whole process that you go through is very difficult: to get back to work and also to ensure that everyone in your family continues to move forward. It is a very difficult process. Anything we can do as a government to ensure that we are as helpful as possible, in my mind, is all of our roles.

1710

I know that the intent of the motion that was brought forward today certainly was to do that. I am very pleased to say that not only the Premier but also the minister do acknowledge that the program is flawed. They do acknowledge that work needs to be done. It was announced on March 10. There has been a moratorium placed if there is a fatality within the workplace, and the WSIB is committed to bringing forward a report that will

deal with this. I see that as a significant step forward. There has been so much work done on the WSIB. I don't want anyone to think for one minute that I don't believe there is more work to do. I recognize that.

I did want to share a couple of things. I had the opportunity within my riding, as you know. You've heard me speak to it many times. My largest employer is Bruce Power. I know that a number of the members of the third party have never been on site, and probably never will be on site, but I did want to share with you some of the things—

Interjection.

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: I didn't say all; I said some.

I did want to share with you one of the things that was talked about for the day of mourning, because there were fatalities when the original Douglas Point was built. I did want to share some facts with you about how things have changed in the largest employer within my riding.

Bruce Power has gone six million hours without a lost-time injury, and that is absolutely incredible when you think of the thousands and thousands of workers who are there. As many of you know, they're going right now in a restart program, which is one of the largest infrastructure projects in Ontario, and that has gone nine million hours. I can tell you that is quite a feat.

What we can do is to ensure that we have the education, the legislation and also the willingness to continue to listen when things need to be changed. After all, that is our role. Clearly, I see that that is the direction we are headed. The recognition that something needs to be changed and a review begun, to me, signals from the government that change is coming, as there have been a number of changes to the WSIB. I do recognize that there has been a significant amount of work within many workplaces, and I also shared my personal experiences on how difficult it is to get back in the workplace when one has been seriously injured.

What we can do as a government is to recognize the different workplaces and the strengths and weaknesses that come forward, and then ensure that we have a program in place that meets the needs of all employees. After all, it is our responsibility to ensure that we have safe workplaces so that all people will return home safely.

Mr. John O'Toole: First, I want to recognize the people in the galleries today. With the change in the standing orders, this is an important issue. Many of the people I recognize—a number of the people there—were here when the reviews were going on in 1995-96. At that time, the Minister of Labour was Elizabeth Witmer, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, and I recognize members in all the galleries who have appeared over the years.

Certainly in the time I've been here, I know of three reviews—and the member from York–North just spoke. She was referring to the report from the Standing Committee on Government Agencies that held public hearings for the review of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, and admirably reported, as she's a very hard-working member of that committee.

Before that committee, certainly the Federation of Labour—Wayne Samuelson—was there, and he's here today. Other members of the community—Mr. Liveridge, who's practised law in that area. He reported back in 1995-96 with the Cam Jackson review. So it's not a new issue, but it's a very complex area.

In fact, looking back at the resolution, it's a bit strongly worded. I'm looking here at the order paper and it's really overstated. That's the problem that I find with Mr. Hampton's motion, the NDP motion. I just think it's important to read some of it. This is the strong wording:

"Immediately direct the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, WSIB, to eliminate the flawed experience rating program." That's pretty direct.

"Immediately direct the Provincial Auditor to conduct an audit of the flawed experience rating program;

"Recognize the fact that tens of millions of dollars have been drained out of the WSIB's accident fund each year by employers who have learned how to play the game of experience rating." These are sort of loaded phrases.

"Recognize the fact that the practice of experience rating actually encourages employers to mis-report or under-report injuries and occupational disease, force injured workers back to work before they are medically ready...

"Recognize that this hides the true extent of workplace injuries...."

I have no disagreement that this is something that should get full scrutiny. Certainly the chair, Mr. Mahoney, a former federal minister—and just reported in the press recently in an article called "Head of Worker-Safety Board in Hot Water for Hosting Ottawa Bash." That's inappropriate and unacceptable, and I think the lack of any decisiveness on the part of the minister or the Premier—to send the right signal during this discussion about Mr. Mahoney's behaviour or his comments would have been the right thing to do.

To find a solution, you're always looking for the balance. In any discussion, you're looking for the balance. And I'm saying that I want to give some respect to the work done by the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Paul Miller, who gave a good account of his work and his time at Stelco. I can tell you he did a very good job this week at the Standing Committee on Estimates, which was reviewing the work of the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, Ms. Pupatello. He actually put her through the grill, if you will, with very stern questions on accountability.

That's what's really more important here—rather than whether or not we know the history or the nuances of this particular discussion on experience rating. I think you'd have to look back to—the work done generally by the NDP is commendable. They're the right questions, which may be different from our questions, but certainly the intent and the genuineness of the motion are recognized.

I think once you look at the work that Mrs. Munro mentioned in her report, under the experience rating—there are a number of different opinions on it, for sure.

You can look at my riding of Durham. I know there are people here from that riding. Probably the largest employer, at one time, was General Motors, and that's unfortunately not the case anymore. The auto sector generally is in a state of challenge. I worked there 30 years. In fact, I worked indirectly in that area. I worked in the computer department for a long time, but more importantly, I worked in the personnel area and I worked in a period attached to the labour relations component, which was part of the program of bringing people back to work. I have some comments, and if I have time, I'll mention them.

It's very important that if a person is out long-term and after a severe injury—there's no one disputing the legitimacy of the claim at all, nor should they. Every accident should and must be reported. If they're on pain medication, I think sometimes it's hard for them to get back to work. We used to call it work hardening—getting people up and getting them to work. That's as much of the job as getting ready, getting there, travelling, often from Peterborough or Lindsay or further, back to General Motors plants. It's very difficult to have a long car drive if you've had a back injury, a repetitive strain injury, carpal tunnel or those kinds of things and you're on medications for pain. It's better to have a routine that pulls you along in life.

1720

I was all in support of the early return. I had discussions often with the district committee men representing the union, saying that what they should do is set aside a number of jobs for these—because seniority prevails in the workplace. The light-duty jobs tend to be high-seniority jobs, and if you had a young worker injured, strained or something like that, maybe it would be better if they had a light-duty job for a little while. I think there could be co-operation, to work through, to make sure—what's this all about? The most important thing, in fairness, is to first of all recognize and treat the people fairly, and secondly, encourage them to keep going despite the setback of the injury. Look at persons who have special needs, physically or mentally. They have to come along in life and participate alongside the rest of us who may have our own problems.

More recently, I was reading an article in the same paper, "The Hard Search for 'Good' Jobs." That's the balance. "Former US President Bill Clinton had it right when he said, 'The best social policy is a good job.'" With that comes dignity and respect: "I've earned my way. I have an equal voice."

If you look at what the CFIB said during those hearings, they said that generally—they're small employers, by and large—they support it.

The other employers in my area would be OPG, General Motors and the auto sector, but also the agricultural sector. There's a young man, 46 years old, and I went to his wake and funeral just last week. He was killed, run over by a tractor. His father was actually driving the tractor. It's tragic. He was married and all the rest of it. Any injury is very sad, specifically this type of injury.

But what I want to make sure is—the record here is this review that’s being done on experience rating. There was a legitimate reason when it started under David Peterson. This is the important fact here: That’s when it started. It was carried on under Bob Rae.

In 1995, I was working at General Motors, in fact in this area. I was an area manager in part of the plant. It was right in the plant; it wasn’t some kind of office job. The big deal was the number of injuries or those kinds of actions within the plant. They were a very important part of my rating, if you will, as a supervisor.

I would say that I wouldn’t support this resolution, because I think what it needs is to be enforced properly, so that employers who are doing what Mr. Hampton is suggesting are severely penalized for not conforming. Experience rating employers should be able to earn their way back. The last thing we want to do is jeopardize jobs in the province. We shouldn’t lower standards; we should have very strong safety records.

There’s one last thing I want to put on the record. Over the many years that I’ve been here, Paul Kells, whose son was killed at work, has led a crusade in his life to have young people well trained before they enter the workplace with summer jobs. At this time of year—it’s a signal and it’s a good time to talk about the positive things—young people and employers have a responsibility to make sure of workplace training and the certification of the workplace, so that everyone has the opportunity to work in a safe environment, and WSIB is an important part of that. That’s why I think the report that will be filed shortly by the Standing Committee on General Government—let’s wait for the report and see what the minister says, and let’s worry about the liability as well.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I too want to share an experience with you. My neighbour died in a mine. He left behind his wife and his 8-year-old daughter. The mining company was fined a hefty fine for what happened, but the same mining company received 10 times that amount in WSIB rebates. His death was not considered a lost-time injury. It didn’t count. How can we continue to support a system that treats the death of a worker as a better outcome than a lost-time injury? To me and to all of the workers who lost their life on the job, it doesn’t make sense. It needs to be changed. We need to support this proposition.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: I’m extremely pleased to be able to respond to the motion brought forward by the honourable leader of the third party, in which Mr. Hampton wants to get rid of the experience rating system used by the WSIB.

As the minister said, it would be very difficult, and even impossible, to get rid of this system. But instead, we launched a review of the system on March 10, just a little over two months ago. The WSIB is conducting a review of its experience rating program. Their review team will look back at the decisions regarding the fundamental structure of the program by March 2009.

The board is also making immediate changes to the program. Effective immediately, if a company is responsible for a workplace fatality, it is ineligible for a

rebate in that calendar year. The review will also consider requiring employers to be in compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, and a long-term plan to tie the board’s incentive programs to proactive health and safety initiatives.

Let me take a few minutes to review the background to the WSIB’s experience rating program. Under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, the WSIB has the discretion to establish experience and merit rating programs. The purpose of these programs is to encourage employers to reduce injuries and occupational diseases and to encourage workers to return to work. The incentive works by rewarding good performers with rebates while imposing surcharges on poor performers.

The WSIB currently administers three experience rating programs. The first is the new, experimental experience rating program. This program automatically applies to companies which pay more than \$25,000 per year in premiums and are in a non-construction rate group. Through this program, a company can earn rebates on its premiums by maintaining a good health and safety record. If it has a poor health and safety record, it may be assessed surcharges. Next, there is the CAD-7 program. This is a prevention incentive program that applies to employers in the construction sector whose average annual premiums are more than \$25,000. Through CAD-7, construction companies can earn refunds on premiums by maintaining a good health and safety record. If they have a poor health and safety record, they may be assessed surcharges. There’s also the merit adjustment premium plan, which is designed specifically for small employers. Each program uses premium adjustments, rebates and surcharges to encourage workplace health and safety.

I want to assure members of this Legislature that the WSIB does not stand pat on its programs. The purpose of these programs is to provide incentives to employers to help reduce workplace injuries.

I want to point out that the WSIB does not stand alone in seeking to reduce workplace injuries and deaths. The Ministry of Labour also plays a large and vital role in its legislative, educational and enforcement activities. The Ministry of Labour has a primary responsibility to ensure that workplaces comply with Ontario’s Occupational Health and Safety Act and related legislation. This means ensuring that a strong internal responsibility system is in place. A strong internal responsibility system means, in part, having a system of well-functioning joint health and safety committees that foster a strong, sustainable culture of workplace health and safety.

A strong health and safety workplace culture consists of:

(1) Competence—having appropriate knowledge and training systems for responding to events and a properly functioning joint health and safety committee;

(2) Commitment—a demonstration by the employer of leadership on safety, appropriate policies and procedures to protect workers, low tolerance for poor health and

safety practices, and insistence upon full compliance; and lastly

(3) Capacity—having adequate resources for preventing injuries and a good system for obtaining assistance from sector health and safety associations and the WSIB.

1730

To build a strong health and safety workplace culture takes many people working together. It takes partnerships among the wide range of organizations that are striving to keep Ontario a leader in workplace health and safety. The health and safety of Ontario workers is our highest priority.

Just before I finish off here, having been the PA to the Minister of Labour since October 2007, I cannot tell you the satisfaction I get from knowing and learning about the programs that are in place and attending functions.

I believe my colleague from Durham was mentioning the story about Rob Ellis and his crusade after the death of his son as a result of a workplace injury. It's a truly moving presentation that Mr. Ellis gives all over the province; it's just priceless. I had a chance to go to a Mississauga high school where Mr. Ellis and the folks from the WSIB had a seminar for young kids. You could really see on the faces of these teenagers, grade 12 and 13 students who are just about to enter the workforce, the effects that workplace injuries have on families. There is a way to prevent it. These young folks are just about to embark on their working careers, whether it's a part-time job or a full-time job if they aren't pursuing any post-secondary education. It's really important that we get them young and teach them about their rights and responsibilities, about the labour laws and how they can be safe wherever they work, things such as refusing unsafe work. A lot of people didn't know these laws existed, so I was truly satisfied with what we're doing.

Again, as our minister stated before, there's more work to do, because until we get to that goal of zero injuries or deaths, I think our job will never stop. I don't know which minister it was, but we initiated a target of reducing workplace injuries, and we have reduced lost-time injuries by 20%. That's a good start, but I think we have a lot more work to do. Like I said before, until we reach that zero number, I don't think we should rest. I think people from all three sides of this House would agree that we should aim for that zero number. We should all work together to ensure that we don't see any injuries or loss of life as a result of workplace injuries. Thank you very much for letting me make this presentation.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Further debate? It being almost 5:35, I'll now be putting the question. Mr. Hampton has moved opposition day motion number 3. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1735 to 1745.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): All those in favour, please rise and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Bisson, Gilles	Hampton, Howard	Miller, Paul
DiNovo, Cheri	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Gélinas, France	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): All those opposed, please rise and be recorded by the Clerk.

Nays

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Phillips, Gerry
Albanese, Laura	Gerretsen, John	Qaadri, Shafiq
Arnott, Ted	Hoy, Pat	Ramal, Khalil
Bailey, Robert	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Balkissoon, Bas	Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz
Bartolucci, Rick	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Bentley, Christopher	Mangat, Amrit	Shurman, Peter
Brotten, Laurel C.	Martiniuk, Gerry	Smith, Monique
Bryant, Michael	McMeekin, Ted	Smitherman, George
Caplan, David	McNeely, Phil	Sousa, Charles
Carroll, Aileen	Miller, Norm	Takhar, Harinder S.
Colle, Mike	Mitchell, Carol	Van Bommel, Maria
Craitor, Kim	Moridi, Reza	Watson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	Munro, Julia	Wilkinson, John
Dhillon, Vic	Naqvi, Yasir	Yakabuski, John
Dickson, Joe	O'Toole, John	Zimmer, David
Duguid, Brad	Oraziotti, David	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 9; the nays are 50.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): I declare this motion lost.

Negatived.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in his office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The following are the titles of the bills to which His Honour did assent:

Bill 12, An Act to amend the Vital Statistics Act in relation to adoption information and to make consequential amendments to the Child and Family Services Act / Projet de loi 12, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil en ce qui a trait aux renseignements sur les adoptions et apportant des modifications corrélatives à la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille.

Bill 35, An Act to authorize the Minister of Finance to make payments to eligible recipients out of money appropriated by the Legislature and to amend the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, 2004, the Ministry of Treasury and Economics Act and the Treasury Board Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 35, Loi autorisant le ministre des Finances à faire des versements aux bénéficiaires admissibles sur les crédits affectés par la Législature et

modifiant la Loi de 2004 sur la transparence et la responsabilité financières, la Loi sur le ministère du Trésor et de l'Économie et la Loi de 1991 sur le Conseil du Trésor.

Bill 44, An Act respecting Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters / Projet de loi 44, Loi

concernant les mesures budgétaires, l'affectation anticipée de crédits et d'autres questions.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): This House now stands adjourned until Thursday morning at 9 o'clock, on May 15.

The House adjourned at 1748.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Sophia (L)	Hamilton Mountain	
Albanese, Laura (L)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
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Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / procureur general
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (L)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (ND)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Brotten, Laurel C. (L)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Brown, Michael A. (L)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (L)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)	St. Paul's	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, government House leader / ministre des Affaires autochtones, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (L)	Barrie	Minister of Culture, minister responsible for seniors / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Colle, Mike (L)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (L)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (L)	Essex	Deputy Speaker, Chair of the committee of the whole House / Vice- Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Delaney, Bob (L)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (L)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (L)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (ND)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (L)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L) Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (L)	Oakville Mississauga East–Cookville / Mississauga-Est–Cookville	Minister of Tourism / ministre du Tourisme
Gélinas, France (ND) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (ND)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie (PC) Hillier, Randy (PC) Horwath, Andrea (ND)	Oxford Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Third Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hoy, Pat (L) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (L) Jeffrey, Linda (L) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (ND)	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland	New Democratic Party House leader / leader parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kular, Kuldip (L) Kwinter, Monte (L) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L) Leal, Jeff (L) Levac, Dave (L) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (L)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (ND) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (L)	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (L) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier and President of the Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (L)	Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
McNeely, Phil (L) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (ND) Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (L) Moridi, Reza (L) Munro, Julia (PC) Murdoch, Bill (PC) Naqvi, Yasir (L) O'Toole, John (PC) Oraziotti, David (L)	Huron–Bruce Richmond Hill York–Simcoe Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre Durham Sault Ste. Marie	

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Pendergast, Leeanna (L)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie
Prue, Michael (ND)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (L)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (L)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Leader of the Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (L)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (L)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (L)	Nipissing	Minister of Revenue / ministre du Revenu
Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / vice-premier ministre, ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Sorbara, Greg (L)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (ND)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Van Bommel, Maria (L)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Second Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Opposition House leader / leader parlementaire de l'opposition
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (L)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (L)	Willowdale	

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Joe Dickson, Kevin Flynn, Sylvia Jones,
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Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Khalil Ramal, Laurie Scott, Peter Shurman
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