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(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Thursday 2 April 2009**

**Jeudi 2 avril 2009**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 2 avril 2009

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational prayer.

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GREATER TORONTO  
AND HAMILTON AREA  
TRANSIT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2009  
LOI DE 2009 SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT  
DU RÉSEAU DE TRANSPORT EN COMMUN  
DE LA RÉGION DU GRAND TORONTO  
ET DE HAMILTON

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 1, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 163, An Act to amend the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority Act, 2006 / Projet de loi 163, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la Régie des transports du grand Toronto.

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

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I would like to preface any remarks I might have: I'm seeking unanimous consent to hold down the NDP lead, as our member is not here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I woke up this morning to a brave new world. I opened up the front page of the Toronto Star and I saw an announcement that had been announced before, but actually there seemed to be some meat on the bones. There actually seemed to be a date, and that's something I've not been used to seeing.

I want to start off any comments I have here on this whole thing about Metrolinx and GO Transit and Bill 163 with a clear understanding that we have to do what is being proposed and we have to do it in the most expeditious and fastest manner possible. Gridlock is killing the greater GTA, it is killing Toronto. It is costing some \$2 billion in lost productivity. It is costing the city, the greater Toronto area and southern Ontario enormous opportunities. When and if we come out of this current recession/ depression, it is important that things are moving quickly.

I looked at the dates—2013, 2015, 2016—that were proposed on the front page of the Toronto Star, and I can only hope that we can even speed those up. I know that would be ambitious, but it would put literally tens of

thousands of people to work; it would give an opportunity to get people out of their cars.

Having said that, I want to deal with the meat of Bill 163. It is far from clear to me that the forced merger between GO Transit and Metrolinx proposed in Bill 163 will address the real reasons for the McGuinty government's failure in the past to move on public transit. I know that the mayor of the city of Toronto, although he is lauding the developments of yesterday and into this morning, was very critical of this government for taking the unusual step that it did to take elected people off the board: to force the merger and, in so doing, take all of the elected representatives who had been on the board in the past off.

I want to talk about my own city, Toronto, where I have lived most of my life, save and except the little more than a year that I spent living in Ottawa. Toronto is probably one of the most expensive cities in all of Canada and in all of North America for monthly passes. The monthly pass in Toronto is exceptionally high. If you go to other cities and see what they have in Montreal, Ottawa and Vancouver in terms of monthly passes, you will see that Toronto ranks too high, near the top. We are anxious to get people out of their cars daily. We are anxious for as many people as can to use a monthly Metropass and to get on the subway, the streetcars and the buses daily. It is not going to work if we continue to have monthly passes that are higher than everyone else's. We have to find ways, and this government has to find ways, of reducing that.

The government of Ontario once paid more than half of all transit costs and it now pays only one third. I would suggest that if the government is serious about not only building the new structures of the future, not only putting a line along Eglinton Avenue out to the airport, not only building Finch and not only extending the Scarborough LRT, then the government has to also look at covering the transit costs. These are very, very high, we need to pay a higher amount. In some cities in Europe, quite literally, the government pays almost everything, so that you can get on streetcars in some places in Europe and Japan for a very, very small amount of money. It doesn't cover the cost of the ride—because the cities, municipalities and governments of those countries and provinces understand full well the necessity of building the transit system and having the transit system be economical so that people will want to get out of their cars.

Between 1998 and 2004, TTC fares increased by 14%, while the city's transit operating subsidy decreased by 17%. That is the reality of what happened over those

years. From 2004 to 2007, Toronto Transit Commission cash fares increased by 75 cents and the monthly pass reached above \$100. This cemented the TTC as one of the most expensive public transit systems to ride when compared to other North American cities. Meanwhile, capital spending on roads has increased by 57%, and it appears that the government, up until that period of time, up until perhaps yesterday, was more intent upon building roads where people would drive their cars rather than on building transit systems that would be non-polluting, electric, easily accessible and cheap.

We know that the fare hikes reduce ridership, which in the long run leads to service cutbacks. We saw that whole round a couple of years ago, where service cutbacks of buses, streetcars and even in some cases of subways, by running them less frequently, not running them at night, produced crowding and people looking for alternatives. Hopefully, some of them would carpool, but the majority would get back into their cars. This was causing some grave gridlock.

I'm glad to see that over the last few years, people are starting to get back on to the transit system in this city and I would hope in cities with which I am less familiar across this entire province. But we know that every time fares increase, transit ridership goes down. It doesn't matter whether that's in Toronto or London or Peterborough; it doesn't matter whether it's in Ottawa or Hamilton or Sarnia—it doesn't matter. When the fares go up, the ridership goes down. One of the key things is not only to build the new structures, but to ensure that the fares remain doable, to ensure that the fares are affordable to people and provide a better alternative than the use of the private automobile.

**0910**

We know that having fare hikes means more cars on the road, and that in turn causes dirtier air and more children with asthma. Asthma has been an epidemic, in terms of the number of children and the number of people in our society who are getting asthma today, as opposed to 20 or 30 or 40 years ago. It was a relatively rare phenomenon; today, it is commonplace. I invite any of you to go into schools and see the number of children who come to school every day with puffers. That's really quite shocking. It was not the norm and it was not happening even 20 years ago.

Our current over-congested, car-based system is costing us billions of dollars, as I've said—a year in lost productivity. We see the expansion of public transit as the way to create well-paying jobs in Ontario. The whole question of Metrolinx: The implementation of Metrolinx's regional transportation plan would create some 430,000 jobs, we've been told; 17,000 in the first year alone.

I want to talk for a minute about the announcement yesterday. I want to talk about the ambitious plan for Toronto, about building the three new electrified systems across the city, because I didn't see in that announcement—I saw the construction announcement; I saw the end dates; I saw the costs. I saw the \$9 billion; I saw the

\$3 million—contrast that to \$9 billion—for a study in Hamilton. Although I welcome what is happening in Toronto, which is, after all, the largest urban agglomeration in all of Ontario, I still think we need to be looking at other places, other large cities like Hamilton and Ottawa. We need to be more proactive than simply announcing a \$3-million study plan. I'm hoping that we do that, because as Toronto will probably show the way in terms of how the money is spent and how we electrify and how we get people out of their cars, that same thing has to happen literally in every single transit system across this province, and it has to happen in smaller-city Ontario. I would suggest starting with the next-largest cities of Ottawa and Hamilton, and going down from there.

I didn't see anything in the announcement about a buy-Ontario plan. I didn't see anything in there about buying the streetcars, the light rapid transit cars, that are going to be needed by the years 2013, 2015 and 2016. That was not part of the plan and it was not part of the announcement. And if it was, it certainly didn't make the Toronto Star; it certainly didn't make the news yesterday. I watched the news last night. I watched CP24. Adam Giambrone was on there talking about the plan, but he didn't talk—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Adam Giambrone is one of the problems.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My friend from Durham here—I don't know whether he's jealous or what, but he is talking about Mr. Giambrone in terms that I think are not fair, because Mr. Giambrone has a very difficult job, in the largest transit system in this entire country, in trying to put everything together to keep people on—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** He's trying to do what David Miller tells him.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Oh, I'm hearing my friend from Durham saying that he only does what David Miller tells him to do. Well, I would suggest my friend from Durham is absolutely wrong. I don't know whether he has ever met Mr. Giambrone, but I want to tell you, Mr. Giambrone is many things, but one of them is not a puppet. Mr. Giambrone is a person of great integrity. Mr. Giambrone is a person who believes very passionately in public transit and very passionately in how to get the best bang for the buck for the people of Toronto, who, after all, pay the majority of the costs of the TTC system.

Having said that, we wonder about where the government's announcement is in terms of where those light rail vehicles are going to come from, because we have, on this side of the House and certainly in our party, advocated for a long time that these vehicles should be built in Ontario. It is essential that the vehicles be built in Ontario, not only for the safety and security of our people here but for the jobs that will come from them. We know that we have the capability in both Thunder Bay, with Bombardier, and in Hamilton to produce light rail cars. They should be produced here, and that should be part of the plan. We should be looking to start building those here, not waiting for some time or waiting for the lowest possible bid, but looking to start to build them here. We

are in a recession. We need to know, and the people who work there in the companies need to know that they will have a market to sell these.

I know that Bombardier produced the LRT vehicles for Toronto earlier. Those LRT vehicles, some of which were driverless, went on to be used in other places. They were pioneered here in Ontario, but they went on to be used in other places. They're now used in Vancouver; they're used in parts of the United States. It was that leading technology, that opportunity to build which made them into a world leader. I want to do the same thing, and I think we need to do the same thing. We need to be up-front and bold, and we need to say that what is going to be planned here will be the next generation, the brand new cars of the future, the LRT cars of the future, and that we want them to be built here.

We want the whole world, when they're looking at electrifying their systems, when they're looking at new streetcars and new LRTs, to say, "I think the place we need to go is Canada. I think the place we need to go is Ontario. I think we need to go to Hamilton and Thunder Bay to buy them, because they have the technology and the expertise and the skilled workers."

So it is a leap of faith. And might it cost more? Yes, it might. We can probably buy them cheaper in China. I'm telling you that right now; you know it and I know it and the TTC probably knows it and everybody else probably knows it too, because if you pay \$1 or \$2 an hour versus the living wage that we pay here in Ontario, it's bound to be cheaper. But I will tell you that if you want the technology of the future and want Ontario to be on the leading edge, then we have to take that leap of faith. We have to say that we want our workers to be employed and we want our workers to be there. We want to know that the people who pay the taxes for this Legislature, for the politicians who work in it, for the government, for all of the infrastructure that's going to take place, have jobs to do it.

So I'm asking the government, as part of the announcement yesterday, for that first step forward—or perhaps the second step, because they've already announced this before, but it seems to be becoming more and more pressing and the government is taking it stronger and stronger. They need to do it with a buy-in-Ontario policy. I'm suggesting that the current policy of having 25% produced in Ontario is simply not good enough.

I'm not talking about the whole thing, and I've heard the government spin about 82%; that's because it's 100% of the construction and 25% of the actual production. I'm talking about 100% of the construction and at least 50% of the manufacturing, because that is going to produce jobs in that key area and make us the technological leaders in Canada. These are wonderful opportunities for job creation through transit, but they have to be seized.

I've outlined a little bit about why we need to do this in terms of the economy. There are, of course, the environmental reasons. The environmental reasons are absolutely paramount because, as we know, Canada is a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol. The environment is

being degraded in many ways that oftentimes people are oblivious to, but we have to look at it. We see the news; we see the shrinking ice sheets; we see our iconic animal, the polar bear, being forced and squeezed into smaller and smaller spaces and the numbers starting to dwindle. We see whole areas of degradation of our environment and that we need to do something about it. Transit, and taking people out of their cars, will be a big step forward.

#### 0920

I've also alluded a little bit to the health reasons: the puffers, the kids who have asthma. There are many health effects—not good ones—as a result of congestion, pollution and people in their cars that can be alleviated in a great way. Just as this government is committed, although they've taken so long and so many steps and so many back steps in getting rid of coal-fired generation—we need to, at the same time, do the same thing in terms of the automobile. I know that smarter heads around the world are looking to electrify cars. I know they're looking at lithium ion batteries. I know they're trying to do everything possible in order to reduce the consumption of carbon-based fuels. We need to do the same thing here in Ontario, and we need to electrify the systems. We need to do it for health reasons. We need to do it for environmental reasons and, I suggest, for economic ones as well.

The question is: Will Bill 163, as it stands, speed the implementation of a regional transit plan or not? This is where I have some difficulties, because we have left out elected officials. I know that the government perhaps was a little bit concerned that some were too parochial, that some were looking at their own towns, their own cities and not at the broader picture. But if that is the problem, then they should simply say so. The government should have told the respective councils, the respective mayors, that the representatives who were being sent there were too parochial. But to simply take people off the system, I would think, is a backward step. I would suggest that every time governments of any stripe have taken elected officials off boards or committees, it has been a retrograde step.

I do remember being for many years on the board of the Children's Aid Society here in Toronto. I was on the board when I was the mayor of the borough of East York and I continued on that board following the forced amalgamation of the municipalities into the megacity of Toronto. One day came along and the government of Ontario at the time, a Conservative government led by Mike Harris, said that the elected representatives were no longer going to be on the board of the Children's Aid Society.

I don't think that was a good step for children's aid because what happened to that board—and literally what has happened to every single board, including the transit board in Vancouver, which I'm going to get to in a second. People who were on that board, who were public officials, made sure that everything was open and everything was transparent. The meetings weren't held in secret, the meetings weren't by invitation only and the meetings always had notes that were accessible to every-

one because public officials could not participate unless that was the case. As soon as that happened, I have to tell you—although I don't have firsthand experience—I stopped seeing the minutes. I stopped seeing what was happening and I started to see that that board retrenched and became much more secretive and much more difficult for ordinary people to access. We have seen, over the last seven and a half years that I have been in this Legislature, many problems. The same thing has happened—I won't have time—to the equivalent of Metrolinx in Vancouver. The same thing happened as soon as they took the public officials off the board.

I would caution the government that we need to have them back on, and perhaps at committee somebody can move such a recommendation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Before we do the questions and comments, I would like to welcome to the Legislature today Gilles Morin, the former member for Carleton East—a member of the 33rd, 34th, 35th and 36th provincial Parliaments. Mr. Morin served as Deputy Speaker during his tenure here. We welcome you here again today, sir.

Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I'd certainly like to acknowledge that the member for Beaches–East York has a long-standing interest in the provision of public transit here in Toronto, first during his time as the mayor of the borough of East York and then, of course, moving on to Toronto council after the amalgamation.

There's no question that in my own hometown of Peterborough, actually, we're quite excited. Over the last number of years, we've used the gas tax money to expand our transit significantly. I want to pay respect to councillor Len Vass, who headed up the transit review of Peterborough, and of course my good friend, Mayor Paul Ayotte, whom I have served with.

One of the things that was unique about that—those who are familiar with Peterborough—coming into Peterborough—about a decade ago we developed the Major Bennett Industrial Park. You could debate the pros and cons of the value of call centres coming into the community, but we established a unique program in our social services division in the city of Peterborough to provide job-ready opportunities for a whole variety of people who haven't had their first job experience. We developed transit into Major Bennett Industrial Park. We established the opportunity for people getting that first job to indeed use public transit because many of them didn't have cars.

In terms of Metrolinx, Metrolinx has been tasked with the responsibility to look at the feasibility study of the proposal to extend rail service from Toronto to Peterborough. I know my friend from Durham is quite excited about that initiative. So we're looking at Metrolinx to take the lead, to get the consultant in place and to take a look. We look at the opportunity; I know the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan will be a real advocate for these rail cars to be manufactured in—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's always a pleasure to follow the member from Beaches–East York. I apologize if I crossed his path with speaking broadly about Adam Giambrone, a very capable young guy. I know that when he was the policy adviser for your caucus, he was extremely thorough.

I just want to make my point, which is that the real point here is that you have to really look behind the billboard sign. This is about the ninth time they've announced this money. If you trust anything the government says, you're going to find that perhaps in 2011 or 2012 there'll be a big hole in the ground going nowhere. I'm really concerned. This amount of money going out without the people—like David Miller acting surprised. It just shows the lack of concentration. They're trying to change the channel here to a big amount of money on transit to keep Toronto happy. This is changing the channel. I have very little trust left after several broken promises, including the HST.

Here is what they're saying in my riding of Durham. I'm going to try and represent my riding and their interests to the best of my abilities. “From Durham's perspective, there are significant gaps in the RTP (regional transportation plan) over the entire 25 years,” it was said at a regional council meeting.

“Regional chairman Roger Anderson agreed Durham isn't as well served with the plan.”

I listened to the member from Peterborough. This is all about large cities, which I have no problem with, but the gas taxes—one glaring example of how this province caters to the urban vote. There is nothing for rural Ontario in this. Carol Mitchell, you should be ashamed. There's nothing in your area for transit. I think of my riding and how we get—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member knows full well that he shouldn't use another member's name as opposed to her riding, if he's making reference to it.

Questions and comments?

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** We're talking about Bill 163, An Act to amend the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority Act, 2006. I normally enjoy the comments that are made by the member from Beaches–East York because mostly he makes sense, but I am really puzzled today about his comments. And I don't even know where the Conservatives are on this because Frank Klees, a leadership candidate, says he's in favour—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I have to draw to your attention as well, apparently, that you should make reference to a member by his riding name, not by his first name or his last name.

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Before I get sidetracked by the position of the Conservatives, because we are hearing two versions this morning, I expected that there would be one version, especially when the leadership candidate is saying he supports this plan 100%. He says, and I wish the member from Durham would listen to this, “It's not”—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I will have to caution the member because he's supposed to be making

reference to the original speech that was made by the member for Beaches–East York, not attacking another member.

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I stand corrected. I got sidetracked by the party that speaks from both sides of its mouth.

But let's get back to the original comments by the member from Beaches–East York. I think he should be more positive, because today we know it's \$9 billion for transportation. It's the first time in the history of this province that this kind of money is being spent for transportation, and the member is not positive enough. I'd remind him that what's important to realize is that so many people will get jobs; I think he mentioned that to some degree. Secondly, we cannot hold this project up, and I hope his party will not be the one that will hold it up, because we're counting on them to support this bill.

0930

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'll return to the member for Beaches–East York, who has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** There's another one, isn't there?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I apologize. The member for Brant.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I just wanted to take an opportunity to speak directly to the member of Beaches–East York. He has consistently been very level-headed when it comes to pointing out the good parts and the bad parts. That's his job, and he says it that way. And I appreciate that very much.

I was very interested in his comments about expanding beyond. There are two pieces that I wanted to make sure he was aware of, and if he can acknowledge that, then maybe he will give us the negative side, of course. First, in the budget that's been presented to us, there is procurement legislation being proposed that indicates exactly what he's talking about in terms of "buy Ontario." It's called Buy Ontario, and it indicates that the province has designated that there would be proposed legislation to deal with the points he's actually making right now about whether or not procurement would be Ontario-made, and it's called Buy Ontario. I'm sure he can recognize that that's on the radar screen, and I'm glad he brought it up.

The second one is extending GO service and the transit concepts outside the areas designated in this particular legislation. He is aware that in Places to Grow he will notice that there's a 30-year build-out inside that piece of legislation, along with working with the Minister of Transportation in a 30-year build-out plan that would do the connect he's talking about. I fully support what he's talking about. I would be remiss if I didn't mention that I'm looking even beyond Hamilton, and I'm sure the member sitting beside you is aware of that. We are looking for extensions beyond simply the GTA into Hamilton, and Hamilton has been mentioned as the next connect to GO service and improvements in GO service. I'm hoping that we extend that into the riding of Brant, which is what we're working on, and to form a loop in the transportation corridors we're talking about: Niagara,

Brant, Cambridge, Kitchener-Waterloo, Barrie, Hamilton and the GTA, which I believe will address what he's talking about. I'm sure he understands that's a massive plan that takes time to accomplish.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. We'll return to the member for Beaches–East York, who has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I'd like to thank the members from Peterborough, Durham, Davenport and Brant for their comments and questions, and I'll try to respond to them as best I can.

The member from Peterborough talked about his own municipality, and I thank him for the comments on Peterborough and what is happening in Peterborough. I tried to include Peterborough in my comments, because I do believe that what is happening and what was announced yesterday in Toronto needs to be emulated throughout the province, and that smaller cities need to have the same kind of experience, the same kind of electrification, the same kind of transit programs to get people out of their cars.

The member from Durham made the very strange statement that Mr. Giambrone was a policy adviser for the NDP. I have been here for seven and a half years and I have known Mr. Giambrone even longer than that, and I want to assure the member from Durham that Mr. Giambrone never worked here—never once. I know he is a New Democrat, and I know he did hold federal office within the administration, but he has been a councillor now for two terms and is a very level-headed one on a council that does not have party politics.

I'm very puzzled by what the member from Davenport had to say. He wants me to be more positive, and he doesn't want me to hold up a bill. It is not my intention to hold up any bill. It is not the intention of the NDP to hold up any bill. It is the job of opposition to point out things in a bill that may not be exactly right. It is our job to point out some faults.

I started by commending the government for the announcement yesterday. I talked about the rationale and the reason and the jobs that are going to be created, and I am supportive of that. My job is to tell you, and where I was getting toward the end is that I believe it is important to keep elected representatives on the board of Metrolinx. I do not think it is the right policy for this government to take them off, because it will drive it into secrecy and that's the—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Almost inadvertently, I hope I was an example of the kind of behaviour that this particular bill is intended to foster and to provide an incentive for.

This morning I got up at my usual time of just shortly after 6 and dashed out of the house at 7:28. Here's how I got to work this morning: I have to pick up the 41A East at the corner of Churchill Meadows and Tacc and I have to pay for that with a 60-cent-cash fare and show them my GO train pass with an uncancelled ticket. That's one

method of transit and one method of paying for it. That takes me to the Streetsville GO train station. I cancel my GO train 10-ride pass, and I take it down to Union Station. So those are two methods of transportation operated by two companies, paid for in two different ways. At Union Station, I walk over and I get on the TTC and I take it to Queen's Park, then walk through the tunnel and I'm here. So that is the third method of transportation, operated by the third independent company which I've had to pay for—in this case using a token—just to get here.

This area, here in the greater Toronto area, has just about overtaken Chicago as the third-largest metropolitan area in North America. The largest is New York, the second-largest is Los Angeles and now the third-largest is here in the greater Toronto area. We have got to be able to do better to enable people to get from where they live to where they work, to where they study, to where they want to go for entertainment.

This bill is part of a whole series of initiatives—some of which I'm going to discuss in my 20 minutes—that enable Ontarians to do something sensible and not have to drive their cars everywhere they go. God bless; we all love our cars. Indeed, there's nothing wrong with having your car, but do you have to take your car everywhere you go? Our job as legislators is to provide a framework and the resources to enable people to have the kind of public transit they need, the kind of transit that people see when they travel abroad.

I'll use the example of two that I've seen. One is Washington, DC, where transit goes pretty much everywhere. Washington, DC, started from way behind Toronto. Toronto had a subway when Washington was car city. Another place that I was at earlier in this decade was Hong Kong. Hong Kong is roughly the equivalent of taking the entire population of the GTA and moving it into one neighbourhood. Hong Kong is dense, and for public transit, density is everything. This is something that our province was also late in learning. If we want to have cost-effective, efficient, workable public transit, then one of the things that we need is density, and that's what the Places to Grow legislation has helped us do.

In Hong Kong, when you get off the plane at the airport, you don't have to leave the terminal to get on the train that connects you with Central in Hong Kong, which is, as the name suggests, the centre of the city. You're there.

When I get on the 41A East in Mississauga, I see my fellow sleepy, bleary-eyed commuters, and I can recall that on one occasion a gentleman came up to me and he said, "Good morning. How are you?"—a little bit of chit-chat. He said to me just before I got off the bus, "It's really good to see our MPP taking the bus with us. It inspires us." I found, personally, that was very flattering, and if that's all I have to do, I'm pleased to do that. Besides, on those days that I don't have to take my car, that's an awful lot less stress on me and on every other commuter who has the luxury of not having to drive.

As well, and I'm speaking personally as a legislator, I have an opportunity on the train in the morning to do a

little focus group, to have people sit down and talk to me about whatever is on their minds, and that's something that's very precious to me as a legislator. I get a chance to hear people's thoughts.

**0940**

In the course of listening to people, I find that they like the things the province of Ontario has been doing in public transit. I'd like to talk about those things, in addition to mentioning some of the announcements just yesterday—the some \$7.2 billion to build two new light rail transit lines along Eglinton and Finch Avenue, and, of course, to upgrade the existing Scarborough rapid transit line. I'll come back to that a little bit later.

Some of the initiatives that the province of Ontario has taken in recent years have really made a difference in our neighbourhoods of western Mississauga. Let me just go over a few of them. We can all remember—or at least those of us who are over 30, I think—when inside every bus and every subway car and every GO bus and every GO train there was a sign that said, "The operation of this transit service is financially assisted by the government of Ontario." Then one day during the mid-1990s, all those signs disappeared, because for a period of years, the province of Ontario got out of the public transit business, and our roads became more and more choked with traffic.

Now the province of Ontario is back assisting public transit, doing for people here what nations across the world do to enable their people to, as I said earlier, get from where they live to where they work to where they study to where they want to go for entertainment.

We have to use public transit, and we have to marshal our resources to minimize the number of cars on our roads. Let me talk about the story of that as it applies on the Milton GO line, which serves our neighbourhoods in western Mississauga—neighbourhoods like Lisgar, Meadowvale, Streetsville, western Erin Mills and Churchill Meadows. Lisgar was the first new station to be built in the city of Mississauga in 25 years. It got started when, frankly, I began to petition the Minister of Transportation in this House and we read petitions here for more than a year. In January, a very cold day in January, the Minister of Transportation and I announced our government's intention to provide funds to GO Transit to build a new station at Lisgar to serve a very dense neighbourhood in northwest Mississauga. At a stroke, that station would help get traffic off roads like Derry Road, Aquitaine, Britannia, Battleford—all of those roads that head east in the morning. A lot of that traffic, instead of clogging those roads going this way, could go up north to Lisgar.

In point of fact, many days when I'm taking the train, I drive my car up and park it at Lisgar—a brand new station. Why do I do that? Because, among other things, while parking is very difficult to find at many GO train stations in Mississauga, you can park at Lisgar. For those who live in those neighbourhoods of Meadowvale and Lisgar and Churchill Meadows, here's a great secret from one of your MPPs: If you want to park, you can get a parking spot at Lisgar. It won't last forever, but right at the moment, it's still easy to park at Lisgar.



Construction got going in late 2006—again, on a bitterly cold day—when then-Minister of Transportation Donna Cansfield joined with our local city councillors and we turned the sod. That project proceeded very, very well. It was finished nine weeks ahead of schedule. It opened in early September 2007, and it was completed under budget. Part of the reason for that is the effective way that the city of Mississauga and the government of Ontario worked together.

It's not like the project didn't have a few bumps in the road; it certainly did, but anytime anything went wrong, our local councillor worked with me—and I can't say enough about her: Pat Saito, the councillor for ward 9 in Mississauga. Pat and I talked about Lisgar often. Anytime anything went wrong, if she didn't solve it on her end, I was able to solve it on my end, and as the guys in the construction shack told us, "Nothing happened to derail this project, and anytime anything did, you guys fixed it." So we had our GO train station nine weeks early, in the fall of 2007.

Construction on the station is now complete and, as I speak in this month of April 2009, there is a brand new windmill that's going to generate just about all of the electricity for the station, when the wind is blowing, and be able to make a contribution for the grid. That windmill is pretty much complete. They're just synchronizing it and doing the testing before they connect it up and enable it to power Lisgar and to make a contribution for the grid.

As well, when the Lisgar station was built, it was designed from the very outset to accommodate 12-car-long trains—12-car-long trains that at the time the station was built weren't then running on the GO line, but we knew they were coming and they were designed in from the very start. These days on the Milton line, all of the trains pull 12 cars. The station was designed from the very outset to assume that there was going to be a third track on the Milton line—a third track that was announced in July 2007 as part of Ontario's Move 2020 plan. So Lisgar is completely ready.

Let's talk about some of the work on the other GO train stations on the Milton line. At Meadowvale, near where I lived for about 11 years, the platform has been extended to accommodate those 12-car trains. When Meadowvale was built in the early 1980s, at a time when interest rates were peaking at some 20%, they cut every corner they could in construction. So finally, years later, we have proper disabled access to get from the station on to the platform; there's a brand new elevator, a brand new tunnel; there are more platform shelters; they've resurfaced the area. There's a general station upgrade at Meadowvale so at least the experience of taking the train at Meadowvale has been substantially enhanced in recent years.

At Streetsville, in 2003, when I was knocking on doors and asking for people's support in my first election, one of the things that several of the residents mentioned—and then I started to talk about it and more residents mentioned it—was the length of the parking lot and the fact that you've got a long walk if you're on the

last three trains—to park your car, to walk literally about a city block to get up to the station, to buy your fare, cancel your ticket, to go under the tunnel, to get on the platform, to walk part of the way back to get on the train. The good part about that is, it keeps you in shape. The flip side of that is it's a pretty miserable walk when you're walking into the teeth of a blizzard or into driving rain. So I spoke with the people from GO Transit. They sent out the traffic engineers and they said, "You know, you're right. We can do this for the people of Streetsville. We can put in a new access tunnel." Work on that tunnel began in July 2008; it's nearing completion. So for those of us who occasionally drive our cars and park them at Streetsville, if you're on the last three trains and you're parking near the back of the lot, you're going to have a much shorter walk. They're not going to be selling tickets at the access tunnel, but if you've got a monthly pass or a 10-ride ticket or a two-ride ticket, you can cancel your ticket, go underneath the tunnel and get on the train and skip an awful lot of that long walk—a real progressive move for GO Transit. I really thank them for their co-operation.

Among the other things that are in the process of happening or are substantially completed at Streetsville, the old bricks that over the decades had heaved and cracked and were notorious for puddles when it was raining and really slick ice when it was cold have all been taken up and they've been replaced with new concrete. The station has received a general upgrade. You can now buy a cup of coffee there.

in Streetsville, Meadowvale and Lisgar—to my good friend at the Toronto Star, Jim Coyle, who was wondering out loud in print about a week ago about what difference a government member who is not a cabinet minister can make, I can point to those three projects, as well as to the extension of Credit Valley Hospital, and say that those are projects that, as a member, I worked on and those are projects that are under way today in part because our government listened to the people of the city. That's some of the difference that an individual member can make.

One of the other projects that GO Transit has been very effective with has been the brand new bus garage and repair facility in Streetsville. It opened just this past winter, provided 180 new jobs—this was about a \$50-million project—and one of the features about the bus garage is its green footprint. This is a facility that is energy-efficient to the limit of the way technology can do it today. This enables a lot of the GO buses that serve our northwest neighbourhoods to basically come home to go to sleep close to where they're going to start in the morning, to be able to be washed and repaired close to where they operate, and to minimize the amount of deadheading of an empty bus driving on roads and taking up traffic space. It's a very attractive facility and, frankly, is a major enhancement to the neighbourhood.

#### 0950

On the other stations on the Milton line, Erindale and Cooksville are in the middle of major expansions of their

parking capacity. For those residents who live in those neighbourhoods, this is going to mean that if you want to connect to the GO train and take it downtown, you can connect close to where you live, and the shortage of parking will soon be alleviated.

I'd like to talk about two more things in my remaining time. One is the capacity expansion, given the limitations that we do have. I mentioned earlier that the trains on the Milton line are now all 12 cars long. The Milton line was the first place that GO Transit deployed its new locomotives, which I think are called the MP40 series, that are powerful enough to haul 12 loaded passenger cars. By increasing those trains from 10 to 12 cars, we immediately increased the capacity of each train by 20%—and GO has recently announced one new train on the Milton line, one in the morning and another one in the afternoon, so we're going to increase the capacity by another 16% on those crowded trains with one new train.

The other one I want to mention in my remaining time is the third track on the Milton line. In the Kinsmen Centre in Streetsville, there's an aerial picture of Mississauga taken in July 1950, looking northwest. Running right down the centre of that are two rail lines. There were probably two rail lines for decades before that. Today, there are just two rail lines that connect Milton to Toronto down through the Milton corridor. There has been a lot of growth since then. We have got to make the pie larger in order to be able to provide more reliable GO train service two ways. As it is, the trains only go east in the morning and only come west in the afternoon. We need two-way GO train service to help more people get out of their cars and take the train to and from work, whether they're going or coming in the middle of the day.

The line is owned by CP Rail, and CP Rail uses that line for freight purposes, for all intents and purposes, at 100% of its capacity. Those big freight trains are now upwards of a kilometre or two kilometres long as they rumble past. So to make that pie larger, we have to build a third track to enable two-way GO train service.

I've spoken to GO Transit about that for a number of years. GO Transit had the first level of environmental assessment in the fall of 2006. In 2007-08, they did the full-blown environmental assessment, which, not surprisingly, has shown that there are no insurmountable problems in adding a third track to the Milton GO line. The engineering study to lead to the drafting of tender documents to go to request for proposals will be done, I am told, this year. That would mean that as early as next year—and we do hope it will be next year—GO Transit can issue that request for proposals and hope to get a good, competitive winning tender. It's about a three-year build-out from the time the shovel goes in the ground until the time the third track is complete and we can put more trains on the line, and we can have all-day train service helping people who live in those Mississauga neighbourhoods of Meadowvale, Streetsville, Lisgar, Churchill Meadows, central Erin Mills, Cooksville, Dixie and so on and so forth to get to and from Toronto.

This has all been a part of projects such as what was announced yesterday. In doing my summary of the work on the Milton GO line, I've also left out the expansion of the Lakeshore line, where a third track will be added to greatly enhance the ability of commuters in Clarkson and Port Credit to get to and from downtown. These are just a small part of our government's efforts to work for the benefit of Ontario to enable people to commute more efficiently.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Mississauga—Streetsville did give us a fairly decent itinerary of how he gets to work, but there was little content in his remarks on Bill 163, dealing with the governance of Metrolinx, as well as the question, "Where's the money?" We see the money announced this morning; we saw the same money announced in 2007. It's 2009, and we've just had a budget. I'm concerned that this Move Ontario plan, the MoveOntario 2020 plan that was part of their election scheme in 2007, is part of a grander scheme of not being straightforward with the people of Ontario.

I am looking forward to a more critical assessment of Bill 163 by the member from Newmarket—Aurora, Mr. Klees. Mr. Klees did serve as the Minister of Transportation. He's also one of the highly respected members who will be seeking the leadership of the Conservative Party, which I think would be quite threatening to the current McGuinty government.

That being said, the member from Streetsville talked about his particular application to the minister. I think it could be considered a conflict of interest that he is improving his own conditions. I can understand looking after constituents, but it sounds to me like you're taking credit for the tunnel being dug. I'd like to see where that money has been allocated. If it had anything to do with you, I think you should be dealing with the Integrity Commissioner.

I would sooner deal with the lack of service in Durham. When you start to talk about the east-west spine, Durham region—the regional transit in Durham—is working hard, but they're being ignored by the government. In fact, I cited that earlier today in quotes from the paper by Roger Anderson as well as the director of transportation for the region.

The member from Mississauga—Streetsville means well, and I think he should consider his investments—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I also would echo some of the member's concerns. The member from Mississauga is doing his job. He's trying to represent his people the best way he can, and I commend him for that. However, I must inform him that Ontario doesn't end in Mississauga and Streetsville. It's not all about that area. The member from Brant and I can attest to the needs of Hamilton and Brantford. I know he's doing his thing for his people and is doing a good job; however, he's forgetting about the rest of us.

We need some major, major transitions in Hamilton: one from the James Street train station to the airport—they're trying to expand Hamilton airport to expand commerce and transport in Ontario. And we also need a B line, which I hear is going ahead—we're in the top five under consideration. But I can't emphasize enough that the member has to look at the big picture. It's not all about one area and the needs of one area. Ontario is a big place.

Also there is another side to Ontario, across that Skyway Bridge, that is not getting its fair shake when it comes to transit or light rail or the things we need. Hamilton has been overlooked for years. We're one of the largest cities in Ontario, and we've been overlooked many, many times. There is a little bit—a tidbit—of the billions of dollars that are coming to Hamilton. Not enough, not fast enough. We need consideration west of the Skyway Bridge.

I hope that, in deliberations with his caucus, this member and the rest of the members will consider a good portion of Ontario that is being ignored.

**1000**

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** I want to congratulate the member from Mississauga–Streetsville. Some of the comments that were made by the member from Durham with regard to the comments of the member from Mississauga–Streetsville—he talked about riding public transit, he talked about the planning, he talked about the impact on his community, he talked about the regional aspect of it. Then the member stands up and criticizes that.

Don't just take the word of the member from Mississauga–Streetsville on it; let's hear what the mayor of Mississauga has to say about this important piece of legislation. "I'm very pleased with it," said Hazel McCallion, mayor of Mississauga, when asked what she thinks of the proposed legislation.

"First of all, Metrolinx was delayed more than a year because of controversies between municipalities as to how many elected people should be on the board. I think an independent board overseeing all of the systems is important for resolving these kinds of disputes. There needs to be more than the regional systems, so I'm delighted."

When we hear the concerns of the members from across the way, we understand that a regional system is a system that looks to the future of what we need for transit to move people around. That is certainly how we've moved forward with growth patterns and how we have made significant investments in infrastructure.

I just wanted to set the record straight with regard to the gas tax after a comment made by the member from Durham region, just to let him know that in fact Huron–Bruce does receive funding from the gas tax. We don't have GO Transit, we don't have subway links, but what we do have are buses moving around, albeit limited, but we do what we can. And this is the first time the provincial government has come to the table.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to enter the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yes—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** You've already had one. You can't.

Member for Beaches–East York.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** To comment on the member from Mississauga–Streetsville, I always enjoy listening to him. He is articulate. He brings home his riding to this Legislature. He lets us know what is happening in Mississauga, particularly in Mississauga–Streetsville. But I was hoping to have heard some more from a government member, especially one who is so articulate, because Bill 163 talks about a lot more than just what is happening in any particular area. I know that I perhaps dwelt a little long on what was happening in Toronto, but that is an agglomeration of 22 or 23 ridings, and it impacts the ridings outside of it as well, with moving people around.

I was hoping he would have talked—and he should have talked—about the structure of what is being set up in Metrolinx and how that will improve or not improve the structure that exists today.

I was hoping he would have talked about public participation on the new board—because oftentimes boards that do not contain public figures tend to be closed boards—and whether or not he thought that a closed-board system was better than what was taking place at the present time.

I was hoping he would have talked about the transparency, whether or not this new Metrolinx is going to have public meetings and public records and people will be able to come and listen, or at least see the minutes.

I was hoping he was going to talk about the ownership of assets—because right now the assets are primarily contained and owned by the respective municipalities, Toronto having the largest assets, but Mississauga also having a fair amount of assets of public vehicles and a public vehicle system—and who will own the assets in the future, whether or not the municipalities will have to give them up; and, last but not least, the local plans for transit. Maybe he can address those in the two—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. I'll return to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville to respond.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I want to thank the members for Durham, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Huron–Bruce and Beaches–East York for their comments.

To the member for Durham: Mayor McCallion, as the member for Huron–Bruce has pointed out, supports the new governance model. The Milton line is a perfect example of how a promise made is in fact a project delivered and a real success.

With regard to his comments on the Streetsville upgrades and the access tunnel, I do take part of the credit for that. I say to the member for Durham: If you have a problem with that, shame on you.

To the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, I thank him for acknowledging our success. One of the things that we need is those rail upgrades on the Lake-shore line to better serve not only Hamilton but the Niagara Peninsula. So I thank you for the comments; you're absolutely right. Those things that we need are the things that are going to be required to get rail service going between Hamilton and Metro Toronto, because you can't just fly over Mississauga; you have to go through Mississauga.

The member for Huron–Bruce has pointed out that if we don't have the infrastructure, then, for example, we cannot expand the Milton line, which is already running at capacity, to Cambridge and beyond. We can't better serve the rapidly growing neighbourhoods in Milton unless we expand capacity on the Milton line.

I thank the member for Beaches–East York as well. Just to make something very clear on it, the Milton line impacts some 12 or 14 different ridings. If we don't improve the infrastructure on the Milton line, we can't properly service a big chunk of Metro Toronto that depends on the Milton line. So I thank you very much for pointing out how Bill 163, through its application on the Milton line, is going to make a difference for the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I'm pleased to participate in this debate. As I indicated in my response to the minister's statement when he tabled this legislation, I will speak in favour of the legislation and support it.

What is interesting is how long it took this government to realize that the governance model that they have had in place simply would not achieve the objective of a truly coordinated transportation and transit system for the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. The reason for that, I think, is predictable. We can't blame elected officials for advocating for their particular region or their particular priorities. In fact, that is what they get elected to do.

I represent one of the fastest-growing regions in this province, perhaps even in the country, York region, so the issue of transit and transportation is always top of mind. The issue of gridlock and its impact on the economy and on the quality of life in our communities is a major one. Since being elected in 1995, I've identified the issue of gridlock as one of the top three priority issues that governments should be addressing. Unfortunately, it hasn't been within the top three priorities either of this government or, unfortunately, the previous government of which I was part. I believe it was a grave error, because transportation, transit, the ability to move through our communities, is critical not only to the quality of life of individuals but to our economy as well. It really should be seen as fundamental, and it should be a priority in the decision-making of any government, and that's why I recommend it.

In fact, as Minister of Transportation, my recommendation was that we would move to a regional system. From the very outset, it was my opinion that any board

overseeing a regional authority would consist not of elected officials, but would have individuals responsible for decision-making who are experts in the field of transit and transportation planning and land use so that there isn't a conflict in terms of political override of what the appropriate plan for transportation and transit should look like. It shouldn't be whether I think the priority is for my particular community. There's a responsibility that we ensure that we have an interconnected, congruous transportation and transit system that in fact serves the greater area, and that it is also then constructed in the most efficient way and in an accountable way so that all who are contributing to its cost will not only know that it's being done efficiently but will also be assured that there is value for the tax dollars that are being invested.

#### 1010

The first comment that I made to the minister when I saw this new act was that I welcome this governance model. When the previous bill was introduced in this House, I criticized the legislation at that time because the governance model was not right. Unfortunately, it took this government considerable time to come to that realization, and we've wasted a lot of time as a result of that. With every day that goes by that we don't take action on a substantive policy, we lose the opportunity to regain some of that lost time. However, here we are.

The one thing that I will say, though, is that I don't understand why this government continues to do business the way it does. One of the questions that I asked during the briefing that we had was, were the municipalities consulted before this plan was proposed? The response that I got was that Metrolinx was consulted, but municipalities were not. I think that municipalities have to be wondering why this government chose not to consult with them prior to taking this very significant step that essentially, in one way, closes municipalities out of the loop. I'm not saying that they should have compromised on the governance model, and I hear the third party saying that they want to introduce amendments that will bring elected officials back into the governance model. I want to be very straight with the member who's proposing this, Mr. Prue. I certainly will not support that amendment, because I think it's been too long coming to give us what we have before us now, and I have a feeling that the government won't support that amendment either. But having said that, I do think that with regard to any legislation that's introduced in this House that affects our municipal partners, the right thing to do is to bring them into consultation early on in the deliberations. I think that simply shows respect for our partners.

What I want to address here is the issue of—I want to raise a caution, because one of the important steps taken in this legislation is to give this new agency, Metrolinx—which combines GO Transit with Metrolinx—the authority to own new transit infrastructure. That sounds reasonable, because the justification is that we're going to place the ownership into this agency, which is then controlled by the provincial government, which allows, then, for the provincial government to deal with the funding issues in

a more efficient way—and that, again, makes good sense. My caution goes to the transparency and the accountability measures that are put in place to ensure the appropriate accountability by Metrolinx to the provincial government.

We have an example that I'm reviewing now that actually came to my attention just a couple of weeks ago within York region, where its transit authority appears to have the authority not only to own infrastructure that relates to transit—stations, buses and so on—but it also appears to transfer the authority to own property that would then be developed for purposes other than transit. It may be justifiably related in some stretch of the definition, but essentially what it would do is give that authority the right to own property for the purposes of developing commercial property and even residential property.

I don't believe that is the role, nor should it be the role, of a transit authority. That's the role of the private sector. If there will be expropriations of land for the purpose of facilitating transit or transportation or rights of way, then there should be a very specific framework of responsibility. It should be well defined what this agency can and cannot do with that property. The last thing that we want is for Metrolinx, or any other transit authority, for that matter, to on the one hand have the authority, the power and the support of the provincial government to expropriate lands and then to take it upon itself to actually develop those lands for purposes other than directly related to transit. I don't think that's appropriate and I believe that in the final analysis we have to put some specific guidelines in place to ensure that.

I see, Speaker, that you're giving me notice that my time is up. I have much more to say on that, but I have to defer to you, sir, as the Speaker.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I have to observe the rules of the House and the standing orders. As such, this House stands in recess until 10:30, when we'll reconvene for question period.

*The House recessed from 1017 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'd like to welcome Patricia Pepper in the assembly today: a dedicated volunteer from the great city of Ottawa.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** Today in the galleries and here at the Legislature are several hundred women from the Ontario Women's Liberal Commission, and in particular, I hope that members of the assembly might join me in welcoming the member of Parliament for Scarborough Southwest, Michelle Simson, and Liana Turrin, the president of the Ontario Women's Liberal Commission, and all others who have come to the Legislature today.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'aimerais reconnaître plusieurs jeunes qui font partie du Parlement jeunesse et qui sont

ici avec nous aujourd'hui. Je commence avec Kamal Alem, qui est de Sudbury; ensuite, Justin Bélanger, qui est de Timmins–Baie James; Mélanie Dufresne, également de Timmins; Mireille Lemieux, Rémi Nolet et Brandon Garnett, qui sont tous du comté de Timmins–Baie James; Jessie Turcotte; Justin Morin-Carpentier; Chantal Renaud, qui est de Nickel Belt; Kevin Dumoulin; Courtney Tresidder; Carla DeCeccio; Alexire Morier; William Stuckless; et Vincent Bergeron, qui font tous partie du Parlement jeunesse francophone. Ce sont des jeunes du nord. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** Il me fait plaisir de souhaiter la bienvenue aux élèves de 41 écoles secondaires francophones de l'Ontario. Ces élèves, qui représentent les écoles de leur région, participent au troisième Parlement jeunesse francophone, qui se déroule ici même à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario.

Merci au personnel enseignant qui les accompagne. Bienvenue à Queen's Park et bon succès dans vos délibérations.

I would like also to mention that there are 11 students from my own riding who are part of the group today.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I would like to introduce two students who are here with us today. Jessie Turcotte, from École secondaire l'Orée des Bois à Dubreuilville, is a student at this brand new school that we were most proud to open late last year. She travelled on her first airplane to get down here today. Her teacher is Gabrielle Lemieux. And from Elliot Lake, Justin Morin-Carpentier, who attends Villa française des Jeunes. It's Justin's second visit here.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Today being World Autism Day, I would like to ask for unanimous consent for everybody to be allowed to wear the bracelet that represents autism.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** I'd like to welcome two very good friends in the east gallery this morning, Niki Worton and Cathy Caissie, from my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I have several guests from Ajax–Pickering, but I would certainly like to focus on one lady in the east members' gallery. I am related to her through marriage. I'd like to introduce my wife to the Legislature this morning.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** As I'm unable to be here this afternoon and I believe some members of my riding will be here, I want to welcome them in advance: Tom, Pam, Kayla and Debbie Hawkins, who are family to the family who unfortunately passed away due to carbon monoxide poisoning and who will be here this afternoon for the private member's bill. I'm really pleased that they'll be able to be here for that today.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'd like to welcome, from my riding, Chloée Godin-Jacques, who is in the Speaker's gallery today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On behalf of the member from Scarborough Southwest and page Olivia

Peters, I'd like to welcome her mother, Irene Makeeff Peters; her brother, Nicholas Peters; her grandmother, Lydia Makeeff; her uncle, Winston Shantora; and her aunt, Nadia Shantora, sitting today in the Speaker's gallery. Welcome. A special welcome to my nephew, Nick.

As well, on behalf of the Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services and page Jackson Amos, I would like to welcome his mother, Linda Amos, and his sister, Elizabeth Amos, sitting today in the east members' gallery.

Also, we'd like to acknowledge in the Speaker's gallery Mr. Gilles Morin, the member for Carleton East in the 33rd, 34th, 35th and 36th Parliaments, and also a former Deputy Speaker. Welcome back, Gilles.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Eglinton–Lawrence is out of order.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is to the Minister of Health. Electronic health records will improve patient access to care and patient safety. By the Minister of Health's own admission to a group of nurses on January 22, 2009, he said, "Ontario really lags behind other jurisdictions and provinces in developing electronic health services." One has to question why that is the case when this Premier has poured over half a billion taxpayer dollars into the Smart Systems for Health Agency.

Minister, in your opinion, is pouring more than \$600 million into a now defunct agency a prudent and caring thing to do during such challenging economic times?

**Hon. David Caplan:** The member well knows the Smart Systems for Health Agency. I believe she was the one who had set it up. I do think it's a fair characterization. While they did much good work, they did not achieve the goal in the mandate which they were set. That is why, upon becoming Minister of Health, I set about creating eHealth Ontario. I think that in eHealth Ontario we have the individuals and the expertise which are going to be necessary to be able to transform Ontario's electronic health infrastructure to be what it should be. In fact, we've been able to attract on the board David Livingston, president and CEO of Infrastructure Ontario; Matthew Anderson, CEO of the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network; Heather Sherrard, vice-president of clinical services at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, and many, many others. I believe these individuals, along with its chair, Alan Hudson, will make wise use of the—

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

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** After sinking more than 600 million taxpayer dollars into Smart Systems for Health, the Premier decided to abolish it and set up another agency. He did so, by the way, very quietly.

Minister, the fact that this organization was abolished is a clear admission that it was an utterly failed program on your part. The fact that not one board member of the former agency is now part of the new agency shows an utter failure on your part. In the Ministry of Health results plan briefing book, it says, "Ontarians are entitled to know what they are getting for their money." I agree. Minister, will you today call in the Auditor General to do a value-for-money audit of the agency?

**Hon. David Caplan:** In fact the Auditor General, as an independent officer of this Legislature, is available to be able to, if he believes, provide any analysis, but I can tell the member that I have tremendous confidence in Dr. Hudson and in Sarah Kramer, the new president and CEO, to be able to transform Ontario's electronic health infrastructure.

I've instructed them to begin with a diabetes registry. The next product that I believe is going to be critical is an e-prescribing regime that will link Ontario physicians with pharmacists, and we'll be able to cut down on adverse events and errors. The third one, of course, which is critical to us and which we are absolutely determined to see put into place, is an electronic health record for all Ontarians.

In fact, we've celebrated 10 years of the Electronic Child Health Network, where they have provided a fabulous template, and that is a good example of some of the work that has been done previously.

I can assure this member that I have placed at my—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

1040

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** It's obvious that this minister does not want to talk about Smart Systems for Health. He is totally disregarding the right of the public to know how this \$647 million was spent—this at a time when this government has demonstrated runaway spending and mismanagement of millions and millions of dollars.

I say to you today: Minister, are you willing to direct the Auditor General to commence a value-for-money audit of the Smart Systems for Health Agency, or are you going to continue to show your disregard and disdain for the taxpayers in this province?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I disagree with the rhetoric and nonsense of the member opposite. Quite frankly, she set up an agency which didn't fulfill its mandate. That's why I came along, along with my predecessor, to be able to re-form this agency, eHealth Ontario, with, I believe, the board and the personnel in place to be able to fulfill a very important function of an e-health infrastructure. I believe they are on the right track.

I would also mention to the member opposite that we're working very closely with our federal counterparts—they, in their recent budget, also recapitalized Canada Health Infoway to the tune of half a billion dollars. I expect that Ontario will be receiving its appropriate and fair share of those funds to be able to invest in important electronic health infrastructure that Ontarians would expect would fuel the revolution in health care.

The 2008 budget committed \$47 million, and in the most recent budget brought down—

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

#### ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** It's apparent that the Minister of Health and the Premier have something to hide, and they're avoiding calling in the Auditor General.

We found some information through a freedom-of-information inquiry. We found some secrets that you would like to bury under the bushes. Despite no results, let me quote some of the spending that you allowed from 2003 to 2008. In 2003, the agency had \$24,000 in travel expenses; in 2008, that number had skyrocketed to nearly \$430,000. Food expenses in 2008: \$85,000. The list goes on and on.

Minister, why do you want to hide this information from taxpayers?

**Hon. David Caplan:** The member's question belies her charge in this Legislature. In fact, all of the information is presented in public accounts, which I assume is where the member was able to obtain the information.

In fact, it had not been the case when that member had the privilege to sit on your right hand that such information was easily made available to this Legislature and to the public. I would suggest that that is a significant contrast between her actions and the actions of this government. This government believes in transparency. This government believes in accountability. This government believes in expanding the powers of the Provincial Auditor to go in and take a look at the various agencies, boards and commissions right across the province of Ontario.

That member has opposed those actions, and that member has opposed accountability and transparency. I'll take no such lectures from the member, given such a sorry track record as we've seen in the past. Our record on electronic health in fact is to correct her errors and see—

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

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I gather from the minister's response that he's either in complete denial or—just as unacceptable, and I sometimes feel that might be the case—he really doesn't really know what's going on at his ministry.

Let me point out some other examples of the entitlement atmosphere of this government. The agency was disbanded by the Premier and given a new name and a new CEO. So what happened? The new CEO spent \$24,000 on new furniture, \$17,000 on office renovations, over \$1,000 on artwork and over \$1,000 on blinds and window dressings. This is one office where this government spent nearly \$50,000. That's more than most Ontarians make in a year.

Minister, how can you find that acceptable and why are you trying to hide the facts from the public? Why will you not ask the—

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

**Hon. David Caplan:** Nothing could be further from the truth. All of this information is public through, first of all, estimates and then through public accounts.

I can tell you that I and the government have directed Infrastructure Ontario to identify and examine new and innovative alternative finance and procurement models that can be used to successfully deliver health information technology projects. For example, the diabetes registry will help 900,000 people living with diabetes be able to manage their care by providing them with up-to-date information and educational tools electronically. Its purpose is to reduce the gap between recommended guidelines and the care Ontarians receive by providing clinicians with reminders and reports; by linking those allied health professionals—physicians, nurses, dietitians, physiotherapists and pharmacists and many, many others—with the patients to be able to manage their conditions. I believe we have the right individuals in the right place with the right mandate to revolutionize—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** It's obvious the minister doesn't want to talk about Smart Systems for Health, and with good reason. This government is not going to achieve until 2015 what other provinces are going to achieve in 2010. The taxpayers have a right to know that the money that is being set aside by this government is going to be well spent, because we have six more years where you have the opportunity to squander their money. And you've already done so: You've wasted \$647 million.

So I ask you today one more time: Will you call in the Auditor General to do a value-for-money audit of this agency, or will you continue to hide the truth from the taxpayers?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I don't need the honourable member's—withdraw the comment, please.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I will.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister.

**Hon. David Caplan:** Nothing could be further from the truth. The member knows that all of the information is available to the public through estimates and through public accounts. The member equivocates when it comes to these matters. She in fact was the one who set up the Smart Systems for Health Agency. It was the actions of myself and this government which have eliminated or quashed Smart Systems for Health and formed eHealth Ontario. As I've said, Dr. Alan Hudson is its chair, and Sarah Kramer, formerly at Cancer Care Ontario, is its current president and CEO. I believe these individuals have the ability, the acumen and the dedication to be able to implement a very aggressive and important program, which unfortunately was not started under a previous government. We will reach our goal of a diabetes registry. We will reach our goal of e-prescribing. We will reach our goal of an electronic health record for all Ontarians. This member offers no constructive suggestion—

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

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Acting Premier. The average Ontario family spends \$4,174 on basics like gas for the car, home heating and electricity. An 8% tax hike is going to cost them an extra \$330 on those basics alone. When families are worried about job loss and fewer work hours that are available to them in this economic situation, why are the McGuinty Liberals hitting them with an 8% tax hike?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I would remind the leader of the third party that in fact Ontario families can expect a \$10.6-billion cut in personal taxes, much of that accruing to low-income families. I would remind the member opposite that Ontario is creating the largest sales tax credit in the country. That will help Ontarians of modest income. We are increasing the Ontario child benefit to \$1,100. The NDP vote and speak against that. That kind of initiative, sir—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** You may want to be in your seat.

Minister.

1050

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The members of the NDP voted against every one of those initiatives.

Finally, I'd remind the leader of the third party that she and her predecessor signed a letter to this government, inviting us—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** No, don't stop the clock. I'd just remind the member from Hamilton East that if he's going to be making any interjections, he would probably be best sitting in his own seat.

Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The average household spends about \$7,700 on purchases that will be hit with an 8% tax hike. That is the fact. That includes everything from gas to the Internet bill to magazines to haircuts. The tax hike means more than \$580 a year extra in taxes. It will be thousands more if you buy a house or if you have the misfortune of having to bury a loved one and pay for the funeral.

Why are the McGuinty Liberals taking more than \$580 out of the average family budget when people are losing their jobs?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In fact, 93% of Ontarians will see their overall tax burden decrease because of this government.

I'd say to the leader of the third party: Why is it that your party very recently called upon us to increase the provincial sales tax? You didn't ask us to increase the child benefit; in fact, you voted against that. You didn't ask us to cut personal taxes for the lowest bracket in Canada to give our people of modest incomes the lowest tax rates.

Why did you want us to increase the provincial sales tax without any of that? That party and its leader don't

understand the importance of cutting personal taxes at this time. They don't understand the importance of the Ontario child benefit. This government, this party and our Premier certainly do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Horwath:** Again, I'm asking questions to this minister about his tax policy. We've actually used this government's own online calculator to compare the \$580 in higher taxes to their permanent tax savings that this minister brags so much about. The one-earner couple with two children in Thunder Bay making \$50,000 is going to stand to lose—to lose, Minister—\$356 a year. With your own calculator, the two-earner couple with one child in Toronto making \$50,000 will stand to lose \$140 a year. The two-earner couple in Windsor making \$75,000 a year will stand to lose \$75 a year.

Why are the McGuinty Liberals telling worried families that they're going to be better off when clearly they won't?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** What's clear is that the member hasn't even listened to groups and individuals like Hugh Mackenzie, who say that this is a positive tax cut for Ontarians of modest income.

Again, I remind her that she asked me what our policy is. Our policy is to cut taxes for low-income Ontarians, which is exactly what we're doing. In contrast, she and her party laid out a very clear policy. They said, in a letter to Premier McGuinty dated November 2007, "Raise the provincial sales tax 1%." That would have hit low-income Ontarians. That would have hurt the poorest in our society. It shows no vision and no understanding of reality. To make matters worse, it's no wonder she's got her math all wrong: She refused to get a briefing from the Ministry of Finance. She wouldn't take us up on it. Mr. Hudak did; the—

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

## PROVINCIAL PURCHASING POLICY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is to the Acting Premier. Yesterday, the government announced funding for two of Toronto's transit city lines, which is something that we support. But without a buy-Ontario requirement there is no guarantee that the value-added transit vehicle manufacturing work is going to take place right here in Ontario. Why is this government missing an opportunity to create long-term jobs by rejecting a buy-Ontario policy?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** To the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The member would know that in fact we do have a policy on procurement, which calls for a minimum of 25% Canadian content, recognizing, of course, that Ontario is an exporting province that relies on no retaliation from other jurisdictions, which the member wishes to invite.

I say this as well: She will know that the Toronto Transit Commission has made a policy that says they will have 25% Canadian content. The Toronto Transit Com-



mission is an organization which has, I think, a strong social conscience and recognizes the importance of creating jobs in the province. And we are—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I think everyone would agree that money for transit is definitely good, but creating long-term, value-added jobs in our struggling manufacturing sector while making Ontario the international hub for light rail is even better. Ontario families should be able to expect good streetcar service in Toronto and the manufacturing jobs of the future in Thunder Bay, in Mississauga, in Oshawa and in Windsor. A buy-Ontario policy with a 50% transit vehicle manufacturing requirement would get us there. Why is this government rejecting a strong buy-Ontario policy?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The member would understand as well that approximately 82% of the jobs that will be created from the major initiatives that this government is undertaking are in fact jobs which will be helping the province of Ontario, will be in the province of Ontario. That is a substantial number.

I think if you looked at various projects in various jurisdictions, to have 82% of the jobs in your own jurisdiction is rather astounding. So I could play a game, and that game would be, on one particular project you could say 75%, because that particular vehicle, for instance, is made only in Ontario. I don't play that particular game. Nevertheless, we are successful in those bids, and again, overall—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** But what I would hope this minister would understand is that companies are closing down across Ontario and thousands of families are being affected by job loss. The impact is real, yet the McGuinty Liberals are content with spending money on transit without thinking about ways to make those dollars work for our struggling families in this province, in hard-hit communities across Ontario.

Transit spending and bringing jobs for the future to Ontario go hand in hand. Why are the McGuinty Liberals rejecting a buy-Ontario policy for this province?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Well, in fact, we have not. That is the difference. We have created a policy, after very wide consultation with all concerned, of a minimum of 25% Canadian content on any procurement that takes place. Nevertheless, 82% of the jobs in these particular projects will originate in Ontario. Steel will come from the province of Ontario, other products will come from the province of Ontario, and I can assure you that the workers will be from Ontario.

But the member should remember that the people from the province of Ontario who make products for other places do not want to face the kind of retaliation that she invites with the kind of policies that she's advocating at the present time. If you look at vehicles, for instance, 85% of our cars in this province are sold in the United States. How would you like retaliatory—

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

## AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Frank Klees:** The question is to the Minister of Finance. Car dealers experienced the worst March in 12 years in this province. Two months before the tabling of the budget, the PC caucus put forward recommendations to the Minister of Finance and asked him to come to the aid of this industry by providing incentives to consumers. Specifically, we proposed a three-month provincial sales tax holiday, with which we have experience in this province, very successfully, in 1989. There was nothing in this budget at all. In fact, there wasn't even a mention of the auto sector in the minister's speech—nothing—and now, car dealers across this province continue to suffer. I ask the minister, why was there no provision for a provincial sales tax holiday and no aid to the auto industry in this budget?

1100

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Let me address the question. First of all, we do have experience with that, with a tax holiday, and the experience was that it didn't increase vehicle sales. It certainly did not work. What we did, however, and what we are doing: In December, we committed \$1.3 billion to help the auto sector; that member's party didn't support that. We created the AMIS fund, the Next Generation of Jobs Fund. We have helped retool our plants over the last number of years so they can be competitive—and they are and they're among the best plants in the world. That member and his party voted and spoke against those initiatives.

At a time of global economic crisis, this government is the only subnational government that has come through with assistance to the automobile sector. We're proud to be there, and we're going to continue to work with the industry, with the CAW, to help protect that vital footprint in Ontario's economy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** The Minister of Finance has it absolutely wrong. The facts show that when the provincial sales tax holiday was implemented in this province, sales of cars and trucks increased by 17%. In one month, there were 17,500 units that moved off car lots in this province. Why didn't he do the research? Why didn't he do what we asked him to do: a simple sales tax holiday for three months that would stimulate sales, that would help people in the auto sector and car dealers across this province cope with the gridlock on their parking lots? Why did he not include it? The evidence is there that it works. It would have been transparent; it would have been funds that would have gone directly to consumers. He failed to address the issue. Why not?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member said that there's no mention in the budget of the auto sector; I'd refer him to page 15.

The member is right: That one month they did go up, but the next month they fell back down, and there was no increase in sales over time. We don't accept the policy; we think you're wrong about it. We didn't include it. We have, however, included enormous tax cuts for the manufacturing and automotive sector.

I remind the member of some of the quotes from those—let's take Ian Howcroft, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters: "Overall we're very pleased with today's budget, it addresses many of our long-standing issues and priorities. I think that it shows that the government was listening. We're particularly pleased with regards to the harmonization of the GST and PST, we've been advocating that for a long, long time." They're also pleased with the corporate tax cuts.

I support those folks, people like Ian Howcroft and other independents. We have laid out the right plan for the future. I hope that member—

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

#### AUTISM TREATMENT

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. A distraught father, Paul Ceretti of Hamilton, came to Queen's Park yesterday with his six-year-old twins, Mackenzie and Delanie. Both girls have autism and were receiving IBI therapy until the government suddenly terminated Delanie's IBI therapy just nine months into her treatment. But at the same time, the treatment was continued for her twin sister. Delanie is making progress with IBI, but she is not ready to go to school. Will this minister commit to ensuring that Delanie's treatment continues, as recommended by her IBI therapist?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** It's world autism day, so I think it's appropriate that we talk about autism. I want to start by saying that I have enormous respect for kids with autism, for adults with autism, and for their parents and their families.

The member has asked about a specific case; of course, I cannot address that specific case, but what I can tell you is that we must leave it to experts to determine who is benefiting from IBI therapy and who would be better served by different supports. I don't think the member opposite would like this to become a political decision. The decisions are made by experts. We have tripled funding for IBI therapy and more than doubled the number of children receiving IBI therapy. It is very difficult when IBI is over and it's time—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Who's more expert than the provider of the service themselves to determine whether or not the girl needs the therapy?

The minister knows that both girls—they're twins—need the IBI services absolutely. It's unacceptable that one twin can receive therapy and the other is cut off when both of them need it and both of them are benefiting from it.

The Premier promised that all Ontario children would be served, regardless of their age. What will this minister do to ensure that Mr. Ceretti will be able to obtain continuing treatment for Delanie, as recommended by her IBI provider and as is her right in this province?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The member, I think, recognizes that there is a continuum of support that is necessary for kids with autism. We have expanded the continuum of supports. We're providing more respite, more summer camp for kids. But most importantly, I think, what we are doing is smoothing the transition from IBI therapy into schools. I'm working very, very closely with the Minister of Education to make sure that kids, as they transition into school, which is where kids belong—that that is done with the support of the school community, the IBI community, and their family.

#### PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a question for the Minister of Labour. Minister, as you know, the plight of temporary foreign workers has been in the news lately.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Turn around.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Member from Niagara West, this is a very serious issue for people in my riding. I hope he takes this seriously.

Many of these caregivers say they are being exploited and charged thousands of dollars, which they are forced to pay through alternate illegal work if contracts are cancelled. Some even say that they've been forced to work long hours without days off or even minimum-wage salaries.

Minister, the situation that these foreign workers are facing is of great concern to the people of Toronto, to the people right across Ontario, and to me. My constituents and other members of this House all feel something should be done, I hope. Can you please tell us what your ministry is going to do to help protect foreign workers from these abuses?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** I'd like to thank my colleague and my friend the member from Eglinton-Lawrence for sharing his concerns on this very important matter.

These stories of exploitation of vulnerable workers in Ontario are very disheartening. Many of these temporary workers devote their lives to caring for our loved ones. That is why my ministry intends to introduce legislation to protect foreign workers in Ontario. The proposed legislation would start by banning fees from being charged to these workers. Also, we will be licensing this program. We will target abuses of these workers by providing a 1-800 hotline and outreach, including education and targeted investigations. My ministry will continue to move forward with a made-in-Ontario solution to weed out these unscrupulous agents and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary? The member from Willowdale.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Minister, I want to thank you for acting swiftly on this issue to help vulnerable workers in Ontario. The proposed legislation shows that our government is listening to the concerns of some of the most—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Parkdale may want to be in her seat. Order. We're not

setting a very good example for all the guests, particularly the model parliamentarians who are here today.

The member from Willowdale.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** The proposed legislation shows that our government is listening to the concerns of Ontario's most vulnerable workers. It's a strong program. It will protect workers. It will help families raise their children. It's the right thing to do. But unfortunately, there are always a few bad apples out there. These people are unscrupulous, they prey on men and women who come here through the live-in caregiving program, and they need to be stopped. What else are we going to do in addition to banning fees?

1110

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** I want to thank the member for Willowdale for being such a great advocate on this important matter. We will be working over the coming weeks to see how Manitoba's legislation works and make sure that we get it right for Ontario. For our part, the province will move to ensure that the rights of caregivers working in Ontario are respected. We will target abuses of these workers by providing a 1-800 hotline, conducting targeted investigations and providing outreach, including education in their native language.

At this time, I would like to thank all of my colleagues, and particularly for the support of MPP Mike Colle. We want to ensure that any approach that is taken meets the needs of this vulnerable population.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** New question? *Interjections.*

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's the theatre of the absurd.

My question is to the Minister of Transportation. The government has once again reannounced the GTA transit plan, and I emphasize that this is a reannouncement of a reannouncement, because we've all heard it several times before—first in June 2006 on Bill 104, during the 2007 election, and in your 2007 throne speech you promised to introduce the Move Ontario 2020 plan, which was billed as an historic expansion. Still nothing.

This was almost three years ago. So far, it appears that the Move Ontario plan is stuck in gridlock. The latest announcement looks like it's a way to distract Ontarians from a 13% new tax, increased deficits, increased spending. Minister, how can we trust that you can deliver on this transit plan for Ontario?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** First of all, I find it interesting that a member of the Progressive Conservative caucus—at least I think it's the Progressive Conservative caucus—would ask this question, because you will remember when you were in power and part of the government of Premier Harris, at that time you completely abandoned public transit. You got out of the business of GO Transit, for instance. The amount per capita just dwindled completely. Under this government, we have seen very significant—billions of dollars being allocated for public transit. I must say Mayor Miller was there yesterday, applauding the Premier's announcements.

**Interjection:** Bill Fisch.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Bill Fisch was there applauding the Premier's announcements. Adam Giambrone was there applauding the Premier's announcements. They have faith that at long last, after the previous government, we're going to see action on projects—

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The people who were there at your announcement, you just fired them from the Metrolinx board. They were there to see what was next, because they didn't know what was next.

I'd like to draw your attention to the article, which I'm sure you've been concerned about, in the Toronto Star this morning that says "Transit Gets \$9 Billion Jump Start." But what it says at the end is an interesting question: "It's still not clear where most of the money to implement the Metrolinx plan will come from."

I put to you, the Metrolinx plan, the \$50-billion plan, is \$5 billion a year for 10 years. Let's be honest with the people of Ontario. Where are you going to get the money? Or is this just another announcement?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** This is a long-term project, as the member would know. We have made that commitment of \$9 billion.

The projects we talked about yesterday will overall create some 430,000 jobs in the province of Ontario, which is very significant. At long last we have funding that has been allocated by the treasurer of the province of Ontario; that has been approved. We will see shovels in the ground this year and next year on these projects. We have an environmental assessment process which allows them to be very carefully assessed within a six-month period of time. Everybody was enthusiastic and excited about it, because they remember the bad old days when the Tories got out of public funding for public transit.

So, have faith; we are moving forward. Come on board. This is good news for the people of the province of Ontario—

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

#### AGRICULTURAL LABOUR POLICY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Minister of Labour. Today is a sad day for Ontario's 70,000 farm workers. This morning, the Supreme Court of Canada granted the McGuinty government leave to appeal the Superior Court decision that found the Agricultural Employees Protection Act unconstitutional.

As you know, this 2002 act denied farm workers the right to collectively bargain. Farm workers, most of whom work on large factory farms, deserve the protection of unions like all other workers. When will the McGuinty government finally stop its endless and costly legal appeals and grant farm workers the right to join a union and bargain collectively?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** I thank the member for the question. The member is aware that it is before the courts. I'm pleased that the Supreme Court of Canada has granted

leave to appeal. The Ontario government believes the Court of Appeal's decision raises issues that should be considered by the Supreme Court of Canada. As the case remains before the courts, I say to the member, it is not appropriate for me to comment further at this time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Minister of Labour is the Minister of Labour. It's absolutely appropriate for him to talk about labour issues in this province.

Farm workers are no different from any other workers in the province of Ontario. They work hard each and every day to provide a decent life for their families, but they also tend to work longer hours and for less pay than most other workers.

The reason they don't have protection under unions like the UFCW—in all other provinces, actually, they do have that protection, and that minister knows it. Except for Alberta, all other provinces have granted farm workers the right to collectively bargain.

When will this government stop delaying, stop appealing, stop being unjust to farm workers in the province and finally provide them with the right that all Ontario workers have? That is the right to collectively bargain and join a union.

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** Our number one priority is the health and safety of Ontario workers. That's why, when we looked at our farms and agriculture, we ensured that we brought forward the Occupational Health and Safety Act to cover those workers.

What the member is asking, as she well knows, is before the court. It is before the Supreme Court of Canada. We believe that there are issues that need to be looked at by the Supreme Court. Those are being done, and I ask that the member wait and see what the court has to say.

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** My question is for the Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services. My riding of Ajax–Pickering is home to many small businesses, both medium and large in size. These businesses are vital to our community and are key contributors to our local economy.

Minister, I often hear from local small business owners that they are overwhelmed by the amount of red tape they face when dealing with government. Business owners would like to spend less time completing paperwork and spend more time focusing on growing their businesses, particularly in these challenging economic times. What is the government doing to cut red tape and ease the paper burden on our small businesses in Ajax–Pickering and Ontario?

1120

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I want to thank the member from Ajax–Pickering for asking this question, and I also want to welcome his wife to the Legislature.

The member is right. I think small businesses are the major contributor to the economic well-being of our province. He's also right that some of the small busi-

nesses are facing some challenges at this point in time. That's why our government has a very aggressive agenda to make sure that we cut red tape.

Through the Small Business Agency of Ontario, which is part of my ministry, we are moving very aggressively to make sure that businesses can focus on their businesses, rather than focusing on filling out forms for the government. In the first phase of our project, in seven ministries we cut down the paperwork by about 24%. In the second phase, in the next eight ministries, we cut it down by 25.6%. Now we are working on the 10 ministries so that we can—

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

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I'm pleased to hear the minister speak about the reduction of the paper burden on our small and mid-sized businesses. No doubt, it will make a difference.

But the red tape for businesses in my riding isn't just the paper burden. To operate, every business has to ensure it has the right licences and permits in place from federal, provincial and municipal bodies, such as Ajax and Pickering. Getting all of this sorted out can be onerous, overwhelming and costly, as it could delay the opening of a new business.

We all want to see more entrepreneurs up and running as quickly as possible. Can the minister tell me and my constituents what, if any, actions are being taken to help businesses in terms of getting the right licences and permits for their operations?

**Hon. Harinder Takhar:** To the Minister of Government Services.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I'm pleased to weigh in on this important issue. I thank the member for the question.

In this regard, I'm particularly pleased to let members of the assembly know about an initiative called BizPal. BizPal is a partnership between all levels of government which makes it easier for businesses that want to start up to get the licences and the permits that they need. It's a one-stop shop, so to speak. If you want to open a new restaurant or if you want to expand your chain of stores or whatever, you can go there and get the help you need. I'm pleased to say that there's one in Ajax–Pickering. That's one of the municipalities we're working with. Tomorrow, I'll be in my beloved Hamilton, making an announcement about the BizPal expansion there, because, to be frank—

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

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** To the Minister of Transportation: Reading my paper this morning, I did a double take on the headline "GTA Transit Gets a \$9B Boost." The ink is barely dry on the budget. We didn't see \$9 billion of Ontario taxpayers' money mentioned.

Minister, we ask again: Can you tell the people of Ontario where the \$9 billion is coming from? What is the federal share? What is the Toronto share?

Ontario taxpayers in my riding of Haldimand–Norfolk are paying for this \$9-billion transit boost for Toronto, yet they get nothing.

Minister, my question: When can rural residents—for example, in Haldimand–Norfolk—expect to hear news from you of their very own public transit funding announcement?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** This is a “spend” question, by the way—we’re in the second half of question period. Now the Conservatives want to spend money, and I’m happy to see that. The first half of the question period is always “save money”; the second is “spend money.” That’s why it’s called the Progressive Conservative Party.

First of all, already we have seen \$2.5 billion in new funding to go since 2003—over \$750 million in 2008-09.

You’ll remember the gas tax. You people refused to share the gas tax with the people of the province of Ontario. Our government has shared the gas tax this year: some \$321 million shared with municipalities; two cents of the gas tax. They have appreciated that very much. It has allowed them to expand their services, enhance their services, make them more comprehensive and—

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

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** You’re right, Minister; we remember the gas tax, and I ask you not to rub it in. My riding got nothing from that gas tax. Three weeks ago, you said no to sharing two cents a litre with municipalities. Haldimand county and Norfolk county got nothing.

Your McGuinty government has been making these gas tax announcements since 2004. Nothing for Dunnville, nothing for Caledonia and other small towns, in spite of their lobbying, the petitions I bring into the House—the last one had over 1,000 names. They want an answer—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of the Environment, I may have to retract what I said in a TV interview about you.

You have 10 seconds.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Don’t rub it in. We get nothing in the gas tax. We pay 14.7 cents a litre like everybody else—nothing from this \$9-billion announcement—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. It’s Thursday. I think we would like to get through question period. I’m very happy, though, to continue to stop the clock.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I’ve been as helpful as I could today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** You’re not being helpful right now, member from Renfrew.

I would just ask the co-operation and indulgence of all members of the House to tone it down a little, please, and let’s allow the questioning to continue.

Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** First of all, the member would know that those municipalities that have de-

veloped transit programs in recent years have been eligible for gas tax, the many communities that have done so. But since 2003, our government has provided \$2.3 billion in funding to support road and bridge projects across the province; \$1.1 billion, announced under the Investing in Ontario Act in August 2008, for municipal infrastructure that can be used for roads, bridges transit and other projects; the municipal infrastructure investment initiative, \$450 million in one-time funding to support municipal infrastructure priorities, such as roads and bridges, in communities across Ontario; the \$400-million road and bridge fund, announced in the 2008 budget; the Ontario Infrastructure Projects Corp. loan program, which provides long-term loans to municipalities for critical infrastructure projects; the RED program under the auspices of the Ministry of—

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

## TAXATION

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Last week’s budget cut more than \$2 billion in corporate income taxes, but the minister knows full well that to benefit from corporate income tax cuts, companies must be profitable. The companies that are making money in this economic climate are not the same companies that are shedding Ontario jobs by the tens of thousands and may not be the companies creating jobs of the future. My question: Will the minister admit that his \$2-billion corporate tax cut is the wrong policy at the wrong time and is simply bad economics when it comes to job creation?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I am glad that the member at least acknowledges that there’s an important role for corporate tax cuts. That’s why last year we eliminated the capital tax for manufacturers. That tax accrues to any company, whether or not it’s making money. For instance, a number of forestry companies in northern Ontario applauded that. The forestry sector industry applauded this—

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Name them.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Do you want them in alphabetic or numeric order?

This is the right policy for Ontario. The member voted against the capital tax elimination for forestry, farmers and manufacturers. I don’t know why you would have done that. It put cash in their hands last July. Tens of thousands of other businesses are going to benefit from this. But what we’re most proud of is \$10.6 billion in personal tax cuts for the lowest-income citizens among us.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Minister, here is the truth of the matter: Liberals believe in shovelling billions of dollars out the door to already profitable companies in the faint hope that maybe a few jobs will be created. New Democrats support the highly targeted approach successfully used in both Quebec and Manitoba, which only rewards companies making real investments and creating real jobs. One is a philosophy of listening to big business.

When they say “Jump,” you ask, “How high?” The other is a tightly focused one on real-world economics by creating real jobs for real people. Will the minister admit his \$2-billion corporate tax giveaway is bad economics and nothing more than unseemly pandering to powerful and already profitable corporate interests?

1130

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It’s interesting, but one of the facts that the member opposite overlooks is that Manitoba has actually lost 16% of its manufacturing jobs—almost three times as high as Ontario—in the last year.

We have taken a balanced approach to public policy, an approach that saw us last year eliminating the capital tax for manufacturers in the forestry industry, which was applauded across the board by them. That cash flowed into their hands last July. That cash was used to keep people working and to keep plants operating.

There’s more to do. That’s why we have cut corporate tax rates. That’s why the forest sector industry came out and said, “This is a very good budget for the forest products industry.” In a period of obvious economic challenges, this is the right course of action.

I reject what he says; we reject their philosophy. We’re building a new Ontario for a stronger—

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

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I have a question for the Minister of Transportation. Yesterday, the minister announced, along with the Premier, York regional chairman Bill Fisch and many others, that this government will be funding the development of a bus rapid transit system for our Viva public transit.

First of all, Minister, on behalf of the people of Richmond Hill, I would like to thank you for the huge investment. Our relatively young transit system in York region has been an enormous success. As you know, demand has been outstripping our ability to service riders. We need to move faster in getting people out of single-occupancy vehicles and onto public transit.

Would the minister tell me and my constituents of Richmond Hill a little bit more about this investment, when we can expect to get shovels in the ground and how a bus rapid transit system will—

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

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I’d like to thank the member for Richmond Hill for an excellent question about the announcement yesterday which includes a \$1.4-billion investment to improve the York region Viva bus rapid transit system. The Viva bus system is already a very successful transit system, and we want to make it even better.

One of the problems has been the traffic gridlock which buses can often find themselves in. In order to make transit more attractive to people, we need to ensure that the buses are not sitting in the same traffic that they’re trying to avoid. That is why we’re funding the development of a network of separate lanes for buses,

including bypass lanes along Highway 7 and the Yonge Street corridor through Richmond Hill. We can expect that people will be at work this year on this project. Components of the network will be up and running in two years, and the remainder by 2013. That’s quick action.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from York South–Weston.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** To the Minister of Transportation: Yesterday’s announcement totalled more than \$7 billion in transit projects for the people of Toronto. Without question, this is the single largest investment in public transit in the city in decades.

One of the projects being funded, the Eglinton cross-town rapid transit line, will be of enormous benefit to my constituents in the riding of York South–Weston. I understand that this will span the entire length of the city and connect as far west as Pearson International Airport. This will provide people in underserved areas with new public transit, connecting them to the rest of the city and providing new opportunity to families across my riding and beyond.

Given the importance of this project, would the minister please tell us more about it and let us know when we can expect things to get moving?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** As the member would know, public transit is more than simply moving people from A to B; it’s often about connecting communities and about ensuring that underserved neighbourhoods get access to quality transportation and are properly connected to schools, hospitals and employment opportunities.

We’re excited about the Eglinton crosstown rapid transit project. That is why we announced that we will be investing \$4.6 billion to make it easier for people to move across the GTA—to Kennedy station, to Pearson airport. As you know, it will take some time to build a project of this magnitude, but we are confident that our commitment to fund this project will make it a reality. We need to be reducing greenhouse gases. We need to reduce gridlock, connect communities and move our economy forward.

I would like to recognize our provincial agency, Metrolinx, for all their hard work and all the work the city of Toronto has done to get us to the point where these projects are in fact becoming a—

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

#### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is for the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Minister, in response to a recent question, you stated that the average family’s electricity bill would only rise by 1% under the new Green Energy Act. Subsequently, you gave me a vague breakdown of where those costs would come from. What you didn’t account for was the cost of backup generation for wind and solar, because, to use your words and the Premier’s words, they’re not reliable.

Are you promising that an average family’s hydro bill of about \$1,000 per year will only rise by \$10 in each of the next 10 years?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I repeat what I've offered the honourable member on several prior occasions. We'd be very happy at the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure to establish for the honourable member a foundation briefing that gives him some insight into the overall energy supply mix in Ontario. I have mentioned before in the Legislature that 75% of all of Ontario's electricity needs last year were met by a combination of emission-free nuclear and emission-free hydroelectric power. On top of that, the renaissance of our energy sector has seen the emergence of several gas-fired plants which provide reliability in those circumstances when ratepayers demand more electricity. In the space between that foundation and those gas-fired peaker plants are tremendous opportunities to integrate a greater degree of renewable energy. That's what the Green Energy Act is all about.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Minister, you like to use Germany as an example when attempting to inculcate people, which I know you're going to be doing some more of this afternoon, with the benefits of your Green Energy Act. What you don't tell them is that power in Germany is about 24 cents a kilowatt hour, and it is now planning to build—get this—at least 15 new coal plants to back up the wind in its system when the wind is not blowing.

Minister, don't you think it's time that you came clean with the people of the province of Ontario and told them exactly what electricity will cost them when fully implemented under your Green Energy Act?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I don't know who's been inculcating the honourable member but it's not working very well. The Green Energy Act is about a portion of our overall energy supply mix, and unlike Germany, Ontario is going to continue to rely, as an example, on Niagara Falls. The honourable member's question, where he seeks to frighten people about electricity costs, gets deeply into apples-and-oranges comparisons which lose perspective quickly. We have natural advantages here in Ontario that Germany does not enjoy. They have some big rivers there but they don't travel quite like ours, and therefore they don't have hydroelectric power to the proportion that we do.

Similarly, we have a strong foundation of reliable nuclear power which provides power to us at a very reasonable price. This is different from the circumstance that's occurring, and that's why it's not really a fair comparison for Ontarians to talk about Germany and Ontario. But we do think Germany has been pretty effective at a model—

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

#### OFFICE DES AFFAIRES FRANCOPHONES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones. À la page

97 du budget, on retrouve les budgets alloués à tous les ministères de la province. Il y en a 36 en tout. Tous les ministères ont reçu une augmentation ou sont demeurés stables, sauf un : l'Office des affaires francophones, qui a subi une coupure de 7,3 %.

Nous sommes 549 000 Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes ici, ce qui veut dire près de 5 % de la population de l'Ontario. Par contre, le budget de l'Office ne représente que 0,0047 % du budget de l'Ontario.

Ma question : étant donné que le budget de l'Office est si minuscule, comment peut-on justifier qu'alors que le budget de l'Ontario a augmenté de 12 %, le budget de l'Office des affaires francophones s'est fait couper de 7,3 %?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Excellente question du membre de l'opposition. Je voudrais la rassurer que le pourcentage qui a été coupé—l'an dernier, vu que c'était le 20<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l'adoption de la Loi sur les services en français, nous avons eu de l'argent supplémentaire pour les célébrations de cette fête-là. Alors, on n'en a pas besoin cette année. On l'a eu l'an passé. On a fêté, et voilà. Maintenant nous sommes revenus à notre budget.

Il y a eu, par contre, une augmentation au bureau du commissaire aux services en français. Alors lui, il a eu une augmentation. C'est inclus aussi dans notre budget. Alors, l'office n'a pas eu une réduction de budget : il a eu une légère augmentation de son budget.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** On a point of order, Speaker: I'd like to point out to you that I have here a copy of the public accounts for 2007-08 for the Smart Systems for Health Agency. Contrary to what the Minister of Health stated, there is no breakdown of expenses for food, travel and entertainment or for the CEO's office.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** It's not a point of order, but I trust the honourable member and the minister may have a discussion following question period or perhaps pursue that line of questioning next week in question period.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1141 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Before I introduce my guests in the gallery, I would like unanimous consent for us to wear this purple ribbon here in the House today. It is to recognize the tragedy that happened in Oxford county late last year, and it will relate to my private member's bill later on this afternoon.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to introduce the group who made the ribbons we are wearing or we have just approved to wear: Lori Vollmershausen and her students from Victory Memorial School in Ingersoll. These students were taught about values and good decision-making by

Laurie Hawkins, an OPP officer who passed away from carbon monoxide poisoning in December. They are here today to attend the debate on the Hawkins Gignac Act, and I'd like to welcome them here and thank them for coming here and making these ribbons for us to wear.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** First of all, I would like unanimous consent to wear the Autism Ontario pins today on World Autism Day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you.

I would like to introduce some guests who will be joining us momentarily: Marg Spoelstra, Carly Fleischman, Pat Lalonde, Lauren Dora, Kylie Proulx, Sheila Laredo, Lisa Prasuhn and Caroline Prasuhn, Lisa's daughter; also, Josh Chilcott from Guelph and his mom, Joelle. They're here to celebrate Autism Awareness Day.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### POPE JOHN PAUL II

**Mr. Frank Klees:** It is my privilege to pay tribute to Pope John Paul II on this, the fourth anniversary of his death.

Two years ago today, I first tabled my private member's bill, An Act to declare Pope John Paul II Day in Ontario on April 2. On February 19, this Legislature participated in second reading debate on that bill, and it was passed unanimously. Over the past two years, my office has received thousands of signatures in a continuous stream of petitions calling on the Legislature to enact this bill.

Today, we join together as Canadians of diverse religious and cultural traditions to reflect on the impact of Pope John Paul II on a world that is all too often beset by violent conflict and social injustice. His message to the nations throughout his ministry was simple, yet profound: "Be not afraid." In a world that is experiencing the most serious economic upheaval since the Great Depression, these words have particular relevance today in every corner of the world.

To ensure that generations of Ontarians would have the benefit of Pope John Paul's wisdom, I call on the Premier and all members of this House to call for third and final reading and pass into law the Pope John Paul II Day bill, which would ensure that, on every April 2, Ontarians would be reminded of the legacy of this great spiritual leader and defender of social justice.

### ORAL HEALTH

**Mr. Dave Levac:** April is Oral Health Month, and to kick off this month, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Health Promotion will take part in a Brush-a-mania event tomorrow at St. Isaac Jogues Catholic School in Toronto. My colleague and friend the member from Scarborough-Rouge River, Bas Balkissoon, is a big supporter.

In its ninth year, Brush-a-mania is designed for children grade 6 and under. It educates and motivates kids to use good oral health practices and familiarizes them with the role of dentistry in their lives. Organized by the Toronto East Dental Society, the Rotary Club of Toronto-Don Mills and the Ontario Dental Association, Brush-a-mania has already reached more than 300,000 students.

This government is also committed to improving the health of all Ontarians, including their oral health. In fact, we continue to work with public health units, community health centres and aboriginal health centres across this province, and dentists and dental hygienists, to deliver prevention and treatment services for low-income Ontarians, especially children. We are now expanding the children in need of treatment—CINOT—program, to include children up to the age of 18 years old. This program already provides essential dental care for over 30,000 children in low-income homes.

As many of us know, cavities are a transmissible, infectious disease that damages teeth and gums. Other than the common cold, Toronto Public Health and other health units, including my own in Brant, confirm that dental decay is the most frequent condition suffered by children and it is one of the leading causes of children missing school, second only to asthma.

We all want to support this, so let's go to [www.brushamania.ca](http://www.brushamania.ca).

### SENIORS

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I rise today to call the attention of this House to the challenges that our working seniors now face when it comes to collecting their benefits.

Hazel, my constituent, who will be celebrating her 70th birthday this April, recently came to see me at my office seeking help. She works in an administrative position. She brings tremendous energy, experience and dedication to her work. A few months ago, she was told by her employer that she was no longer entitled to her benefits. I met with Hazel, and I do not envy her employer being on the wrong side of that argument. She puts most 40-year-olds to shame. Not surprisingly, she was successful in securing compensation.

Despite her personal success, however, Hazel felt that I should be aware of the potential for injustice that working seniors face in their jobs. Seniors should not have to fight for what they have earned.

In 2005, this Legislature eliminated mandatory retirement, but the Liberal government neglected to protect working seniors from these kinds of clawbacks. Lifting the mandatory retirement age did not change the provision of benefits. It's a big gaping hole in the legislation and it should be addressed immediately. Age should not determine the treatment of employees.

I am here to protect my constituents, especially those who have contributed so greatly to building our province, and I am calling on the McGuinty government to do the same.



### MINISTER'S VISIT

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I rise today to thank the Deputy Premier and Minister of Energy and Infrastructure for his visit to Durham region on Friday, March 27.

Durham region, which is making enormous strides in the area of green energy, hosted Minister Smitherman for a day in which various institutions and business groups shared their enthusiasm for the opportunities that the Green Energy Act can provide.

At an early-morning breakfast on the Whitby-Oshawa border, Minister Smitherman outlined to business, municipal and community leaders his vision for Ontario and his Green Energy Act. He acknowledged that Durham is a community that is at the forefront of this province's energy solutions and noted that Durham currently supplies 30% of Ontario's energy supply through the Pickering and Darlington nuclear stations.

During the day, Minister Smitherman travelled to UOIT, the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, in Oshawa to view world-leading research to create hydrogen fuel from waste steam, a by-product of nuclear energy production. Minister Smitherman was hosted by UOIT president Dr. Ronald Bordessa. He toured the geothermal facility which captures energy from the ground to heat and cool much of the university.

Further in the minister's visit to Durham, he visited Durham College to view first-hand investments being made at the school which are a showcase for the school's programs which will produce the technologists of the future.

To end the Durham tour, the minister addressed members of the Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade at a luncheon for businesses that had been recognized by the board of trade in a program that promotes eco-friendly businesses.

Durham region is a green community and can be—

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

### CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I want to start by thanking all of the members who are wearing the purple ribbons in memory of the Hawkins family.

I also want to thank the students from Victory Memorial School in Ingersoll who are here in the public gallery today and who designed and made these ribbons. The ribbon is Cassandra's favourite colour, and the silver puzzle piece represents Jordan's autism and the silver interlocking necklace that Cassandra and her friends bought when they started school together last September. The students are using the donations from the ribbons to create a permanent monument for the family.

Tragically, late last year, the Hawkins family—Richard, Laurie, Cassandra and Jordan—were killed by carbon monoxide poisoning in their Woodstock home. It was later discovered that their gas fireplace had a blocked exhaust vent. For all of us who feel safe in our homes, it was a tragic and shocking reminder of how quickly accidents can happen.

Carbon monoxide leaking into our home is something that we rarely think about, but, sadly, there are many tragedies in Ontario each year due to this poisonous gas. It is tasteless, colourless and odourless, and the only way to protect ourselves and our loved ones against carbon monoxide poisoning is to make sure that we have working carbon monoxide detectors on every level of our homes. That is why I introduced the Hawkins Gignac Act, which would make that the law in Ontario.

Later this afternoon, my private member's bill will be coming forward for second reading debate, and I hope that all members in this House will support it so we can prevent more tragedies like this in the future.

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### SPORTS CLINIC

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I'm pleased to announce that on March 26, about 100 high school students from C.W. Jefferys, Westview Centennial and Emery Collegiate had a day trip of a lifetime as they took part in Generation Change, a sports clinic featuring top athletes from professional sports teams. The event was designed to demonstrate how staying active in sports can help one stay focused, keep disciplined and gain valuable life skills, such as team building and setting goals.

Guests and speakers included players and representatives from the Toronto Argos, the Montreal Alouettes, Tennis Canada and the Ontario Tennis Association, the Toronto Football Club, as well as the Toronto Raptors. I would like to thank Mr. Tony Genco, the president of Downsview Park, for hosting the event.

Generation Change could not have been organized without the help of Sergeant Stephen Hicks and the staff at 31 Division and ProAction Cops and Kids charitable organization. Members of 31 Division were on hand, volunteering their time and athletic skills as well.

This milestone event was made possible because of the unparalleled collaboration of the Toronto District School Board, the police force, the provincial government and dedicated professional athletes.

I was thrilled to have the Minister of Education, the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, come out for the event, and I am tremendously thankful to all the athletes who made the day so memorable. I want to thank you for your time and their time as well.

### HAROLD KENNEDY

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** I rise today to pay tribute to Harold Kennedy, a great public servant from Mississauga. He served as a member of Mississauga city council, representing ward 1, for 26 years, from 1967 to 1994. Sadly, he passed away on Saturday, March 21, at the age of 82.

Throughout his life, Harold exemplified what public service is all about. During his career, he earned a reputation for his hard work in the community, as well as being actively involved in a number of charitable organizations. He gave his time to St. John Ambulance,

the Boy Scouts, the Metro and Credit Valley conservation authorities, and the Lions Club of Mississauga, to name a few.

He is also remembered for his extraordinary service to his constituents. The current ward 1 councillor, Carmen Corbasson, recalls one winter when an elderly woman called Harold's office. The snowplow had left a snow-bank across her driveway, and she was trapped in her home. Before the call could even be made to the works department, Harold had already put on his coat and was heading out the door. When asked where he was going, Harold Kennedy replied, "I'm going to shovel that lady's snow." That says it all. Harold is fondly remembered for his time in office as someone who was sincerely concerned about people first and politics second.

In fact, Harold comes from a family that has made an incredible contribution to our city and our province. He was a son of a town councillor and a trustee; his uncle was Thomas L. Kennedy, our former Premier; and his brother, Douglas Kennedy, represented Mississauga South in this Legislature as a member of provincial Parliament for 17 years. We owe them all a great deal.

Speaker, I would like to offer the Kennedy family sincere condolences on behalf of this House and the residents of Mississauga. Harold Kennedy will be dearly missed, but his memory and example of extraordinary public service will live on.

#### NURSES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** In the last couple of days, 37,000 hours of nursing care have been cut at Quinte Health Care. The centre joins a long, long list of other health care facilities that have either reduced nursing hours, deleted vacant nursing positions or laid off nurses.

It is a depressing list, and I don't think I have time to read them all, but here are some of the agencies and facilities that are cutting registered nurse care: Bluewater Health; Chatham-Kent Health Alliance; Extendicare; Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital; VON Sarnia-Lambton; Windsor-Essex County Health Unit; Windsor Regional Hospital; Grey Bruce public health; St. Joseph's Health Care; Woodstock General; Cambridge Memorial; Guelph General Hospital; St. Mary's hospital; Canadian Blood Services; Hamilton Health Sciences; Joseph Brant Memorial; Niagara Health System; Norfolk General Hospital; St. Joseph's health care, both in Hamilton and Toronto; Headwaters Health Care; William Osler Health Centre; Baycrest hospital; St. Michael's Hospital; Toronto East General Hospital; and Toronto Rehabilitation Institute. The list goes on and on, but I want you to remember that cutting nurses is cutting care.

#### IMMIGRANTS

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I am very proud to stand here today to talk about Ontario's long and important history of immigration. Whether our fellow Ontarians come from Athens or Alberta, we all have a shared goal

to make this province the best place in the world to call home. We are very fortunate to have people from across Canada and throughout the world who have chosen to make their lives in Ontario, and, like all other Ontarians, they have built the province that we are proud to live in today.

Hamilton has shared an important part of this history. Between 2001 and 2006, over 16,500 immigrants chose Hamilton to raise their families and build our city and province. I am a proud Hamiltonian, Ontarian and Canadian because my parents chose to come to Ontario. In the 1960s, my parents came to Canada from Greece. They had a great deal of hope and a strong desire to make their lives as Ontarians. Now they are proud Greek Canadians and Ontarians who have had an important part in building their community and their province.

Whether you come to Ontario from British Columbia or Bolivia, Nova Scotia or the Netherlands, or even Ireland, as the Premier said yesterday, we are proud Canadians and proud Ontarians at the same time. We are all here to build a better Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** You forgot Ukraine.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 118, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit the use of devices with display screens and hand-held communication and entertainment devices and to amend the Public Vehicles Act with respect to car pool vehicles / *Projet de loi 118, Loi modifiant le Code de la route afin d'interdire l'usage d'appareils à écran et d'appareils portatifs de télécommunications et de divertissement et modifiant la Loi sur les véhicules de transport en commun à l'égard des véhicules de covoiturage.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 126, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and to make consequential amendments to two amending acts / Projet de loi 126, Loi modifiant le Code de la route et apportant des modifications corrélatives à deux lois modificatives.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

## MOTIONS

### COMMITTEE SITTINGS

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding committee meeting times for Bill 150.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Duguid:** I move that, in addition to its regularly scheduled meeting times, the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to meet for the purpose of considering Bill 150, An Act to enact the Green Energy Act, 2009 and to build a green economy, to repeal the Energy Conservation Leadership Act, 2006 and the Energy Efficiency Act and to amend other statutes, as follows: to 9 p.m. on Wednesday, April 8 and Wednesday, April 22, and at the call of the Chair on April 14, 15 and 16, 2009.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I am very pleased to rise today to mark the second annual World Autism Awareness Day. This day was declared by the United Nations on December 18, 2007. It's a day to raise awareness about autism and to encourage early diagnosis and early intervention. The UN resolution also calls on us to celebrate the unique talents and skills of persons with autism, and that's what I want to do today. As the Minister of Children and Youth Services, I've had the great pleasure of meeting extraordinary people living with autism spectrum disorders—ASD—and I have been inspired by the talents that they offer to the world.

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Last October, I was delighted to attend the Geneva Centre for Autism's annual international symposium. Since 1986, the centre has been bringing together professionals, educators, parents and researchers from around the world. I was particularly impressed and overwhelmed by the talent of a young man with autism whom I met there. Michael Mikulak presented a dynamic comedy routine. As a ventriloquist and a comic, he used a puppet and his talent to leave an audience of over 1,000 international delegates in stitches. At the same conference, we were treated to the vocal stylings of a young woman named Samantha Mutis, who raised the roof with her musical talent. And I will always remember Josh Chilcott, a grade 8 student who is with us today—he was in grade 8 last year. I met him with the Minister of Education at Kortright Hills Public School in Guelph with Liz Sandals last year. I can tell you that Josh knows more about cars than you or I will ever know. I understand he continues to speak on his passion. He is now at high school at Centennial Collegiate Vocational Institute. He's here with his mum today.

While we often focus our attention on children with autism, we must also recognize the strengths, potentials and needs of adults with autism. There are thousands of adults with autism across this province who are making significant contributions in their communities and enriching the lives of others. It is remarkable what people with ASD are doing and achieving with the right supports.

Early last year, the world was touched when an Ontario girl with autism made international news. She is joining us here today; we're expecting her any minute. At the age of 13, Carly Fleischmann was unable to communicate verbally, but after years of support and therapy, she found a way to express herself by typing messages on a computer. In fact, Carly provided extraordinary insight into what it feels like to have autism—she typed it out on a keyboard as “being in a room with a stereo on full blast.” Oh, Carly is with us now?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Yes, in the gallery.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'll introduce her when she—oh, is she here? Wonderful. She's up top.

Carly further wrote: “It is hard to be autistic because no one understands me. People look at me and assume I am dumb because I can't talk, or I act differently than them... I think people get scared with things that look or seem different than them.”

Carly's story is inspiring. When asked what she thought other kids with autism could learn by hearing her story, Carly responded by writing the following: “To tell you the truth, I don't know I am a girl with autism that learned how to spell and is now able to tell people what I think. It's not like I built a thousand houses in New Orleans or found a way for people who don't have food get food. I think the only thing I can say is, don't give up; your inner voice will find its way out. Mine did.”

As a society, we need to do everything we can to provide the very best support for our kids. We need to do

everything we can to nurture their strengths and talents and to hear their voices. Lauren Dora is here with her mom, Pat Lalonde. She's another role model in her community. There she is. She's a resident of Kingston and a figure skater who pursued her passion despite a surgery on her knee. With determined and loving support, Lauren went on to win the gold medal in figure skating for eastern Ontario in the Special Olympics.

Today is a day to give due honour to people living with autism as well as the people who support them. I'd like to acknowledge some of those people here in the House today.

Caroline Prasuhn is here with her mom and her dad, her brother and her sister. I understand that Caroline is a whiz on the keyboard herself. Listen to this: She actually can drive a horse-drawn carriage thanks to her skills on the keyboard. Josh Chilcott is here from Guelph with his family. Lauren Dora is here from Kingston. Margaret Spoelstra is here. She's the executive director of Autism Ontario. Sheila Laredo, another dedicated parent, is with us. And of course Carly Fleischmann has joined us. Thank you all so much for being here.

I'd like to emphasize how grateful and how moved I am by the dedication of parents and families of children with autism. These parents devote themselves to tapping the potential of their extraordinary kids. They deserve to be honoured and recognized for the commitment they make to their children every hour of every day.

We are making progress in the support we provide to people with ASD and their families. But today is not a day to focus on government achievements; it's a day to celebrate people with autism and their families. Today is their day. We will continue to do our best to provide support to them to live with dignity and as respected members of Ontario's family.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Responses?

#### WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm very pleased to rise today to formally recognize World Autism Awareness Day.

We certainly are all familiar with the hardships that are faced by people who suffer from autism and by their families and their caregivers. On behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, I want to welcome the families that are here today.

I'm proud to be doing this presentation on behalf of my caucus. I want to recognize the efforts of the parents, the caregivers and the children. What you do each and every day is truly admirable.

I don't think anyone in this House who does not have an autistic child actually knows what it would be like. We do know, though, from listening to parents, many of whom have come to our offices over the years, that these parents make many, many sacrifices when they are faced with the challenge of raising an autistic child.

Today we want to raise awareness, knowledge and understanding. Autism is a lifelong developmental dis-

ability that is particularly hard to diagnose. Most often a child is diagnosed after demonstrating certain behavioural tendencies which signal autism, such as difficulties with social interaction and communication as well as repeated patterns of behaviour and interest.

Unfortunately, autism rates are increasing everywhere. It is now considered one of the fastest-growing developmental disabilities and is increasing by 10% to 17% yearly. It occurs in one of every 165 births. In Ontario alone, it is estimated that there are 70,000 individuals with autism.

All members of this House hear from families who are seeking help for autism-related problems on a regular basis. We hear from families who feel helpless because there are not enough options available to them as they try to care for their children and adults in the best possible way. In my community we have KidsAbility. Because of a lack of funding, it has a long waiting list of children who can't access the centre.

We have a problem that is growing. Obviously, more support is necessary if we are going to support those whose lives are affected. With autism growing, we need to ensure that adequate resources are being spent on diagnosis and treatment. Doing so has the potential to improve the lives of those with autism and their families, as well as reducing the costs of treatment in the long run. I guess that's what we all have to remember: Early intervention is so very, very important.

#### 1330

We need to take a look at more efficient spending of our resources, providing greater leadership and investment, in order that we can diagnose and treat those with autism.

The frustration people are experiencing when it comes to receiving care is driving some of them to take some very drastic measures to get their message across. We need to remember that it is very frustrating to hear that there is nothing that can be done, and that the waiting list for your child is long. If you are simply told to wait in line, that answer is not good enough. The solution doesn't necessarily lie simply in spending more money; it also involves better management of the money that is currently being invested.

Besides the fact that more has to be done on the part of government in the way of strategy and investment, World Autism Awareness Day highlights the fact that each one of us has a role to play, and we play it today by raising awareness here in this Legislature. By doing so, we can hopefully convey the message being expressed to us, as members of provincial Parliament, who have a duty to uphold the interests of those we represent, that the needs of families being affected by autism are simply not being adequately addressed today.

Above all, by rising today, we are provided with the opportunity, as the minister has done, to acknowledge the tremendous efforts of the families and the individuals who have been affected by autism and to express our heartfelt appreciation for their significant sacrifices and their devotion to the cause. We thank you for your ongoing work.

I hope we can continue to work together in this House to address the inadequacies in the current system, while advocating a stronger commitment to early diagnosis and intervention, so that individuals and families affected by autism are able to see that we are responding and we are doing what we can together to address their needs.

#### WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'm glad to rise today to recognize World Autism Awareness Day, and I'm especially proud of the Sudbury chapter of Autism Ontario, who were good enough to provide each and every member of the House with a cute little bracelet. I'm kind of proud of it. It's red, green and blue and says, "Autism Ontario: See the Potential." With the willingness of this House, the Sudbury chapter was gracious enough to give each and every one of us a bracelet, and I hope you will wear it proudly.

To continue with awareness, they also sent two pamphlets, Supporting People with Autism and Autism Ontario, which I was able to put on the desk of each and every member of this House. Those two pamphlets are full of very good information, and I encourage every member of this House to read them so that we are more aware about autism and what can be done.

Autism spectrum disorder affects people around the world, and Ontario is no different. There are about 80,000 Ontarians who are living with autism today. It affects about one in 150 children, mainly boys.

On this day, I would first like to recognize the contribution that our families and friends living with autism spectrum disorder have made to our community. I'm especially proud of the people who are here and the example given by Caroline, Carly and Josh. You are truly an inspiration, and I thank you for coming to Queen's Park today. It reinforced my belief that everyone has something to contribute to this society.

I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the hard work being done by so many families and organizations across Ontario dedicated to fighting for appropriate service for those in our communities living with autism. Yesterday, I met Mr. Ceretti, who has been fighting for the rights of one of his twin daughters, Delaney, to receive IBI therapy. Delaney got cut off after nine months of therapy. He was here yesterday because he knocked on every door. He tried every way he could to bring therapy back for his daughter, but he couldn't. So he did the last step he could think of, and this is to appeal to the court of public opinion.

I know that Carly would agree with me when I say that if she had been cut off after nine months of therapy, she would have never developed into the young woman that she is; she never would have been able to communicate, and we would be missing out on a world of opportunities. The same thing is playing out for hundreds and thousands of children in Ontario who can't access or get cut off from their therapy after a few weeks, a few months or a year.

This morning, we had parents here from Autism Resolution Ontario, an organization that is challenging the McGuinty government to follow through on its promise to children with autism and implement a well-designed, integrated, funded and managed set of services for autism in this province. They came forward with stories of children. We had Jaiden—Jaiden is a three-year-old. He's a curious, joyful and energetic little boy who has autism. He has been on the waiting list for ABA therapy since September 2007.

We had Mendy, a six-year-old little boy who is diagnosed with autism. He is mainly non-verbal. He's a highly sensory-seeking child. Unfortunately, he has unpredictable outbursts and spends much of his time jumping on his trampoline. He has been on the waiting list for ABA for three years.

We had Sebastian, who was born in April 2003. He has been waiting for therapy since 2007.

We also had Jerry, who was born on September 11, 2000. He was diagnosed when he was 30 months old. He, too, had to go on the waiting list to receive the therapy that he needs.

Right now, the system we have for children with autism is nothing but a shame. Too many kids are waiting too long. This is not the Ontario I want.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Because of an emergency, I was unable to attend introduction of bills, so therefore I would ask for unanimous consent that we revert back to introduction of bills.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Thank you very much to each and every one of you for the House's indulgence.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### CARBON MONOXIDE AWARENESS WEEK ACT, 2009 LOI DE 2009 SUR LA SEMAINE DE LA SENSIBILISATION AU MONOXYDE DE CARBONE

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 166, An Act to proclaim Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week / Projet de loi 166, Loi proclamant la Semaine de la sensibilisation au monoxyde de carbone.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** In my conversations with the member from Oxford, his understanding of this bill and my support of his bill this afternoon—if passed, this bill, An Act to proclaim Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week, will proclaim the first week of December in each year as Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week.

Carbon monoxide is a silent killer, as we all know. It's colourless and odourless, and it can rise to deadly levels in a home without anyone even knowing so. The families of Oxford have family in my riding of Brant who have been affected directly by this, and we have reunited the Friends of the Firefighters to raise money to purchase carbon monoxide detectors for the needy. Every Ontarian needs to be educated about carbon monoxide so that we can get rid of this deadly killer.

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## PETITIONS

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition to do with the Burk's Falls health centre, and it reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Burk's Falls health centre provides vital health services for residents of Burk's Falls and the Almaguin Highlands of all ages, as well as seasonal residents and tourists; and

"Whereas the health centre helps to reduce demand on the Huntsville hospital emergency room; and

"Whereas the operating budget for Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare is insufficient to meet the growing demand for service in the communities of Muskoka–East Parry Sound; and

"Whereas budget pressures could jeopardize continued operation of the Burk's Falls health centre;

"Now therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government and Minister of Health provide adequate increases in the operating budget of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare to maintain current health services, including those provided by the Burk's Falls health centre."

I support this petition and I give it to Ahsan.

### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** This petition has to do with property tax assessments.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontarians are angry over the volatility of the MPAC tax assessment system, the near impossibility to predict one's assessment or to understand how it is arrived at, the patent unfairness of assessments and that the current system leaves many homeowners worried they may be forced to sell their homes; and

"Whereas changes are needed that will make Ontario's property tax system stable, understandable, fair and sensitive to homeowners; and

"Whereas property assessments in Parkdale–High Park have risen between 28% and 45% between 2005 and 2008;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: Support the

'freeze till sale' plan to bring fairness to Ontario's property tax system so that new assessments happen only at the time of sale and when a building permit is obtained for renovations totalling more than \$40,000."

I certainly agree with this. I will affix my signature and give it to Olivia to be delivered.

## CEMETERIES

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition signed by many constituents from my riding, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's cemeteries are an important part of our cultural heritage, and Ontario's inactive cemeteries are constantly at risk of closure and removal; and

"Ontario's cemeteries are an irreplaceable part of the province's cultural heritage;

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

"The government must pass Bill 149, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2009, to prohibit the relocation of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario."

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

## CHILD CARE

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services, Madeleine Meilleur, has decided that grandparents caring for their grandchildren no longer qualify for temporary care assistance; and

"Whereas the removal of the temporary care assistance could mean that children will be forced into foster care; and

"Whereas the temporary care assistance amounted to \$231 per month, much less than a foster family would receive to look after the same children if they were forced into foster care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reverse the decision to remove temporary care assistance for grandparents looking after their grandchildren."

I'm pleased to sign and support this as a grandparent.

## FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** This has to do with the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, Bill 56, and is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It was given to me by Mr. Jack Fava, who is organizing to support this petition.

"Whereas innocent people are being victimized by the growing number of unlawful firearms in our communities; and

"Whereas police officers, military personnel and lawfully licensed persons are the only people allowed to possess firearms; and

“Whereas a growing number of unlawful firearms are transported, smuggled and found in motor vehicles; and

“Whereas impounding motor vehicles and suspending driver’s licences of persons possessing unlawful firearms in motor vehicles would aid the police in their efforts to make our streets safer;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law, so that we can reduce the number of crimes involving firearms in our communities.”

Since I agree with the petition, I am delighted to sign it.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. John O’Toole:** I’m pleased to present yet another pile of petitions from the riding of Durham, which read as follows:

“Whereas the municipality of Clarington passed resolution C-049-09 in support of Lakeridge Health Bowmanville; and

“Whereas area doctors, hospital staff and citizens have raised concerns that Bowmanville’s hospital could turn into little more than a site to stabilize and transfer patients for treatment outside the municipality; and

“Whereas Clarington is a growing community of over 80,000; and

“Whereas we support the continuation of the Lakeridge ... site through access to on-site services, including emergency room, internal medicine and general surgery;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the McGuinty government take the necessary actions to fund our hospitals equitably and fairly. And furthermore, we request that the clinical services plan of the Central East local health integration network address the need for the Bowmanville hospital to continue to offer a complete range of services appropriate for the growing community of Clarington.”

I’m pleased to support this, sign it and present it to page Ahsan.

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I’m pleased to present this petition to the House on behalf of my colleague from Perth–Wellington. I’d like to especially thank Sarah Jeffrey, Heather Wamboldt, Brent Germin and David Shaw for having supported it. It’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has publicly stated that she ‘absolutely’ wants to help the beginning and new entrants to agriculture; and

“Whereas beginning and expanding farmers are going to be important in the coming decade, as a record number of producers are expected to leave the industry; and

“Whereas the safety net payments ... are based on historical averages, and many beginning and expanding

farmers were not in business or just starting up in the period so named and thus do not have reflective historic allowable net sales; and

“Whereas beginning and expanding producers are likely at the greatest risk of being financially disadvantaged by poor market conditions and are being forced to exit agriculture because there is not a satisfactory safety net program or payment that meets their needs;

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

“To immediately adjust the safety net payments made via the OCHHP to include beginning and expanding farmers, and make a relief payment to the beginning and expanding farmers who have been missed or received seriously disproportionate payments, thereby preventing beginning farmers from exiting the agriculture sector.”

I’m pleased to sign this petition and ask page Everett to carry it for me.

### ROAD SAFETY

**Mr. John O’Toole:** Another petition here, and this one has been presented to me on a number of occasions by members of the trucking fraternity, Owner-Operator’s Business Association of Canada. Jim Park is one of the people here, as is Laura O’Neill, who’s government relations for the owner-operator independent truckers. It reads as follows—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** A fraternity? Is that what it is?

**Mr. John O’Toole:** It’s sort of a fraternity.

“Whereas the recently passed Bill 41 with regard to speed limiters on heavy trucks was passed without considering the effect on traffic flow, safety concerns and interstate trucking; and

“Whereas the speed of 105 kilometres per hour creates a dangerous situation on our 400-series highways with consideration to the average speed of traffic flow being 120 kilometres per hour”—and that’s an issue in itself; the speed limit’s 100.

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

“That the Legislature suspend enforcement of the speed limiter law until the Legislature can review all studies conducted pertaining to the effect of this law and road safety concerns; and

“That the Ontario speed limiter law be amended from 105 kilometres per hour to 120 kilometres per hour to remove the increased risk of collisions on our highways and to prevent infringement on interstate trucking out of province and country” travelling on Ontario roads.

I’m pleased to sign this in support of the trucking industry moving our economy and to present it to Sean, one of the pages.

### PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I’ve got a petition here from Sally and Polly, the good people from the DGA Filipino store

in my riding on Marlee Avenue. It's a petition in support of caregivers and Bill 160.

"Whereas a number of foreign worker and caregiver recruitment agencies have exploited vulnerable foreign workers; and

"Whereas foreign workers are subject to illegal fees and abuse at the hands of some of these unscrupulous recruiters; and

"Whereas the federal government in Ottawa has failed to protect foreign workers from these abuses; and

"Whereas, in Ontario, the former Conservative government" under Mike Harris "deregulated and eliminated protection for foreign workers; and

"Whereas a great number of foreign workers and caregivers perform outstanding and difficult tasks on a daily basis in their work, with limited protection;

"We, the undersigned, support Bill 160, the Caregiver and Foreign Worker Recruitment and Protection Act, 2009, and urge its speedy passage."

And I support Sally and Polly at the DGA Filipino store on Marlee Avenue, and I sign this petition.

1350

#### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition from a number of constituents from the riding. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents;

"Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant's willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law Reform Act as above to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents."

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

#### JUSTICE SYSTEM

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** The petition here is to the Parliament of Ontario and the Attorney General. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Canadian Judicial Council has been asked by Ontario's Attorney General to probe the judicial behaviour of judges; and

"Whereas judges are human beings and have been known to make serious mistakes in the judicial system, leading to devastating consequences and unfair justice for Canadian citizens; and

"Whereas some judges are known to have fallen asleep in the midst of a trial and have admitted to making serious errors in judgment; and

"Whereas some judges have been observed making biased, disrespectful comments and abusing their judicial powers; and

"Whereas Canadian families need to be protected from these judges who are unable to change their habits, unable to follow the rule of proper conduct and unable to exercise recommendations set by the Court of Appeal, and consequently commit grave injustices;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens, are strongly requesting the following changes in our judicial system:

"(1) That a 'judicial demerit point system' be applied to ensure that judges are accountable for their judgments rendered;

"(2) That a yearly review of their performance be established."

I will sign this document, and thank you for allowing me to read this petition.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I have a petition here to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas St. Mary's hospital, Grand River hospital and Cambridge Memorial Hospital in the Waterloo region are experiencing a substantial increase in demand due to population growth; and

"Whereas hospitals in the Waterloo region receive \$279 less per resident compared to other Ontarians;

"Whereas the McGuinty government's policies have contributed to nursing cuts and to other staff cuts, bed closures and the closure of outpatient clinics, all of which reduce the quality of care; and

"Whereas the provincial government has secured significant additional health care funding from the federal government;

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

"That the McGuinty government provide our hospitals with their fair share of provincial funding and introduce a funding formula based on demographics and the health needs of the population."

I have about 100 residents from Kitchener-Waterloo who have signed it, and I'm pleased to do so as well.



## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the McGuinty government should address the shortage of acute care beds in hospitals by providing alternatives for alternate-level-of-care patients which include but are not limited to an increase in long-term-care beds, an increase in assisted living beds for Ontarians with disabilities, improved access to living at home services and increased hospice/palliative care beds.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Miller moves private member's notice of motion number 79. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'd like to start by saying that I just came from the dentist, where I had a significant amount of freezing, so if this isn't the most perfect delivery today, I at least have a valid excuse, whereas on other days, I don't usually have any excuse.

I'd also like to thank my intern, Meghan Buckham, who has helped with lots of work on this resolution.

I'm pleased to stand on behalf of the 25,000 Ontarians on long-term-care waiting lists and their families to urge the government to address a crisis in our health care system: the lack of resources for alternate-level-of-care patients.

Alternate-level-of-care patients are those waiting in hospital beds who could be better cared for in other parts of our health care system, such as in a long-term-care home, in supportive housing or at home with some home care services. These are just a few of the ways that government could alleviate the shortage of acute care beds.

In January of this year, Tom Closson, Ontario Hospital Association president and CEO, stated, "Without question, the single biggest challenge facing Ontario hospitals is the number of ALC patients waiting in hospitals for alternate levels of care."

Through addressing this issue alone, we would be able to alleviate pressures on other parts of our health care system. It is a win-win for all Ontarians. By increasing and providing alternatives for ALC patients, we can reduce the backlog that hospitals across Ontario are facing.

In my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, the West Parry Sound Health Centre CEO, Donald Sanderson, said in the Beacon Star that "while he agrees with the province's desire to establish targets to reduce ER waits, they need to understand the alternative-level-of-care issue that tends to bottleneck the system." In other words, hospital beds used for emergency room patients are backed up with ALC patients residing there until they can find them an appropriate setting in the community.

This issue is province-wide. Both the member from Simcoe–Grey and the member for Kitchener–Waterloo have raised this issue. It is facing all of us, across party lines and across this province. Let me share with you some facts.

The Ontario Long Term Care Association has reported that every month, 1,300 long-term-care residents end up in hospital because their homes are unable to provide the increased level of care or their physicians or families are not confident that they can. Additionally, the Ontario Long Term Care Association has reported that 1,700 people in hospital beds are waiting for placement in long-term-care homes.

The Ontario Hospital Association reports that approximately 20% of acute care beds are occupied by alternate-level-of-care patients. In my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, the percentage is much higher. I recently met with the CEO of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare and separately with the CEO of West Parry Sound Health Centre. They are at 35% to 40% of acute care beds occupied by ALC patients. This is not acceptable.

Through increasing the capacity of alternate-care facilities, we could drastically reduce the number of long-term-care patients taking up acute care beds in our hospitals. This would not only provide better care for these patients but would reduce the undue pressures already placed on our hospitals.

When I met with the CEOs responsible for the hospitals in my riding, the hospitals were full, and I was told that this is not unusual. The target occupancy for hospitals is 85%. This allows room for people coming in through the emergency department and allows for scheduling of surgeries. An 85% occupancy rate also helps the hospital to balance its budget.

#### 1400

In January 2009, the Canadian Institute for Health Information released a nationwide report on alternate level of care in Canada. The findings reveal a very dire situation for Ontario. Ontario reports the highest rate of ALC hospitalizations across the country. ALC patients admitted to hospital, on average, spend 22 more days there compared to non-ALC patients. Eighteen per cent of alternate-level-of-care patients in Ontario are discharged home while still waiting for a placement with a long-term-care home—obviously, that is not an ideal situation. Alternate-level-of-care patients discharged from hospital also face a higher likelihood of being re-admitted into hospital within 30 days of discharge, compared to non-alternate-level-of-care patients. This reveals the shortcomings of the initiatives taken by the McGuinty government thus far. ALC patients are also twice as likely to have one or more disorders, and that signals the increasingly complex care that is required.

When our party was in power, we understood the needs of our seniors. We built 20,000 new long-term-care beds to give seniors the care they require. We recognized that seniors deserve decent and safe housing, through the redevelopment of 16,000 beds in older facilities.

Alternate-level-of-care patients in this province deserve better. They don't deserve to be languishing in hospital beds far away from their communities, their friends, their families. They not only need care, but they need people to sit and spend quality time with them: play bridge, read a book, give companionship. ALC patients don't get this in a hospital setting.

As well, there are groups of Ontarians who are being entirely overlooked: people with developmental disabilities and acquired brain injuries. Karen Jobbins, a woman I have mentioned many times before, was placed in the Pines, a long-term-care home in my riding, in the town of Bracebridge. Karen has a developmental disability. She doesn't belong in a long-term-care home, but because adequate individualized funding isn't available, she has been inappropriately placed. Constituents with acquired brain injuries, like Jordan Hack and David Crossthwaite, would like to have options available to them, but without the funding to support them, they face the same fate. The province continues to fail to give these Ontarians options.

Long-term-care beds are being taken out of the system for those who need them, and in turn, hospitals become backed up because ALC patients move into acute-care beds.

Both of the hospitals in my riding face financial difficulties because ALC patients are occupying acute-care beds. In the case of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare, they're facing a \$2.3-million deficit this year. They have an accumulated debt of \$7 million, despite the fact that through amalgamation and other measures they have trimmed their costs by some \$4 million. This places a significant burden on the hospital administration, and consequently, they are looking at deficits. This story is being repeated throughout the province. It's ridiculous, unsustainable and needs to be addressed now.

I have provided numerous ways the government could alleviate this problem: an increase in long-term-care beds, an increase in assisted-living beds for Ontarians with disabilities, improved access to living-at-home services, an increase in hospice palliative care beds.

I'm urging all members of this House to support this very important resolution that would not only make life better for seniors in my riding, but in yours, too. The number of Ontarians waiting for long-term-care beds has increased from 12,000 in 2005 to 25,000 currently. The effects are being felt across this province. With a large aging population, seniors are becoming more and more dependent on the services that allow them to live in comfort and in dignity. This does not mean living in a hospital. These people are asking for our help. As legislators of this province, it is our job to do the right thing and make life better for these people. This means supporting this resolution, so I ask all members to support this resolution today.

That's the end of my prepared speech, and I have two minutes left. I would just like to use that time to go over the specific situation I experienced at the beginning of this year when I met with the CEO, Donald Sanderson, at West Parry Sound Health Centre. The day I was there, he showed me his daily bed utilization report. What it showed was that on February 12, 2009, the occupancy of the hospital was 104%. That was because the total number of beds was 70; the total beds occupied was 73; the number of patients in ER—emergency room overflow—was three. The number of ALC patients in 43

acute-care beds, 16; the percentage of acute-care beds occupied by ALC patients, 37%. If you look in the hospital, the total of all alternate-level-of-care patients was 29. So of the total of 70 available beds, that means that 41% of the beds in the hospital are occupied by people who really would be better served either being at home or in a long-term-care home. With the demographics the way they're going, this situation will only get worse. Hospitals aren't going to be able to solve their budget problems, and they aren't going to be able to provide proper care.

How do you plan for the unplanned when your hospital is at 100% occupancy? How do you plan for surgery? How do you plan for the emergency that walks in? How do you plan for births when your hospital is at 100% occupancy?

As I previously pointed out, the target occupancy they aim for is 85%. That allows them to plan for surgery; that allows them to deal with emergencies and not have the emergency room backed up; that allows them to have a better shot at being able to balance their budgets.

This is a big problem, and I really hope that all members will recognize it and encourage the government to move forward to try to solve this problem, because it affects not just the hospitals in Parry Sound–Muskoka; it affects the hospitals that are in your ridings as well. We need to deal with this problem to get our health system working better.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's a privilege to stand and speak to the motion of the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. I absolutely agree; I couldn't agree more. It's refreshing to see his activism on behalf of his community. Certainly my hope is that we're all that active on behalf of all of our communities.

Let me tell you the situation from Parkdale–High Park's point of view. You heard the facts and figures. The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka was very inclusive and extensive about facts and figures. The human face of what this looks like is exemplified every day in our own hospital, at St. Joe's in Parkdale–High Park. Every day you will find people arriving in the emergency ward of Parkdale–High Park's hospital, St. Joe's—a wonderful institution with a wonderful CEO—and they're there because of detox reasons, addiction issues, mental health issues and homelessness issues. Sometimes it's better to sleep in a hospital bed than it is over a grate. People will go into emergency rooms of hospitals just to do that, and that's not even touching the primary concern of the member, who was talking about alternate level-of-care people—those seniors, for example, who need long-term care; those people in rehab situations who need long-term care. The beds are not available, so they take up hospitals' acute-care beds when they need long-term care. This is not even talking about that. This is a whole other level of person who needs assistance from the health care system, isn't getting it, and the only possibility in sight is the hospital. They also

need assistance from the Ministry of Housing, they're not getting it, and the only solution is a hospital.

There have been studies done in New York and Vancouver now showing how much it costs to keep someone homeless. That sounds bizarre, but it's true. The amount is \$40,000 to \$55,000 a year. One of the largest components of that cost is the use of social services like hospitals because the folks are homeless. It costs a great deal more money to take up a hospital bed than it does to book someone into a reasonably decent hotel, and the former housing minister even admitted as much. He said that it would be cheaper to put somebody in a motel than it would be to keep them on the streets. That's the ridiculous reality that we live in. So it's not a question of money; it's a question of political will.

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When it comes to drug addiction and detox centres, we don't have enough. The average wait for folk in my riding who have an addiction issue, who want to go into rehab, who desperately want help, who want to go into detox, is about six months. If they're lucky enough to get into detox, they're lucky indeed. For the rest, where do they go? They go to emergency rooms. Anyone who has been to an emergency room in Toronto late at night looks around that room and knows that the vast majority of people there are there because of addiction issues, mental health issues or concurrent disorders. That's who's in the emergency room.

What is the hospital to do with all of those people? They're compassionate people who work in hospitals. Our doctors and nurses do a great deal of work with very little in terms of resources. They're not about to send somebody out on the street to detox over a grate if they can help it. A great many problems they see are as a result of the lack of supportive housing, the lack of rehabilitation beds, the lack of response to addiction issues which is systemic across Ontario and, of course, as the member himself elucidated, the lack of long-term-care beds—long-term care.

When my husband and I were in Sweden—yes, it is the promised land for social democrats. Did you know that in Sweden, you can stay at home and have a relative paid a salary to look after you if you have Alzheimer's or if you have any condition that requires long-term care? Today is international autism day. If your parent has to take time off work, the Swedish government recognizes that as real work. It recognizes it as a real calling, a real profession, to look after somebody who has challenges, and they pay you for doing it. They pay you for doing it.

We have a situation in Ontario where the people who are in the profession of doing it don't even get paid for most of their time. Imagine driving 900 kilometres a week and not getting paid for travel time. That's the situation of some of our caregivers right now who provide home care, and that's one among many of the reasons that we have 3,000 SEIU Red Cross home care workers on rotating strikes across the province as I stand and speak. Why are they striking? Because of the 900 kilometres a week they drive without recompense, but also

because they're earning around \$12.50 an hour, slightly over minimum wage, for all the training that they've had to undertake, for all the screening that's had to be done, to look after our nearest and dearest, to look after our seniors. That's how little we value them. And let's face it, that's what the government is telling our seniors, our folk who are stuck at home who need home care: They're telling them that they're worth \$12.50 an hour.

Again, if they need long-term care in an institution, God bless, good luck, because they're in for a long-term wait, and probably that long-term wait is going to be done far more expensively and far less efficiently in a hospital, taking up a bed that needs to be used for acute-care patients. That's what hospitals are for. They are not for housing people, they're not for detoxing people, they're not for dealing with long-term systemic supportive housing issues, they're not there for housing seniors, they're not there for rehabilitation that's going to take a long time; they're there for acute care. But we don't use them that way. This government doesn't use them that way.

It's not even a question of dollars. I wish it was only a question of dollars. I wish it was only a question of asking the government to spend more. But in this particular case, it's asking them to spend more wisely. We need more long-term-care beds. We need some kind of standard of care for those who've worked so hard and given so much—that is, our seniors—who have done nothing wrong with their health. They probably don't have a health issue. They have just got to the point in their lives, in their 80s, 90s or perhaps earlier, where they need some kind of basic care, where they cannot live on their own. These are people who've paid their taxes, who've worked hard, who've raised their families. If they don't have the resources—and even if they do, because I know many, many elderly people in my riding who had to sell their house to move into long-term care and have lived longer than the house lasted in terms of paying for that long-term care. Then they go into a place with worse quality of care where the standards are lower, and guess what? It's not the problem of the staff in long-term care. In fact, I have a stack of cards this high in my office signed by workers in long-term-care facilities that all demand 3.5 hours per day of client care, and they're not funded to get it.

I remember one really sad story of a woman who works overtime consistently without pay in a long-term-care home because she actually really cares for her clients and simply can't get the work done in the normal course of eight hours. She works overtime without pay. She said that one week she calculated how much she was making per hour and it was less than minimum wage, if she was actually paid for the overtime she did. She said that some days she's alone on a floor, and said there could be somebody dying down the hall, and if they're not hitting the button for emergency care she wouldn't know. She wouldn't get to them for about an hour, at least.

Is this what our seniors deserve? Is this what this government is offering them? Not only do we need more

long-term-care beds; we need more long-term-care funding, and we need wiser funding across the health care spectrum that doesn't go to acute-care beds when it should go to long-term-care beds. This is absolutely critical.

Meeting with long-term-care workers and long-term-care residents: If you've ever had the pleasure of going into your own long-term-care homes—I know that every member has on occasion, if only to receive their cards of complaints and demands—you'll see seniors who are articulate, wonderful people who, because of lack of stimulation and lack of physical activity, lack of attention, deteriorate a great deal faster than they would if they were allowed to stay at home and had home care provided or had someone in their family paid to provide it, or had a consistent 3.5 hours or more—one would hope more—of client care per day by those who are in the long-term-care homes.

You can watch this deterioration. It's sad. It's pathetic. Family members phone us all the time and demand action, but there isn't action. This is a government, after all, that in their 2008-09 budget, the one we just had, promised long-term-care facilities an extra 2,500 personal support workers and an extra 2,000 nurses. Instead of the extra 2,000 nurses and 2,500 support workers, what do we have? We have them cutting nurses. We have them cutting nurses across the board in Ontario. Just speak to the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario and you will realize this is going on, not to mention the attrition from retirement.

Instead of a bump up, we get action in the negative. Instead of money into long-term care in the budget, we get over \$2 billion in corporate tax cuts for corporations that need it the least. Instead of bailing out our seniors, instead of bailing out those with mental health and addiction issues, instead of bailing out and providing housing for the homeless, the CEOs across Ontario will get a big tax refund in the mail. And quite frankly, only the profitable companies that need it least will get that big gift at tax time.

What could \$2 billion pay for in long-term care? What could \$2 billion pay for in terms of freeing up acute-care beds for the uses they should be put to; that is, acute care? What would \$2 billion purchase in terms of housing for those who are crowding emergency rooms with housing issues? What could \$2 billion have bought but didn't because clearly the McGuinty Liberals have priorities in other places? Clearly, large corporations are more important to them than those who need the beds.

Therefore, I support the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka's motion. I look forward to voting for it.

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**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I'm pleased to speak to the motion by the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka. I would like to provide some comments on his motion and a little bit about the activity of this government over the past five years in the health care sector.

When our government took office, we recognized that hospitals across the province were experiencing ALC pressures, and I must tell you we have implemented a plan that has taken a coordinated approach to address those challenges. Our current 2009 provincial budget protected health care spending, which allows the government to continue its work on this particular plan. We are investing \$1.1 billion in our aging at home strategy, which will provide supports and services to seniors to allow them to stay in their homes with dignity and independence. Our emergency room and ALC strategy and investments are helping to ease the pressure in our emergency rooms and freeing up acute-care beds.

We have increased funding to long-term care by over \$1 billion, providing \$300 million alone this year. We've opened up 7,712 new long-term-care beds and plan to open another 2,181 additional beds over the next three years. You can see clearly this government has been very active on this file.

We have funded 6,100 additional staff, including 2,300 nurses, which equates to 11.9 million more hours of hands-on care to the people in our health care system. Last year, we funded 1,200 registered practical nurses in Ontario long-term-care homes, ensuring at least one new nurse in every home. We've already invested \$23.5 million to provide 873 personal support workers. All of this was done to help ease ALC pressure in our hospitals.

We are making changes to the Long-Term Care Homes Act by providing more hours of services when needed, especially in the early weeks of care. We've also extended the extraordinary circumstances period from 30 days up to 90 days on an annual basis and unlimited care for individuals receiving palliative care or waiting for admission to long-term-care homes.

We are increasing service to Ontarians living with disabilities by investing close to \$120 million for assisted living services in supportive housing, which provides 24-hour access to on-site assistance for those living with disabilities, such as HIV/AIDS, brain injuries etc.

This Ontario government was the first government to make a significant multi-year investment in end-of-life care. We provide support today to over 30 residential hospices, including capital investment in at least 10 of those hospices. Through Ontario's \$150-million end-of-life care strategy, over 6,000 more Ontarians will receive compassionate, end-of-life care in their homes. At the same time, we're also implementing other strategies to help elderly Ontarians get the care that they absolutely need. This government has launched a groundbreaking aging-at-home strategy to meet the needs of the aging population in Ontario.

As part of our strategy to reduce ER wait times, we are increasing home care hours, personal support and home-making services by 50% and removing caps altogether for patients waiting for placement in a long-term-care home or receiving palliative care at home.

This government has been very active in this file, and I've got to tell you, in my opinion, our record speaks for itself because our investment over the last five years has

been significantly more than the previous two governments. Our investment is clearly helping to ease the pressure on our emergency rooms and freeing up those acute care beds that are needed for that service.

Our investment in home care has prevented more than one million emergency room visits and hospital stays since 2003.

This is a government that has moved health care forward in an era of no longer closing hospitals, where previously we had 31 hospitals closed while our population in Ontario was growing significantly. We are in the business of health care, we are in the business of bringing that health care that the public has asked us to deliver, and we are delivering it efficiently. Do we recognize that there's more work to be done? Absolutely. The Minister of Health has spoken on many occasions, recognizing that there's more work that this government has to do. He has launched many strategies to tackle that work, and we're moving forward with our plan that this government has been elected on to the people of Ontario. We're delivering better care, we're delivering that care closer to home and we intend to continue.

One thing that is very important to note is that we were the first government to enshrine public health care into law and make a commitment to the future of medicare. So this government has been very active in the health care sector.

It's unfortunate that my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka has actually moved this motion, but he has not really paid attention to what the government is doing. I must say that if he's looking for work particularly in his riding, the minister is quite open to sitting and discussing with him his particular issues. This government has certainly done a great job in the health care sector, and we will continue to do that throughout this particular mandate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** One of the things that you discover when you get into this chamber for the very first time is that you probably deal on a constituency level and bring to this place problems that pertain to health more than any other problem you can possibly encounter. Health-care-related issues become part of the daily routine very quickly and they are extremely notable because they are deeply personal, they usually involve people who are desperate and they are often sad because they are always about a loved one who needs something. In this particular case, the "something" is an acute care hospital bed. So I rise in support of the motion of my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka.

I must say that I can't comprehend how this government is unable to see the writing on the wall when it comes to acute care beds in Ontario. There's a multiple-level health care delivery system here that of course begins in this particular case with hospitals underneath those LHINs which are extremely costly to operate, the ministry, of course, and all of it is driven by a money cycle.

We have a new budget that's under consideration right now where health care as a function of the total is about 40%; it's gone from \$41 billion to about \$44 billion. All of that seems to result in insufficient progress because it's barely enough to even run in place. So the challenges faced by our province when it comes to acute health care are a result of this domino effect. Frankly, while I'm not in debate with my friend from Scarborough–Rouge River, I can't believe that I've just heard a six-minute defence of what the government is doing, because we're all in this together. This is about statistics, it's about facts, and what started with this government's lack of progress on delivering long-term care is resulting in longer wait times for acute care beds.

In my own riding, in York Central Hospital there are often wait periods, but what they have is two floors of long-term-care beds. There's a direct relationship between being able to secure the acute care bed that you want, or need, and the number of people who have to be accommodated in long-term care in the same facility. The latest statistics show that 25,172 people in Ontario are on long-term-care waiting lists. You can ask anyone about finding a long-term-care bed, especially without an advocate.

I know in my own case, dealing with my late mother, she went from level to level because she was always in an alternate level of care, and only ultimately received the long-term-care bed that she required because she had children who were in a position to advocate for her. So many people in her position, at an advanced age, in their eighties or nineties, don't have that advocate. Without it, you are at the mercy at the CCACs, and they can only do what they can do. In my particular case, the Central LHIN, which includes York region, has 2,085 people waiting for long-term care. That's the area that I represent, so it's of vital concern to me. Without appropriate facilities available to these Ontarians, where do you think they're going to stay? Where are they? Well, they're in acute care beds. They are forced to stay in our hospitals. Consequently, resources meant for acute care are increasingly diverted to patients who should be receiving care in appropriate facilities that offer a residential environment, security and a higher quality of life.

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But you know what? As my friend from Parkdale–High Park said, they're old. You start to say to yourself, "Does anybody really care?" Hence the need for advocates. The result: Hospitals are crowded, surgeries are delayed, Ontarians in need of immediate acute care are forced to wait—meanwhile, we're all getting older. I don't have to tell you that increased wait times means increased suffering—in far too many cases, suffering that's detrimental to the patient's health. Everybody here knows of individual cases—everybody—in their families, in their circle of friends.

To date, this government has turned a blind eye to the growing need for long-term-care beds, and this is an unforgivable omission. It's not something that we can debate; it's something that is statistically provable. It is

not a secret that the demographics are changing. It is not a secret that the number of seniors in this province is growing. That means that Ontario must address the shortage of long-term-care beds now in order to ensure that (a) people requiring alternative level of care have access to an appropriate environment, and (b) acute care services do not suffer.

York region, where my riding of Thornhill is located, is a part of this, and the growth that it's going to experience is going to take the population from 920,000 now to 1.3 million people by 2026. That's one third, again, in the next 15 to 16 years. York Central Hospital, the main hospital serving the catchment area, for example—it provides care to patients living in Richmond Hill, Vaughan, Markham, King, Toronto and other municipalities—has 116 long-term-care beds while we're looking for placement for over 2,000. Admissions—to give some statistical validity to this—for the 356 acute care, complex care and rehab beds in one year stood at just shy of 17,000, and the hospital was operating at a capacity of 93%—far above the recommended levels. And I note that my friend from Parry Sound–Muskoka has hospital statistics that demonstrate that it's basically at 100% in his area.

We have to do something about this now. A responsible government would recognize that, to meet the future needs of Ontario's communities, to meet the needs of my constituents in Thornhill, our province needs a comprehensive plan that will provide more long-term-care beds, more assisted-living beds for Ontarians with disabilities, improved access to living-at-home services and increased hospice and palliative care beds, as my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka is recommending, and that's why I support his motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Kuldip Kular:** Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Mr. Miller's motion.

Prior to my election to this House in 2003, I worked as an emergency physician for about 15 years in one of the local hospitals in Brampton. As a physician and a member of this government, I am very pleased with our progress to relieve the congestion of our hospitals and our emergency departments. More work remains to be done, as always, but we have made excellent progress.

Health care in Ontario and throughout the world is an evolving sector, with more attention and resources being paid to the specific needs of patients in order that their needs are met and that, in a publicly funded system like ours, tax dollars are spent effectively.

Our strategy to address the issue of wait times and alternate-level-of-care pressures has already proven itself. We have identified wait times at specific facilities and for procedures and have seen improvements. We are collecting wait time information and are making targeted investments to bring wait times down. We have been working to reform our health care system since forming a government in 2003. More importantly, our plan is coordinated so that it can address not only the easing of

pressure on emergency rooms and the freeing-up of acute care beds, but improve many other areas of care.

Our growing investments in overall health care funding since 2003 now allow us to continue with our plan and to keep up with hospital funding.

Our government has increased spending in home care, long-term care and the aging-at-home strategy. We are ensuring that seniors can receive care closer to their homes with dignity and independence, and our plans are helping them manage chronic diseases at home. Our investments are working, easing the pressure on emergency rooms and freeing up acute care beds.

We are working hard to continue our progress by rebuilding 35,000 beds over the next 10 years. That's in more than half of the homes in this province.

We are the first province to fund insulin pumps for children with insulin-dependent types of diabetes. That makes our emergency room visits fewer and fewer.

We are increasing the hours of personal support and homemaking services.

We are working with the LHINs, CCACs and hospitals to establish best-care practices for ER and CCAC case managers, including hours of operation to ensure best utilization, with a goal of direct discharge to the home, and with the service supports when hospital in-patient or long-term-care home care is not required.

Standards for long-term-care homes are being restored, and homes face regular inspections.

Ontario has made lots of multi-year investments in end-of-life care.

From all this, I can say with confidence that our government has a plan, and our plan is working. It's definitely going to reduce wait times in emergency departments as well as free up acute care beds, providing Ontarians with the kind of care they deserve.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I want to applaud my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka, who does an outstanding job on behalf of his constituents. In fact, I know that he does, because I'm a part-time resident of that community, and I know how well he looks after our family and our neighbours.

The issue that he has identified and the information that he has provided today address a very urgent need in this province. He is asking the government to "address the shortage of acute care beds in hospitals by providing alternatives for alternate-level-of-care patients which include"—and he's giving recommendations, and I applaud him for that.

He says that what needs to happen is we need to increase long-term-care beds and we need to increase assisted-living beds for Ontarians with disabilities. He says we need to improve access to living-at-home services, and we need to increase hospice/palliative care beds.

This is the truth. Any hospital in this province will tell you that as a result of the policy initiatives that have been introduced by this government, they are being forced to

shut acute care beds. In fact, this morning a message came through on my BlackBerry from a resident in Guelph whose surgery was being further delayed because that hospital, in an attempt to balance its budget, had been forced to close acute care beds, so this surgery now is going to be delayed for one more week. I can tell you, it is causing tremendous stress to this individual. This individual suffers from cancer and is already under stress, but this is a huge issue. My colleague has already pointed out that hospitals today are operating at levels of over 100%. As I say, there is no room at the inn. And if we ever had an outbreak such as SARS, I'll tell you, today it would be an issue that we would be unable to cope with. We simply wouldn't have the accommodation necessary to deal with those people who are suffering from SARS. These hospitals have been put in a very difficult position.

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I also want to mention that this is a new issue. We didn't have this problem before this government started to cut beds in hospitals, and it's as a result of their policy. What has happened is, not only have they reduced the number of acute level beds in hospitals; they're not building any new long-term-care beds or providing the funding necessary for home care or for assisted living. Whereas we built 20,000 new long-term-care beds and renovated 16,000 older beds, this government, since 2003, has never developed a plan. So today, no wonder we have people waiting in acute care beds in hospitals where they shouldn't be. It's because we have 25,000 people in this province who have need of a long-term-care bed but have nowhere to go.

In my own community, we've got about 1,500 people waiting for a long-term-care bed. As a result, in my community, Waterloo region, as of February 2009, we had 23% of the acute care beds in our hospitals at that time occupied by ALC patients. A few years ago this wasn't a problem, but the problem is worsening every year. The percentage of acute care beds occupied by ALC patients is increasing everywhere and that's what is creating the pressure. As a result, you have people who come in for surgery, there are no beds to accommodate them and the surgery is postponed. You have people who come into the emergency room and, again, there are long wait times in the emergency rooms because there are no beds to accommodate the people because they are occupied by alternative-level-of-care patients.

I support this motion brought forward by my colleague. I applaud him for bringing this to the attention of the government. Regrettably, it's an issue which they are failing to address. In fact, I listened to the members today, and you would think there wasn't a problem. I can assure them—I can give them the statistics—your own hospitals, whether you're in Toronto or Mississauga, are all facing pressure from these alternative-level-of-care patients who have nowhere else to go. I can tell you that your residents are suffering because their surgery is being delayed, and there are long waits in the emergency rooms as well. So I urge this government to support my colleague's private member's bill here today, because we

need to make sure our older residents live with dignity and respect.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Parry Sound–Muskoka has up to two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you to all the speakers who've contributed to the debate this afternoon. I know that the member for Kitchener–Waterloo has a particular interest in the statistics from the West Parry Sound Health Centre. It seems she spends a little time around McKellar and Parry Sound, mainly in the summer months.

The statistics for West Parry Sound Health Centre from this year, for example, show that from August to December, the hospital has basically 100% occupancy; 40% of the beds are occupied by alternative-level-of-care patients, so people who really would be better served at home or at a long-term-care home. That creates all kinds of problems for the hospital to be able to balance its budget, to be able to deal with emergencies coming in and not have a backlog in the emergency department, to be able to schedule surgery, to be able to look after young mothers.

The member for Scarborough–Rouge River outlined many of the government's actions and programs that are in place. As well as meeting with the CEOs of the hospitals in my riding, I met with the interim LHIN chair for the North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN, and she outlined all the various programs the government does have in place. But despite those programs, things are getting worse. As the member from Thornhill said, it's not a secret. The demographics are changing. We're getting older. So this problem is going to get worse before it gets better if the government doesn't take action and try to deal with it in the ways that I have suggested.

As was pointed out earlier, on the east side of my riding, Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare, which has the Bracebridge and Huntsville hospitals, is facing a \$2.3-million deficit this year and has an accumulated debt of \$7 million, despite having amalgamated the hospitals and saving \$4 million. They won't be able to balance their budget unless they deal with this basic problem.

I thank all the members for speaking this afternoon. I hope you will support this resolution and help try to solve this problem in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** For those watching at home and those visiting us today here at Queen's Park, this item will be voted on in approximately 100 minutes.

## EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Canada should ensure that Ontarians receive the same employment insurance benefits they would get if they lived elsewhere in Canada and should supplement employment insurance support for unemployed workers in the manufacturing sector by providing targeted resources and other supports.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Ms. Mangat moves private member's notice of motion number 80. Pursuant to standing order number 98, the honourable member has up to 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** In 2008, the total employment insurance regular benefits per unemployed person in Ontario were \$5,490, whereas EI benefits were \$9,560 per unemployed person in other provinces. That means that unemployed workers in Ontario are getting, on average, more than \$4,000 less in employment insurance than they would get if they lived elsewhere in Canada—\$4,000 per year.

Less than 20 years ago, Ontario experienced a recession that cost us almost 350,000 jobs. It was a terrible time for families and residents of Ontario. Once again, Ontario now finds itself facing economic challenges that we all know are the outcome of the current global recession.

The clearest sign of the challenges we are facing can be seen through the number of jobs that are being lost. In February alone, Ontario saw the loss of 35,000 jobs. Across Canada, the total job losses are at almost 300,000.

In Ontario, the manufacturing industry is being hit the hardest. One of the industries suffering the most is the auto parts industry. Mississauga ranks second in Ontario for the number of the auto parts industry's manufacturing businesses. The auto parts industry has seen a decline in their sales over the past few months. Loss of sales leads to loss of jobs. This industry downturn is directly affecting the manufacturing companies in my riding.

Mississauga is also home to 52,000 businesses from different sectors. Many of these industries are also being affected by the current economic climate. My constituents work hard and they remain resilient in this unstable economic environment, but many of them are at risk of losing their jobs and many of them have lost their jobs already. I meet people every day who are struggling and are worried about losing their jobs and their survival. What is making them even more concerned is that the support they hope to rely on if they lose their job is not going to be there and it is not going to be enough. In spite of their hard work and resilience, Ontario workers are being shortchanged by Ottawa at a time when they need support the most.

**1450**

Statistics Canada reports that in December, Ontario had a 30% increase in the number of people receiving employment insurance from the same time in the previous year. Last week, it was reported that in January, Ontario had seen a 6.2% increase in EI recipients since December. What these numbers confirm is that Ontarians are losing their jobs and are turning to the system that should support them while they look for work. However, Ontario workers are not getting the full support they deserve, as compared to workers in other provinces.

Ontario workers account for 39% of the Canadian labour force. They pay their EI premiums just like every other Canadian worker. They're entitled, just like every other Canadian worker, to seek and receive the same EI

benefits. The federal government's employment insurance program is simply unfair to unemployed Ontarians. Across Ontario, the shortfall in EI benefits amounts to almost \$2.1 billion each year. That money would help parents who have lost their jobs to pay their mortgages, buy their groceries, buy gas for their cars and get the training they need to get back into the workforce.

For many years, these workers have seen their premiums used to support unemployed workers in other regions and sectors. Ontario workers need proportional support, yet the federal government refuses to act.

My resolution calls on the federal government to do two things. One, give unemployed Ontarians the same deal they would get if they lived elsewhere in Canada. This money would go to the workers, not to the government. Two, supplement EI support for unemployed workers in the manufacturing sector by providing targeted resources for training and other supports.

I believe that requesting a fair share of insurance from the federal government for Ontario workers and their families is the right thing to do and also the smart thing to do. Ontario workers deserve to be treated like every other Canadian worker, and not have their work devalued or shortchanged. There is absolutely no reason why an Ontario worker should get over \$4,000 a year less than workers in other provinces.

Fairness to Ontario is not an unreasonable request. The workers here pay their EI premiums just like workers in other provinces. In fact, Ontario taxpayers are contributing more to the federation than taxpayers in other provinces. So why is it that Ontario workers are given less?

As stated earlier, a large number of businesses in my riding of Mississauga–Brampton South and across Ontario are manufacturing in nature. They have taken the biggest hit. It is for that reason that I believe it is important to supplement EI support for unemployed workers in the manufacturing sector by providing targeted resources for training and other supports. Rather than shortchanging workers in Ontario's manufacturing sector, they deserve help in transitioning into new jobs.

If Ontario was given its fair share of funding, we would receive an extra \$478 million each year to train our unemployed workers. This would significantly benefit the residents in my riding.

The people of Ontario deserve to be treated equally and fairly. They are facing hard times, just like the rest of Canadians. We cannot sit back and let our workers be treated unfairly. I cannot sit back and watch as more of my constituents are shortchanged. That is why I resolve to see that the government of Canada ensures that Ontarians receive the same employment insurance benefits they would get if they lived in any other part of Canada. The government of Canada should supplement employment insurance support for unemployed workers in the manufacturing sector by providing targeted resources and other supports.

My constituents want me to stand up for them. I hope that the rest of the members will stand up and support my



resolution, to fight for the rights of their constituents, as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm always pleased to respond to private members' bills. I commend the member for her passion for the people in her riding and indeed in Ontario.

In fact, our position is clearly on the record as being that we stand first and foremost for fairness. That's the most important thing. Each of us, I hope, would be working not just for our constituents, but for fairness. Fairness, in this respect, is something I can say that we would agree with—the member's motion. That is on the record. I'd like to talk about a lot of other things, because we've cleared that up. We support this: fairness for Ontario. That gives me a bit of liberty to go on to other things which I think will be important.

I want to spread the joy here a bit, if I can. The member from Hamilton East, Mr. Miller, introduced Bill 6, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000, to provide for an employee wage security program. This bill was discussed, like your bill here today, and passed. In fact, it was referred to the general government committee on December 6. I don't know one reason why they're blocking it. I can tell you, what this bill does—and it's been raised in the House here as recently as last week. With the tragedy of the economy—and I don't blame it all on Premier McGuinty; probably 50% of it, though.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Maybe 45%. But some great portion—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Mr. Speaker, they're barracking.

If they're not responsible for the losses of jobs, they're not responsible for the gains. You can't have it one way and not the other. With the authority goes the responsibility, but also the glory. So when we see the economy going down rapidly, we can't blame Premier McGuinty for all of it. But he can't take credit if it turns around, either.

This recent budget is a good example of just throwing a lot of paint on the wall and hoping that some of it sticks. Nearly every statute has been amended, if you look at the bill—but I want to stay on topic here, to be fair.

Bill 6 really attempts—the other Mr. Miller—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** You have the wrong bill in front of you.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, no, Bill 6. She hasn't got a bill. It's a resolution.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Her resolution—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Well, it's not a bill, see? Mr. Colle, as a former minister, should know that, but then again he's not in cabinet anymore.

This one here “establishes the employee wage security program and provides for the appointment of a program administrator. Under the program, employees will be

eligible for compensation for certain types of unpaid wages.” Now, I think that's fair. Let's go back to the major theme here that we all agree on: fairness.

**1500**

The other day, Mr. Fonseca, the Minister of Labour, was asked a question, and he bobbed and weaved. Now, here's the interesting question. The question was asked by Mr. Miller on March 25—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** He's just using up my time.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** The experienced member knows full well that what we have before us is a resolution by the member from Mississauga here, and he is talking about a bill that was before this House six months ago. That's my point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Yes. I think we do take a little more liberty on Thursday afternoon, private members' time, to fully hear the member, but I would ask him to heed the honourable member's comments and tie this together to the—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Sit down for a minute, please. Excuse me, member from Durham. One of us shouldn't be standing.

I'll watch your time. But do try and tie it back to the resolution from time to time.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yes. Thank you for that spurious interruption there. But I think the point that is being made here with Bill 6 does relate, because what we're really trying to do is get down to the root of fairness. Now, the question of how it does wrap back to the current resolution by the member from Mississauga–Brampton South is the following: Mr. Miller asked a question of the Minister of Labour, and this was on March 25. The Minister of Labour said, “The member's well aware that there is no subnational jurisdiction”—this is the minister's response—by the provincial government. It all belongs to the federal government. So the question was actually deflected, where he said that it's all the federal government's responsibility.

He went back to him in the supplementary and said, “The minister's comments are not exactly correct. The truth is that despite the real pain and suffering of so many workers and their families, we have a provincial government here that's refusing to act on an issue that is clearly—clearly, Minister—within your jurisdiction,” and he was referring back to Bill 6.

All we're trying to do is use whatever tools and resources the Minister of Labour can use. I understand he wants to deflect, as does—up until a few weeks ago, the Minister of Finance, Mr. Duncan, was referring everything to the federal government as their fault.

I'm going to put on the record—and let's correct the record here. It's very important that we get our numbers correct. I'm so disappointed, because on this resolution they are saying that we would not get \$4,000 more per year per person. In fact, in her remarks she said that it

would mean \$478 million for the province of Ontario to assist employees. I think we both agree with that. But here's what has happened: They're ignoring the facts. Somebody gave this resolution to her, I'm sure, really, because the information is here.

It says "labour market training program." The labour market training program is an agreement between the federal and provincial governments; the labour market agreement, it's called. That agreement allocates \$1.193 billion of new money to the province of Ontario from the federal government. They must have agreed, rather than changing the qualifying days for UI or EI, and that's what has happened. Federally, Ontario has a different waiting period—

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Stop the clock, please. The honourable member for Mississauga—Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Speaker, with the greatest of respect, standing order 23(e) states that a member shall not anticipate any matter already on the Orders and Notices paper for consideration, and I believe the member is trying to anticipate an event that has not yet occurred.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** While that would normally be a point of order, I don't accept the argument. I listened carefully to the member. He is tying it back to the resolution. He is talking about employment statistics in the province and he's talking about the budget. So I'd ask the honourable member from Durham to continue.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** What the member from Mississauga—Brampton South is really asking for—let's keep track of it; let's not let it get too far off the regular road, the trail that we're all following to fairness—was equal treatment from the federal government. Clearly, it says that the federal government's EI program is unfair to unemployed workers in Ontario.

I'm a member of the opposition, and I'm trying to point out that her argument is not substantiated when you look at the evidence. I will be supporting the fairness debate, but her premise of the shortage of \$4,000 simply isn't there.

When you look at the last budget—this was the 2008 budget, not the 2009-10 that we're dealing with. The 2008 budget had \$3.5 billion in it. It was called the Second Career fund. The Second Career fund was made up of joint funding—federal and provincial. Do the homework. That agreement probably transposed the responsibility of changing the qualifying base. I would agree with you that the conditions of the economy have deteriorated rapidly in Ontario because we're a manufacturing-based economy. And there is, on our side, a full agreement and a full awareness to look at intercepting employees who have lost their jobs in partnership with the union, the employers and the individual, with the provincial government being there. Bill 6 is suggesting some of that kind of infrastructure. In fact, the NDP, a year and a half ago, when this economy started—the

thunder clouds were rolling in, asked for a jobs commissioner, which I think is to coordinate a very important theme that we hear every day and see every day in the papers: 300,000 jobs have been lost. Think of it. Almost half a million families are being crushed, rolled over, and they've got a plan here for transit, which is moving people around, but they have no plans for people.

This is a recurring theme. They make announcements: the Second Career opportunity thing, three-and-a-half billion dollars. I want a report from Mr. Milloy. How many people have actually filled out the 40-page application? These are people whose families are shaking, wondering how to make their mortgage payment, and we're putting up spurious arguments. In fact, in all fairness to the member, I think she was put up to it. As a matter of fact, there was a question today of the Minister of Labour about the nanny employees, which I believe, again, are false arguments. Most regulations with respect to employment for new Canadians have a great deal of federal responsibility about qualifications, licensing, permitting and legitimization. When I participate in these debates, I don't like to get personal, because I appreciate your passion in the commitment. I agree with it; I'm only pointing out that we should tack into some of this other money.

The money I referred to—and this is in the current budget, and I'm going to read it: The labour market program is \$1.193 billion. As a matter of fact, the federal transfer to the province is on page 96 of the current budget. It's pretty significant. They went from—the transfers; I can't believe it. We are being treated fairly. The tone here is changing, and I respect that. I think Premier McGuinty and Prime Minister Stephen Harper must have had coffee together or a latte or whatever. They must have had something together, because they are now in harmony. I think that Dwight Duncan, during the budget debate, complimented Jim Flaherty. These are positive developments. They have to work together. They've given them a ton of money, is what it is. It's \$19.2 billion—the federal government. When they announce these programs like the wait time strategy, federal money; Second Career, federal money. They're on the stage to get their picture taken, and the money came to the federal government.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** There's nothing wrong with it, but when you stand up here and blame the federal government for a shortfall of \$478 million, I would request—now, in fairness, this debate is usually recorded in Hansard, and Hansard is here—formally that the Minister of Labour stand in the House and tell us where he's spending this Second Career money, the \$1.193 billion. Is there a transitional plan where the government is going to take people into training, orientation, resumé development, career counselling? And I leave another question on the board: What are the jobs of the future for Ontario? What are the plans for these families? Everyone can't be a bus driver with this new transit money. Everybody can't work for the city of Toronto. What are the jobs of

the future? I don't hear or see a plan, except to blame the federal government. It's tragic.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's an honour to stand. I really commend the member for Mississauga–Brampton South for bringing in this motion. She's new to the chamber. We hear her voice, and she spoke forcefully. Of course, she's right. She's absolutely right; we're going to be supporting this motion. The only problem is, of course, that in the courageous stand she's taken, she's speaking out against the Liberal legacy federally, because, lest we forget, it was the Martin-Chrétien government that brought in the EI regime that we're working under right now. It was the Martin and Chrétien government that gave us the EI system that we have. Those are the facts, historical facts. I understand that Mr. Ignatieff is now doing some kind of manoeuvring around this issue, and I'll leave that to the member from Trinity–Spadina to elucidate upon. Certainly the tradition of Liberalism federally has been to basically take from the poor and give to the corporations. So there you go.

1510

I wanted to just take a minute to tell you about what is happening on the ground around this issue. The Good Jobs forum was kicked off in Parkdale–High Park several weeks ago to 200 people in the room. There were steelworkers, there was the Toronto and York Region Labour Council, there was Workers' Action there, among many others. We called for EI reform and we were very specific about what kind of reform we wanted, as well as equal pay for equal work. There's a concept. If you're doing the same job, whether you do it for two hours or 40 hours and have the same seniority, you should get the same pay. That's the situation in the European Union. That should be the situation here.

We also called for 360 hours to qualify for EI benefits. I hope the member will support that. We called for an increased benefit duration to at least 50 weeks in all regions—I hope the member will support that—and to provide an additional year of special extension benefits if national unemployment exceeds 6.5%, paid from federal government revenues. I hope the member will support that. Extend EI part I benefits while workers are in approved training and increase benefits to at least 60% of normal earnings, using the workers' 12 best weeks. This is what the labour movement is calling for across Ontario and across Canada. I hope the member will support the labour movement in doing just that, and I hope she will support the part that we can do something about in the province of Ontario, and that is our own employment standards work and bill. That needs serious amendment. It needs serious amendment, as the member from Durham talked about in terms of severance pay; he mentioned Bill 6. It needs serious amendment in terms of, as I said, the new call across Ontario, which is for equal pay for equal work.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I'm very pleased to speak on the resolution on employment insurance fairness for Ontario of my honourable colleague from Mississauga–Brampton South. There is no better time than now for this House to adopt this resolution. I hope that every single member of this House will stand for fairness for Ontarians.

From January 2008 to January 2009, southwestern Ontario saw the largest increases in employment insurance recipients across Canada. My home of Hamilton has not escaped this global economic downturn. As in all communities across Ontario, job loss has increased the need for EI. The statistics speak for themselves, and I'd like to share some statistics from Hamilton. In January 2008, approximately 7,000 Hamiltonians were receiving employment insurance. By January 2009, this number increased to just over 11,800. This represents a huge jump. In fact, it's more than 4,800 Hamiltonians. Unfortunately what this also means is that a total of 11,800 Hamiltonians will not—they will not—receive the same employment insurance benefits as their fellow Canadians. This is just not fair. Hamiltonians, like all Ontarians, work hard. They're a hardworking people and they deserve to be treated fairly. These 11,800 Hamiltonians will not receive the \$4,630 in benefits and supports as Canadians in other provinces do today.

On September 29, 2008, this House passed a resolution calling on the federal party leaders and candidates to outline their plan for fairness to our province. This included a call for Ontario's unemployed workers to receive the same benefits and supports as other Canadians outside of Ontario. Today we have the opportunity to reiterate an important part of our plan to help Ontarians. It is clear that we have a responsibility to ensure that Ontarians have equal opportunity within Canada to support themselves during this recession. Most importantly, we have a responsibility to ensure that when this recession is over, Ontario is even stronger than it was before. One of the best ways to do this is to provide a bridge for Ontarians while they upgrade their skills to compete in our new economy. This is especially true in the manufacturing sector.

Don Drummond, chief economist for TD Canada Trust, recognized that in the manufacturing sector, "This notion that you get laid off today and you find a job again tomorrow doesn't really ring very true." As a result, we must ensure that many Ontarians directly affected by this recession are able to find opportunity with the same support from all levels of government. That is why today I call upon the House to continue to press for EI fairness to Ontario and Ontarians.

I stand in full support of my honourable colleague from Mississauga–Brampton South.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate? The honourable member for Trinity–Spadina.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I beg your pardon. I was looking for a Tory to stand up, but the 15 minutes were up. I forgot all about that.

I'm delighted to support this motion by the member from Mississauga–Brampton South; it's very timely. It's

good to see that the Tories are also supporting it—at least one Tory; I'm not sure about the others, but we'll see shortly. It's a good thing, but I was reminded by my colleague from Parkdale–High Park about the genesis of this particular problemo. The genesis of it happened during the reign of Monsieur Martin and Monsieur Chrétien, because they did this together a long, long time ago.

You might say, “But why go back so far? We should be looking forward, shouldn't we, rather than looking back?” But I enjoy looking back in history a little bit, because when we were in power in 1990, Mulroney whacked Ontario in such a serious way that it hurt. It hurt us as New Democrats, but it hurt Ontarians in particular, because we used to share—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I can't cite the standing order, but he must be talking about the resolution before the House, not back in 1988. I was brought to order on the same principle. I'd ask the member to stick to the bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I appreciate your comments, but I think the honourable member from Trinity–Spadina has been addressing the resolution. Carry on.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Thank you. I'm surprised that my colleague from Durham would just stand up and waste a few of my precious seconds that I have. How could you do that? It's all connected, and I will show you how it connects, obviously, because it all is interrelated.

So Mulroney whacked Ontario when they stopped sharing the welfare bill. It used to be 50-50, with Ontario sharing half and the federal government sharing half. Mulroney decided in 1990 to change that formula. While we had a serious recession starting in 1991-92, when we needed Mulroney the most, he wasn't there. He had a \$40-billion deficit—this is true; Mulroney did—left by Trudeau—and nobody remembers that, but that's another minor footnote in the history of politics. But what do Martin and Chrétien do? Well, they slashed even further. They got rid of the deficit on the backs of the unemployed: 40% of deficit reduction was due to the cuts they made in the then-called unemployment insurance benefits—40%. Understand, it was severe. This is Monsieur Chrétien and Monsieur Martin. Why talk about them, you say? For me, it's instructive, because we need to learn from it.

When you reduce the deficit by cutting on the unemployed, it's a serious, serious hurting on people who are most in need. So what did they do? They collected billions and billions of dollars from those who were working, but restricting the number and restricting the benefits of those who were paying into it. That was a Liberal regime that started it and continued with it for a long, long time. It was unfair then and it's unfair today.

1520

So you're right to be bringing this motion, but it's also proper that we identify who did what and who continues to harm the unemployed. And so, while we support this motion, we want you to look at what the federal Liberal

Party is doing at the moment. Monsieur Ignatieff, the most learned leader we've ever had—good heavens. Mr. Bob Rae said that he has probably written more books than the Tory caucus has ever read. While that may be true, I say to myself: What's the point of emphasizing the fact that this man has written so many books? Does that make him a good leader? I don't think so. Maybe; I don't know.

But if somebody said, “He's a good guy,” I would say, “That's good.” And if somebody said, “He really relates to human beings in a really nice way,” I would say, “That's a good quality for leadership.” And if somebody had strength and commitment and principles, I would say, “Yeah, I like that. That's a good quality.” But to keep on saying that this man is the most learned man and, good God, once he gets into power, he's going to solve all these problems because he has seriously written thousands of books—I don't understand it. But that's beside the point. I'm not going to belabour that too much. It's beside the point.

We've got to talk to Ignatieff and say, “Iggy, where are you on this issue?” Because evidently—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Mississauga, please. The member from Mississauga South, I think it is: Please calm down.

Just give him a call—he's close to you in terms of ridings; right?—and say, “Iggy, where are you on this?” Because evidently he doesn't have a position.

Federal New Democrats introduced a motion where they say they want every Canadian with 360 hours of paid work to qualify for employment insurance benefits. That's the motion that the federal leader of the NDP passed. Iggy said, “We support it in principle”—I think it's what he said—our learned individual. But when asked, “What would you do?”, he said, “It's not my problem. It's the problem of the Conservative government.” I understand that position, but if he's concerned about the unemployed and if he—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** He supports it.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Who does?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** We don't know what he supports; that's the problem. If he's got a strong commitment around something—Iggy, take a stand. Take a stand so that when we have people like someone from—an individual I read about. Here she is; a Whitby woman who has been laid off. She's a single mom. “‘I am still flabbergasted that I was only entitled to 26 weeks of EI after paying into it for 38 years,’ said Scott. The recent federal budget extended EI by five weeks....” and a letter went to Scott and she was so happy that she got five more weeks.

We're talking about human beings who are suffering, human beings who desperately need the support. What we have are benefits that have been restricted and benefits that have been cut over the years that affect thousands and thousands of people across Canada and indeed in Ontario.

The replacement rate for insured earnings was cut in 1996—that would be the Liberal government that I was referring to earlier; the federal Liberals—from 57% to 55%, itself the result of a cut from 60% in 1993, itself a cut from 66% in the 1970s.

As importantly, the level of maximum insurable earnings was frozen at \$39,000 for a decade, from 1996 to 2006, resulting in a frozen maximum weekly benefit of just \$413 per week. This freeze reduced the inflation-adjusted value of the maximum weekly benefit by one quarter.

Moreover, the effective income replacement rate for employment insurance is undercut by the two-week waiting period during which no benefit is paid, with an average claim lasting for about 20 weeks. This effectively reduces benefits by about 10%.

In 2004-05, the average regular weekly benefit paid was just \$315. Even the maximum benefit of \$413 was barely adequate to bring a single worker with no dependents to a poverty-line income in an urban centre.

So is this resolution timely? Of course it is. And are people paying huge amounts of dollars into employment insurance only to get so little back? Yes, it's a problem. People need and deserve adequate funding to stay out of the poverty rate. Those dollars need to be increased. It shouldn't take so long to qualify, and it shouldn't push so many people out. Ontario deserves better; you're absolutely right. I urge the members who know Iggy—M. Ignatieff, your federal leader—to take a strong position: “Forget about the books you've written. Be strong, be clear and be bold, and support your Liberal colleagues here in Ontario.”

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It is a great pleasure to have the opportunity to speak to the resolution of the member for Mississauga–Brampton South. I am speaking today on behalf of my constituents in Don Valley West, who are in need of support that is fair when compared with the support that people across the country get. I will warn the House in advance that I am going to talk about employment insurance—unemployment insurance, as it used to be called—and how it has evolved over the years, because I think it's important when we look at what's happening today. I know the member for Trinity–Spadina has gone down this road a little bit, although he didn't go back as far as I'm actually going to.

If we look at the realities of employment insurance, or unemployment insurance—it's been called various things—we have to go back to 1934. We have to look at a time when the government of Canada began to put in place some insurance for some people who found themselves without work. In the 1940s—I think it was in 1941—there was a nationally coordinated effort put in place to take some responsibility at the federal level for ensuring that people who were without jobs, as a transitional thing, would get some money. That was the beginning.

Then there were overhauls. I know the member for Trinity–Spadina has talked about the changes that have been made over the years, whether in 1971 or 1996. I think what we have to recognize is that governments over the years have made changes to respond to their dynamic fiscal situation when there has been a downturn in the economy or when there has been a regional need. I'm going to come back to that, because I think that regionality is one of the things that has gotten us into this situation, and we need to look at the regional needs, particularly of Ontario.

My colleague from Mississauga–Brampton South talked about the manufacturing sector. I think that what is happening right now in the manufacturing sector is analogous to what has happened to other industries in other parts of the country at different times in our history. So we need to come back to that if we're going to find the resolution.

The unemployment insurance system has expanded and contracted, depending on economic circumstances. It has contracted and expanded in terms of total, absolute dollars, and it has expanded and contracted for certain people in certain parts of the country because of that particular industry or that particular region, whether we're talking about fishing or forestry, whatever you're talking about across the country. Now we're talking about manufacturing in Ontario.

The manufacturing capacity in Ontario is changing, and it's changing in all parts of the province. There are certain parts of the province, obviously, that are being hit more severely than others and certain industries within manufacturing that are being hit more severely. What we need from the federal government is recognition that EI policy must evolve and adapt to local and global circumstances. That dynamic has to be evolutionary, and the history of EI demonstrates that it has been dynamic. So it is not a new thing that we would be saying, “Do you know what? Right now, we need an adjustment. We need to recognize the reality in Ontario.”

The federal government needs to understand that that's been the history of EI. That's been the history it has been built on, and it speaks to who we are as Canadians. We understand that this country is made up of disparate realities across the country. We know that there are different climates, different industries, different capacities. At this particular point in our history in this country, Ontario, because of its diminished manufacturing capacity, needs this immediately. We need that fairness.

I look to the whole House to be supporting the resolution, and I thank the member for bringing it forward.

1530

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield:** I'm pleased as well to be able to add my support to the member from Mississauga–Brampton South on the resolution before the House.

Many folks have spoken to the history of employment insurance or unemployment insurance, whichever you wish to call it. As it stands now in Ontario, only one

quarter of the people who are currently unemployed qualify for employment insurance. There's no question that in the past when a formula was put in place, it was put in place during terms of high employment. So there are regional disparities, and certainly today we are in another case; we are in high unemployment. So we need to look at those adjustments and we need to look at the fairness. Whether it's province to province or really whether it's just region to region, the fairness must be there. There are manufacturers who have lost jobs in Windsor, but there are manufacturers who have lost jobs in Toronto, Ajax, Pickering, Windsor, Scucog—any number of places.

What we want to be able to do is not only look at the number of hours that you qualify for and the number of weeks you're paid out, but we also need to look at some of the terms and conditions. For example, with the previous government they actually cut about 79% of the training and apprenticeship programs in this province. We've reinstated the apprenticeship and training programs. We put a significant amount of money to help unemployed workers get back into the workforce. Currently, the rules state that if you accept employment insurance, you must be actively looking for work, and if employment is available, then even if you're in a training program, you must drop out and take that job. That sort of defies the whole idea around why we have training for people to proceed with a different career in their life.

Today you don't work for just one company; you may, over your whole career, work for five or six different companies. Employment insurance is supposed to be a safety net for those who are unemployed during those transition periods. So we need to be able to look at that as well.

The differences amongst the different regions are also very significant. As I indicated, even here in Ontario we have car manufacturers and people who are losing manufacturing jobs, assembly jobs in southwestern Ontario. Currently, the way it stands in Windsor, for example, the hours you need to qualify are 525; the minimum number of weeks of benefits is 21 and the maximum is 45. There is a significant unemployment problem. But if you go to Newfoundland, you only need 420 hours to qualify, and you get a minimum number of benefits for 37 weeks and the maximum number of benefits is 45 weeks.

But I could go right back just to the differences in Scucog and Brock. They still have the same problem with unemployment but they need 665 hours to qualify. The minimum weeks of benefits is 15 and the maximum is 38. So you can see that there are huge disparities across this province.

As I indicated before, we were in a time when there was employment; the formula was there. We're now in a time of recession, and the formula needs to be changed. I'm more than prepared to support—as we move forward, this impacts and affects forestry workers, manufacturing, any number of deficits that are occurring in a number of regions across this province and actually, to be honest with you, Mr. Speaker, right across this country.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member from Mississauga–Brampton South, Ms. Mangat, you have up to two minutes for your response.

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I would like to thank the member from Hamilton Mountain, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Natural Resources, the member from Durham, the member from Trinity–Spadina and the member from Parkdale–High Park for their insightful comments.

As I stated earlier, Ontario workers account for 39% of the Canadian labour force. They pay their employment insurance premiums just like every other Canadian worker, and just like every other Canadian worker they are entitled to seek and receive the same EI benefits, yet Ontario workers get \$4,000 less each year than the workers in other provinces.

I want to see the families and the victims of this current global economic recession in my riding get back on their feet, and they need help. They are good citizens. They are working hard and paying their taxes. During these difficult times, they need help from the federal government, and the government of Canada has the power to help our workers and provide them proportional support. They pay taxes like any other Canadian worker.

In 2008-09, there were three net contributors to the federation: Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. British Columbia paid \$2.7 billion, Alberta paid \$14.3 billion, and Ontario contributed \$23.5 billion—the largest contributor to the federation and a proud contributor. I fail to understand why—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you to the honourable member. Sorry, but your time had expired.

We'll vote on this ballot item in about 50 minutes.

HAWKINS GIGNAC ACT (CARBON  
MONOXIDE DETECTORS), 2009  
LOI HAWKINS GIGNAC DE 2009  
(DÉTECTEURS DE MONOXYDE  
DE CARBONE)

Mr. Hardeman moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 143, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 to require carbon monoxide detectors in all residential buildings / Projet de loi 143, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment pour exiger l'installation de détecteurs de monoxyde de carbone dans tous les bâtiments servant à l'habitation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Oxford, pursuant to standing order 98, you have up to 12 minutes for your presentation.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you, and I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 143, which is also known as the Hawkins Gignac Act. This bill would protect lives and prevent tragedies, through requiring working carbon monoxide detectors in every home in Ontario.

I want to thank all the people who are here today to support this bill. I particularly want to recognize the members of the Hawkins family who have come from North Bay and are in the west members' gallery: Debbie, Pam and Kayla. I can only imagine how difficult this loss has been for you and your family, and I want you to know that our thoughts and prayers and those of the community are with you.

Late last year, Richard, Laurie, Cassandra and Jordan Hawkins succumbed to carbon monoxide poisoning. It was later discovered that their gas fireplace had a blocked exhaust and had filled their home with a poisonous gas. I'm honoured that their families allowed me to name the bill in the memory of the Hawkins family.

Richard Hawkins, Debbie's son, was a talented hockey player in the OHL and later shared the love of hockey with others by coaching the local hockey team. His young son, Jordan, shared that passion for hockey and was already demonstrating a sense of responsibility as a paper boy. Fourteen-year-old Cassandra was in grade 9 at St. Mary's High School and was part of the social justice club. The ribbons we are wearing here today are in memory of the family, and they're purple, Cassandra's favourite colour.

Richard and Laurie Hawkins—previously Laurie Gignac—were from North Bay, but after they moved to southwestern Ontario, they made Woodstock in Oxford county their home, and they became a very important part of our community.

As an OPP community relations officer, Constable Laurie Hawkins touched the lives of many people throughout Oxford. This is shown by the representatives from Big Brothers Big Sisters who worked with Laurie, and they are here, again in the gallery. It is shown by the many students in the public gallery up at the top there. Laurie taught the VIP program: values, influences and peers. She opened up to them and shared stories about herself and her family to help give them self-confidence and the knowledge they needed to make good decisions. Years after being part of the VIP program, students mentioned to their teachers the great impact that Laurie had on them.

The students who are here today from Victory Memorial School in Ingersoll are demonstrating their values and dedication by making the ribbons that we are all wearing today to honour the Hawkins family. I want to thank them and their teacher Lori Vollmershausen for being here today.

**1540**

I want to recognize Laurie's OPP colleague who is in the gallery: Sergeant John Rutkauskas. Anyway, John knows who he is. Laurie played a meaningful and significant part, and it was a great loss to the department.

There are also two firefighters from Woodstock Professional Fire Fighters Association here today, Trevor Ford and Brad Cullen, to honour the memory.

In honour of the Hawkins family, the fire department distributed carbon monoxide detectors in our community and worked hard to try and prevent more tragedies. I want to commend them for their work.

Firefighters and fire departments across Ontario have done their part to raise awareness about the need for carbon monoxide detectors in all homes. As a former firefighter, I know that often they are the first to witness tragedy. I want to thank them for all their efforts to protect and save lives.

Patrick Burke, the Fire Marshal of Ontario, said in a recent letter, "The fire service has always understood, first-hand, the importance of having early warnings and the tragedies related to carbon monoxide poisoning." That is why I am pleased that Dave Thomson, Bill Burns and Willie Gregg from the Fire Fighters Association of Ontario are here today to support this bill. I want to thank them for their assistance and the assistance of their association.

In a recent letter, Dave Thomson said, "The Fire Fighters Association of Ontario fully supports your private member's bill, the Hawkins Gignac Act of 2008 ... making carbon monoxide detectors mandatory in homes across Ontario."

Sadly, the Hawkins family is not the only tragedy due to carbon monoxide. Between 2001 and 2007, 74 people died in Ontario due to carbon monoxide poisoning. In fact, it is the number one cause of accidental poisoning deaths in North America.

Only last week in Thamesville near Chatham, a 71-year-old man died from carbon monoxide poisoning caused by his furnace, and over the past few months there have been many more tragic stories—a couple in Markham, a woman near Sudbury and many people who ended up in the hospital like the Toronto family in December. In fact, a British Columbia health organization estimated that each year 13,000 Canadians have some level of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide is produced any time a fuel is burned. There are many sources of carbon monoxide in our homes: furnaces, water heaters, stoves and fireplaces, just to name a few. As we take steps to make our homes more airtight to save on heating costs, our risk of carbon monoxide poisoning increases. What makes it so dangerous is that carbon monoxide is tasteless, odourless and colourless, and there is no way to detect it before it starts to make people sick.

To protect lives, every house with a fuel-burning appliance or attached garage should have a working carbon monoxide alarm on every floor, but today, there are too many homes without one. Currently, only houses built after 2001 are required to have carbon monoxide detectors. That means that there are too many homes in Ontario where people are at risk; this is despite the fact that we have so many tragedies in Ontario, despite the fact that coroners' juries have recommended that legislation be changed to make carbon monoxide detectors mandatory—such as the jury in Sudbury that investigated four deaths due to carbon monoxide poisoning and recommended seven years ago that legislation be introduced to make them mandatory in all homes.

Three weeks ago, Dr. Andrew McCallum, the chief coroner of Ontario, released the results of an investi-

gation into the death of an 84-year-old woman in Sudbury. Working with the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, he confirmed that the source of the carbon monoxide was the fuel-burning boiler system, but there were no mechanical defects with the boiler system. Efforts to make the home more airtight simply caused the air flow to reverse and the gas to fill the home. As a result, the chief coroner made two major recommendations: that members of the public have their fuel-burning appliances inspected regularly to ensure they are in safe and proper working order, and that carbon monoxide alarms be installed on every level of all homes.

This bill would meet that requirement and make our homes safer by requiring carbon monoxide detectors in all homes in Ontario. The Hawkins Gignac Act is modelled on the regulations which make smoke detectors mandatory. For new homes, carbon monoxide detectors would have to be hard-wired and interconnected. We recognize that this would be cost-prohibitive in existing homes, so for these homes a battery-operated or plugged-in carbon monoxide detector would be acceptable.

Carbon monoxide detectors range in price, but there are models available for \$20 to \$25—not a high price to pay to protect our lives. I know that people across Ontario have accepted the importance of having smoke detectors on every level of their homes. I hope that we can make people aware of the need for the same with carbon monoxide alarms.

Currently, many people install one detector in each house and believe that this is enough to protect them, but the reality is that you need one on every level of your home, especially near sleeping areas. Lower levels or the early stages of carbon monoxide poisoning have flu-like symptoms: tiredness, headaches, dizziness, nausea and vomiting. The natural reaction for most people when you think you're getting the flu is to go to bed. Imagine that the carbon monoxide is coming from a heater or fireplace on the second floor directly into the bedrooms and the carbon monoxide detector is two floors away, in the basement near the furnace, or that the gas is coming from your attached garage or a stove in the kitchen. Even if the alarm goes off, it may not be loud enough to hear that far away.

I received a letter from a man in St. Catharines who put it very well. He said, "I want to express my strong support for making carbon monoxide detectors mandatory. I have a carbon monoxide detector on each level of my two-storey house even though I maintain my furnace. I just don't want to take any chances."

I've been pleased at the number of people who have recognized the importance of this bill, such as Greg Nicol, a fire prevention inspector in Owen Sound, who said, "I support your initiative for making carbon monoxide detectors mandatory in all homes with fuel-fired appliances or attached garages in Ontario."

I also want to thank the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association for supporting this bill. In a recent letter they said, "As first responders, our members are acutely aware of and have witnessed numerous accounts

of the effects, sometimes tragic, that carbon monoxide poisoning has had on our citizens. The OPFFA executive board has reviewed Bill 143 and is pleased to support your efforts to make carbon monoxide detectors mandatory."

I also want to thank them for meeting with me to discuss what we can do to increase awareness and strengthen this bill. They suggested some good amendments, and I hope that we are able to take this bill forward to committee to hear from groups like theirs to ensure that this bill will be as effective as possible.

They also explained to me why this bill would help protect all our firefighters. Imagine that emergency personnel have been told there is a medical call. Someone is unconscious, and it is assumed that it is simply a health issue, but in fact the house is full of carbon monoxide and this person is suffering from the effects. The firefighters are walking into the house unaware, with no warning. Having an alarm in the house might not only save the homeowner, but it could protect our emergency personnel.

While there have been many tragedies, I have also received letters from a number of people whose lives were saved by the carbon monoxide detectors that have convinced me even more that we need to pass this bill and ensure that more people are protected. I would ask everyone listening here or at home to take steps to protect yourself and your loved ones. If you don't have carbon monoxide detectors, get them. If you do have them, test them and make sure they're working, and if they're over 10 years old, replace them. Talk to your friends and neighbours about how this inexpensive piece of equipment can save lives. We have lost too many people to tragic accidents. Too many have had their bright futures cut short. Working together, we can raise awareness and move this bill forward to committee to ensure that we can prevent more tragedies in the future.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me this opportunity to present this bill to the Legislature.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's an honour to rise in support of Bill 143, which the member from Oxford has brought forward.

First of all, let me give to the families and friends of the Hawkins family our deepest condolences from the New Democratic Party for your loss. Hopefully this will be the beginning of trying to bring something out of that tragedy that is, in some small way, a triumph. So thank you for coming down today, making the trek, and hopefully we'll have some good news for you at the end of the afternoon.

I also want to acknowledge the member from Brant, who today got up and introduced a private member's bill—I'm a big fan of the member from Brant—about making a week in September a week to recognize the dangers of carbon monoxide. With all due respect, though, I have to say that that's not enough. Just setting aside a week to recognize the dangers of carbon



monoxide is not enough and will not be enough to save lives. But certainly, if Bill 143 is brought in, that would be a huge step forward, because then not only new houses but all houses would be covered under this bill and would be required to have carbon monoxide detectors up and operative.

This is a personal issue for me too, because before I was a politician I was a United Church minister, and early on, coming to Toronto and accepting a charge, we moved into a rental house. It was the first house, I have to say, that had a carbon monoxide detector in it. I had never seen such a thing before. We really didn't know anything about carbon monoxide or the possibilities of carbon monoxide poisoning. Then one day it started beeping, and like some of the stories that I've read in doing research for this bill, we thought there was something wrong with the detector. We turned it off, and it kicked back in; it started beeping again. I thought, "I don't really know what this is about but maybe we should phone the fire department, just in case," feeling a little embarrassed, actually, thinking that they'll come and it'll be nothing. It will just be a faulty detector. Certainly, we could smell nothing; we detected nothing in the house.

#### 1550

This is so typical of what families go through and have gone through. The fire department was there, as usual, in minutes. Within minutes more, the entire street was cordoned off. That's how bad it was. It was a real wake-up call to us as a family. Had we not done that, had we not had the carbon monoxide detector operative and working in our house—who knows? My two children were in the house at the time, my husband, myself, our animals. We're just very glad that we had one, and it was unfortunately not due to our own awareness. So hopefully with Bill 143, more people will become aware. Certainly, even talking about the bill in this place, as people watch from home, will make people more aware so that we can prevent the tragedies that clearly you, who are visiting today, have lived through.

They're not alone. These are a few of the tragedies that have just happened this year because of carbon monoxide poisoning. An 84-year-old woman from Azlida lost her life on January 5 when the air flow on her furnace reversed. Thankfully, her daughter was rushed to hospital and survived. Adrianus Van Ravenstein and his son Michael died of carbon monoxide poisoning in their Kingston home on November 23. Ang Chindemi and her family, including her four-and-a-half-year-old grandchild, only just survived in hospital after the fans to dry their flooded basement blew out their furnace pilot light in their Toronto home. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of St. John's, Newfoundland, Martin Currie, was rushed to hospital this past New Year's Day when he was found semiconscious in his bed. That was due to a part of the liner in his chimney breaking off and partially blocking the chimney, causing his furnace to backfire, and so on and so on.

We know that the London fire department alone receives more than 800 carbon monoxide calls a year.

According to Deputy Fire Chief Dan Oldridge, they've had a few close calls. According to the Canada Safety Council, there were more than 12,000 calls related to carbon monoxide concerns in Ontario—12,000 other families who experienced what my family experienced. The BC Poison Control Centre says that in 2004, 121 people were poisoned by carbon monoxide in that province alone.

As the member for Oxford detailed, unfortunately, rather than decreasing, the numbers of these incidents are increasing. The thought is—although the research is not complete—it's because our houses are more energy-efficient now, more airtight. So it makes them, in a sense, more dangerous if they don't have carbon monoxide monitoring.

I was very pleased that the member for Oxford also gave a little bit of a caveat at the end of introducing his bill, and that was: It's not just enough to have a carbon monoxide detector in your house; it has to be working. I know that there are many across the province of Ontario, and certainly the fire departments know this, that have fire detectors that aren't working for want of a battery. I know that there are many more probably that don't have carbon monoxide detectors working for want of a battery—a battery that could have meant the difference between life and death.

So this bill is absolutely critical. It was quite shocking to me when I first saw the bill that this wasn't the case already in the province of Ontario, that this wasn't the law already. Certainly, it needs to be acted on, and it needs to be acted on quickly.

Again, our family were pretty typical folk who felt we're pretty aware—we are aware of what is going on—and we had never, until that moment, in a rental house, understood about carbon monoxide, its dangers, and what a detector could do about those dangers.

Certainly I applaud the member for Oxford. I would plead with the government—they alone, of course, if you understand the way that this place works, can bring this into law. We in the opposition can make suggestions, we can bring in private members' bills, we can hope they get through first and then even second reading sometimes, but almost all of them die in committee. Almost all of them do not see the fruition of becoming law unless and until the government brings them in as their own. Sometimes we get lucky. I often characterize this place as pushing an elephant uphill because sometimes in the opposition you make a lot of noise about issues, bring in private members' bills, get campaigns going, put in a lot of effort, only to budge the elephant of government up about an inch. In this case, we need that inch. Certainly, Ontario families need it. Certainly, in this case we hope the elephant walks on its own and brings in this law. All they have to do is not only pass it today but ensure that it gets to committee and ensure that it gets out of committee and back here onto the floor of the Legislature.

I'm sure the member from Oxford is like myself and other members of the opposition: As long as it gets passed, I'm sure, Ernie, you wouldn't mind if the govern-

ment put their stamp on it. But we need it passed and we need a whole lot more than just a week in September where we acknowledge the dangers. We know the dangers. Nobody knows the dangers better than our visitors today. I want to commend the children, by the way, for making these wonderful bows. This is quite a feat. Thank you for being so active. We always speak in this House about wanting our children and youth to be more politically conscious and more politically active, because you can make a difference, and your being here does make a difference. So thank you for all the hard work that you put into this and thank you for being here to support the member from Oxford in this noble effort.

My hope, and the hope of the whole New Democratic Party, is that it's not just an effort; we hope that this becomes law. Thank you, the member from Oxford, again, for pleading with the government that they not only say nice things about the bill and not only pass it today, but actually either pass it in its entirety or bring in their own bill in no short order that will do exactly the same thing. We need that and the province of Ontario needs it. It's the only fitting tribute to this incredible family and these incredible folk who have come down today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey:** I'm pleased to stand and offer my support for Bill 143, put forward by the member from Oxford. He is to be applauded for his bill, as there's little doubt that, should it be passed, the legislation would save lives. Our government is committed to increasing public safety in Ontario. That's why we've developed tough building code and fire code standards. In fact, carbon monoxide detectors were first included in the Ontario building code back in 1993. We recognize that carbon monoxide poisoning has become the number one cause of accidental poisoning in North America. In 2001, the building code was amended to require carbon monoxide detectors in all suites of residential occupancy where there's a source of carbon monoxide, such as a gas furnace or a gas appliance. The requirements cover both houses and multiple-unit residential buildings.

Across Ontario, a number of municipalities have passed bylaws, based on advice from their fire professionals, requiring carbon monoxide detectors in dwellings, often using the authority to pass property standards bylaws set out in the Building Code Act, 1992. These municipalities include my own community of Brampton and the cities of Mississauga, Toronto and Oshawa.

For years now, the Ontario fire service has been championing public safety. They have asked that all residents be protected by carbon monoxide alarms. Many fire departments have enacted local bylaws that prescribe CO alarms in all residential buildings in which occupants are at risk of exposure to the poisonous CO gas. In fact, in my home municipality of Brampton, many residents have benefited from the protection of a CO alarm since 1998, when the fire department saw the need for these alarms and took action to have council pass a bylaw to protect its residents.

Residents often have questions about what type of alarm to buy to install in their homes. The fire service has been vocal in telling us that it's important to look for a CO alarm that conforms to Canada CSA-6.19, the standard for residential carbon monoxide alarming devices, or the Underwriters Laboratories standard number 2034, the standard for single- and multiple-station carbon monoxide alarms. By adhering to those standards, a homeowner can take some comfort in knowing that the carbon monoxide alarm has been manufactured in such a manner as to provide the maximum amount of protection.

**1600**

I introduced my first private member's bill, back in 2004, on the issue of residential fire sprinklers. I worked hard to support fire chiefs from across Ontario who had petitioned our government, asking for the power to ensure that sprinklers are installed in all new residential construction. On June 18, 2008, our government filed a regulation to increase the fire safety of new large residential buildings. As of April 1, 2010, all new residential buildings over three storeys high will require residential fire sprinkler systems.

*Applause.*

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey:** Thank you.

Private members' bills, as was mentioned earlier, give all elected members in this House the ability to significantly raise awareness on an issue. This bill attempts to amend the building code in order to save lives, and I support the principle of what the member is putting forward. But one of the benefits of debate in this forum is the opportunity to offer constructive criticism, which I will do in order to assist the member from Oxford, should the bill make it to committee.

One of Mr. Hardeman's initial criticisms of my sprinkler bill was the issue of maintenance. I note it now, as I see that in Bill 143 he has not addressed the maintenance of CO alarms, and I hope he'll consider that, should it get to committee. As well, requiring retrofits of all existing residential units could set a precedent for future retrofits. He might want to address that. Municipalities also may not be willing partners, since they may see this legislation as being a potential financial cost, as well as the difficulty in being able to enforce such an amendment. Lastly, the 12-month time frame provided within the bill to comply with the legislation may just be too short to ensure its success.

Having been a firefighter for 25 years, I know the member from Oxford appreciates anything that government can do to make society safer. I commend MPP Hardeman's efforts in introducing a bill that, like my sprinkler bill, would save the lives of countless Ontarians. I'm happy to lend my support to Bill 143 and will support it when it comes to a vote.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm certainly pleased to support the bill that has been put forward by my colleague the member for Oxford. This is a bill that, it appears, everyone in this House is going to support, and people are putting forward considerations to ensure that

any issues that might be outstanding are going to be addressed.

This bill would amend the Building Code Act, 1992, to require carbon monoxide detectors in all residential buildings. I want to commend and congratulate the member for Oxford. I know that at the time when the tragedy occurred, he did speak to it in this House, and he subsequently did follow up with this private member's bill. I also want to extend my sincere sympathy to the members of the family who are present today, and to thank them for all their hard work in making sure that this private member's bill was brought to the attention of this House today. I thank, as well, the students who have made these wonderful ribbons for us.

Oftentimes young people will ask me, "How does legislation originate? How does it start?" I think this is a good civics lesson. It often occurs because you have a situation, as occurred in the province of Ontario, where a family—in this case, Richard, Laurie, Cassandra and Jordan—died tragically inside their Woodstock home of carbon monoxide poisoning and, as a result, the family and friends wanted to make sure that something was done in order that other families would not suffer a similar fate. So the member from Oxford had the opportunity to introduce a bill, and here we are today.

This bill has come from you, the citizens in the province of Ontario, and you're here to make sure this House supports this bill today and that it can go on to committee, if need be, and be passed by this House, hopefully as soon as possible. It is a very important bill, and I can certainly attest to the fact that carbon monoxide poisoning is not something you cannot consider to be serious. We've had a family friend—fortunately, they were spared the consequences, but they could have met a very tragic end, and so, several years ago, my husband took it upon himself to purchase detectors for the three levels of our home. He continues to monitor faithfully and make sure they're all in working order. It's regrettable that it sometimes takes personal tragedies and situations to make us take action, but if this bill was passed, everyone in this province would be obligated to put a detector in their home, and we could ensure there were no further tragedies as we move forward.

Again, I congratulate Mr. Hardeman. I know this issue is certainly one he wishes to move forward as quickly as possible. Again, I applaud the family members and friends who are here today, who have done what they can in memory of the family, and I thank the students. This is how legislation and bills are brought forward and passed in this House, because of you, the people in this province. We try to respond to what you believe are needs, and of course this is a need that needs to move forward very, very quickly.

Thank you all for your participation in bringing this bill to us today. We hope, as a result of the discussion today, that we will have raised the awareness of all the people in the province of Ontario. I hope that, as a result of the discussion here today, those who are watching at home, or any subsequent media attention this debate will receive—I hope there are people tonight or tomorrow or

this weekend who will recognize that they should go out and buy detectors for all levels in their homes in order to avert future tragedies.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I'd like to thank the member for Oxford for bringing forward this important bill, and I want to tell him and those present today that I'm going to support his bill.

I know that the member for Brant has indicated his support for the bill to the member from Oxford. On behalf of the member of Brant, I just want to say that John and Sandy Gignac are here to support the bill. In fact, they're spearheading action in the riding to educate the public about this issue.

Carbon monoxide, or CO, as it's known by its chemical name, is colourless, odourless, tasteless and poisonous. It is, in fact, the most common cause of fatal poisoning in many countries. Carbon monoxide consists of one molecule of oxygen covalently bonded to one molecule of carbon, hence its abbreviated name, CO. It's produced from the partial oxidation or, in layman's terms, the incomplete burning, of carbon-containing components. If there's not enough oxygen present to completely burn carbon, then CO forms in preference to the more usual carbon dioxide. Carbon monoxide gas is quite flammable, burning in air with a characteristic blue flame, and of course producing carbon dioxide.

The typical average background level in homes is about 0.5 to 5 parts per million. Near a gas stove that is properly adjusted, that level could be 5 to 15 parts per million. In a big city in traffic, that level could approach 10 times that. The chimney of a home fireplace can read a stunning 5,000 parts per million. Just to put some scale on that, undiluted warm car exhaust without a catalytic converter is 7,000 parts per million. Having CO detectors can save more than human lives, especially in farm country.

Operating a CO detector is simplicity itself. You buy it, you put a battery in it, you attach it to a wall or ceiling and that's it. The only downside I've observed is that the battery only fails between the hours of 2 and 4 in the morning on a weekday. Why, for example, would anyone in farm country with a fireplace in the house not want to have a CO detector? If vehicles routinely park or idle outside the barn, why would you not want to have a CO detector to determine if your livestock is exposed to high levels of carbon dioxide?

What happens when CO levels build up in the air and people or animals breathe that air? Carbon monoxide inhibits the blood's ability to carry oxygen to body tissues, including vital organs such as the heart and the brain. When you inhale CO, it combines with the oxygen-carrying hemoglobin of the blood to form carboxyhemoglobin.

1610

**Interjection:** Oh.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** That's a mouthful. Once combined with the hemoglobin, that hemoglobin is no longer available to transport oxygen.

The half-life of carboxyhemoglobin is approximately five hours. That means that for a given exposure level, it takes about five hours for the level of carboxyhemoglobin in the blood to drop to half of its exposure level.

The symptoms of CO poisoning, as the member said, resemble those of the flu. In fact, a misdiagnosis of the flu often means delayed or missed treatments. At high concentrations, the symptoms appear more quickly. Look for a person's face turning cherry pink, a fact pointed out to me by the member for Oak Ridges–Markham and the former York region medical officer of health.

The hardware is cheap, the operation is simple and the benefits are obvious and tangible. This is a bill about the real reason that people send each of us to the Ontario Legislature: to make things better in ways great and small. Let's all vote for Bill 143 and make it law.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's a real pleasure to get up today and pay respect to the people who are here.

I just want to start by saying that I have a great deal of respect for the member from Oxford, Mr. Hardeman. Just given his background, there's no surprise that he introduced this bill. He is a former mayor of south-west Oxford. He's a former associate minister of municipal affairs and housing responsible for rural affairs, and a former Minister of Agriculture. He's been here for quite a few years, and I know he takes things very seriously.

I think his constituents who are here today—he would never say this and never brag about it, but he has also been a volunteer fireman for 25 years, so he's no stranger to emergencies and taking quick action.

This bill is a good example of a tragedy, unfortunately, that happened in his riding. He created something positive out of a very tragic event for the Hawkins family. The Gignac family was tragically affected as well. Mr. Hardeman has turned this into something that's positive. Our caucus, as Mrs. Witmer said, extends its respect and sympathy to all of the family, and the family members who are here.

It's a very nice tie-in for the students who are here today. I hope you're not bored by all of this. Your actions are really part of what is being debated and, I hope, unanimously moved today in support of the young boy who had autism—and your ribbons and the art that are attached to it. I commend you for it and for taking an active role, as Mr. Hardeman is doing, in making this a celebration of an otherwise tragic event.

The bill, as has been said, does things that I think in the long run—we always like to be less than intrusive into people's lives, but when you are potentially saving a life, it takes on quite a different perspective. In that respect, I believe that all members are speaking in positive terms about having a smoke detector, a carbon monoxide detector and any other instruments that can save lives.

It was very important to note that—all speakers have outlined it—as Mr. Hardeman said, in Canada there are about 13,000 deaths a year attributed to these un-

necessary tragedies. If it's preventable, we should be taking action. In fact, government would have a responsibility to adopt Mr. Hardeman's bill, and I would hope they do. At the end of sessions, quite often the House leaders get together and unanimously agree to move an issue forward. In this way, we could be saving lives.

Presently only homes built after 2001, with a fuel-burning appliance or storage garage, are required to have carbon monoxide detectors. All he is doing here is augmenting or improving an existing provision.

It says here, according to the Canada Safety Council, "Carbon monoxide (CO) is the leading cause of fatal poisonings in North America." So it's not just our own jurisdiction. It's Ontario indeed taking leadership.

That's what the discussion this afternoon is about: It's about the role and duties of members, in this case the member from Oxford, but all members. I know that other members in the House have issues on mandatory smoke detectors and other things. I know that the member who just spoke from the Liberal side, Mrs. Jeffrey from Brampton–Springdale, has a bill she's been pushing that she would like to see become law as well.

Even today it's quite interesting that, without tooting our own horns, I had a constituent who was tragically involved in the death of a father and his daughter. There was an inquest where it was determined that the cause of the death was that they were on a cellphone going across a railway crossing. From that, I introduced a bill, and that bill, I think it was Bill 118, became law today. The general government committee confirmed it, and third reading of that bill was today. It wasn't my bill essentially, but it was the concept that came from people, from a tragedy, from an inquest. As an elected member, we have a duty to listen and respond, as we did. The government, to their credit, adopted it into that bill that was proclaimed today. It's not proclaimed, I don't think; it just passed third reading today. It will be proclaimed sometime shortly, which will ban the use of hand-held cellphones and other technical devices while driving.

I would expect that a year from now every person who is a visitor today here could celebrate, if the Dalton McGuinty government is listening. My assumption is that they are going to support this, that they will integrate it into a piece of legislation that's enforceable and has all the right provisions in it. It would be a really important reason for us to go out on a positive note out of this otherwise tragic event.

Even closer to home, we have five children, and I can recall that probably the only event was that one time one of our children was playing in the garage and started a small fire. Fortunately, we had a fire extinguisher in the garage, which is another kind of safety device, and it was quickly stopped. We all need to have those tools—these alerts, these alarms, these devices—to pay attention. I think that making it mandatory is the other provision.

When you look at the fire departments, whether it's the fire marshal or the fire departments, who now, in my community, go around and inspect the home each year—randomly, I gather—to make sure they have working

smoke detectors—because the worst thing you hear is seeing a tragedy of a fire in a family and they go in and the smoke detectors were not operational, which is very sad.

In these cases, the new kinds of devices are integrated into the electricity system so that they don't have batteries. That's probably the ideal state, but we'll have to see what ultimately is required. I'm confident that any thinking person here today would support it for the reason that it's the right thing to do. It has nothing to do with politics whatsoever. It's out of respect for this tragedy, specifically, where Mr. Hardeman has taken immediate action. I believe the date that he introduced the bill was within days of the tragic event. We can respect that action by Mr. Hardeman by making this law.

Also, I just say to members that there is this very informative little carbon monoxide poisoning pamphlet that I think should be available in MPPs' offices. That would be another important move. All this debate is really about educating consumers on ways that you could save not only your life but someone else's life. I commend Mr. Hardeman for the work and the people who are here to help, give support and encourage us to do the right thing here today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I'd like to thank the member from Oxford for introducing Bill 143, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 to require carbon monoxide detectors in all residential buildings, and also to thank the Hawkins family, who are present here today, very much for pushing this bill, and the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association for supporting it.

I have a couple of questions, however. In terms of improving this bill somewhat, Mr. Hardeman may want to consider the problem with electrically heated homes. Is it also essential to place carbon monoxide detectors in electrically heated homes? Is that going to be an exemption or should that also be included? Does it matter? I don't know, but you may want to address that issue.

There's also another substantive issue, and that is, how do you enforce and monitor the existing homes and apartments and develop this kind of a monitoring and checking mechanism so that this bill would really be very effective?

I had a chance to speak with Mr. Hardeman in the hallway, and he indicated to me that this actually is a copy of the smoke detector bill, which is very interesting. The smoke detector bill also has a minor problem, and that is that as soon as some people recognize that the bells go off, it begins to hiss or it begins to make a sound, they either take the battery out because it's inconvenient at the time—because there's no fire; there's simply some smoke in the kitchen—or some people even put tape over that mechanism so it doesn't ring as loud. I'm wondering whether it should be essential that the carbon monoxide detectors be wired so that there would be no problem in having a child taking out or pulling out the carbon monoxide detector or being able to fiddle around with it.

In case it goes off, some might think, "Well, it's not a question of carbon monoxide being in the building, but it may just be a faulty wire or the mechanism itself may be somewhat faulty"—and, consequently, either pulling it out or taping over it. So these are some considerations that are very important.

**1620**

The city of Toronto, of course, has such legislation already in existence. The question here would be that within city limits, it's important that the carbon monoxide detector is in the basement. So there's one already in the basement; it has to be in the basement. Then there has to be one on the first floor. But the present law does not require that there is a carbon monoxide detector on the third floor or the fourth floor. So if you have a home that has two storeys, you'd only have to have one in the basement and on the first floor, but not on the second floor.

Those are some of the considerations. It's obvious that this bill is important because it saves lives. Also, I'd like to indicate that I will certainly be supporting this bill as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate? It would be just the NDP, who have a couple of minutes. No? Then the honourable member for Oxford has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I want to thank the members from Parkdale–High Park, Brampton–Springdale, Kitchener–Waterloo, Mississauga–Streetsville, Durham and Davenport for their kind comments and their show of support for this bill. I also am mentioning, on the presentation from Brampton–Springdale—and I'd like to commend the member for her bill—that that was in my remarks: I referred to meeting with the professional firefighters, and the reason was to talk about how we could deal with such things as maintenance. We suggested that that would be the very thing the bill would go to committee for, to look at making some amendments that would deal with some of the concerns expressed not only by these professional firefighters, but by members of this House as we move forward.

I also want to say that the bill has already come up with good results, just by introducing it. I think everything should end on a positive note. I got this letter from the Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Ontario, and it's to Mr. Hardeman:

"I'm writing as a follow-up to our phone call made to your office this morning. I congratulate you on your initiative to make carbon monoxide detectors mandatory in all residences in the province. As I mentioned to your secretary, my family providentially had a narrow escape from CO poisoning.

"As a result of the press coverage of the tragedy in your riding, I decided to purchase CO detectors for my own house. We have had smoke detectors in place for years. I purchased two CO detectors during the afternoon of on Monday, December 8 and, on returning home, put the batteries in place, tested them and placed them on the kitchen counter, intending to install them on Tuesday

once I had determined the appropriate location. Every evening we turn down the thermostat and open a window; this action probably saved us. On Tuesday morning after I had left for the office, my wife phoned me and informed me that the alarms were beeping non-stop. Our oldest son, a widower, and his two children, aged five and seven, are living with us, and the oldest had just left for school. I immediately called the Kingston Fire Department, who responded promptly. They took CO measurements throughout the house and found readings of 150ppm. They suggested calling Union Gas. The gas company also responded promptly and, after investigation, condemned our furnace. We now have a new furnace.

“As you can”—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Sorry.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. Sorry to cut you off, but your time had significantly expired.

The time provided for private members' public business has expired. It's time to vote.

#### HEALTH CARE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will deal first with ballot item number 1, standing in the name of Mr. Miller, Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Mr. Miller has moved private member's notice of motion number 79. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried. Congratulations.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 2, standing in the name of Mrs. Mangat.

Mrs. Mangat has moved private member's notice of motion number 80. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### HAWKINS GIGNAC ACT (CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS), 2009

#### LOI HAWKINS GIGNAC DE 2009 (DÉTECTEURS DE MONOXYDE DE CARBONE)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 3, standing in the name of Mr. Hardeman.

Mr. Hardeman has moved second reading of Bill 143, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 to require carbon monoxide detectors in all residential buildings. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Hardeman?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** To the committee on general government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it agreed that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government? So referred.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### 2009 ONTARIO BUDGET

#### BUDGET DE L'ONTARIO DE 2009

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 31, 2009, on the amendment to the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Debate?

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** It's a privilege, duty and honour, of course, to speak on the Ontario budget, 2009. With your permission and indulgence, I'd like to offer four road signs or road maps in terms of the remarks I'd like to deliver.

First of all, I'd like to share a couple of quotations, one from Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1933—as you know, a former American President who found himself having to deal himself with very similar circumstances of a global economic meltdown. The second quotation is from one Premier Dalton McGuinty.

L'Ontario subit les contrecoups de la crise économique mondiale. L'incidence de cette crise sur la croissance économique, les emplois et les investissements touche directement les particuliers, les familles, les collectivités et les entreprises de l'Ontario. Les pertes d'emplois nuisent aux familles ontariennes. Des collectivités perdent des usines. Les revenus du gouvernement baissent.

Nous faisons face à un défi de taille, mais la population de l'Ontario saura le surmonter.

Speaker, there are a number of things to share with you about the economic crisis that we are going through. As you know and as we hear daily from the press reports and media reports from the United States, whether it's the insurance sector, the broader financial sector, the manufacturing sector, or the powerhouse of North America, the auto sector, all of these various industries are under extreme challenge. Unfortunately, many of them are looking at either liquidation or bankruptcy or very serious reorganization. That, of course, is the climate or the landscape or the background upon which Ontario and Ontario's people and the government of the day find themselves.

So the question arises: In terms of this economic climate, what could have been within this budget to help maintain Ontario's finances? What could have been some of the measures and initiatives? I would say the scorched-earth policy that we might have engaged in. For example, we might have cut hospitals, we might have fired nurses,

we might have privatized yet more of Ontario's collective assets, all in a desperate bid to maintain our financial integrity and lay the foundation stones for tomorrow's prosperity. But of course, as Liberals, as people who move towards a balanced approach, that is not what we did, and that's where I'd like to bring in the quotations: first, from FDR, and I don't mean this to be quite as aggressive or potentially offensive as it is potentially interpretable, but this is what he said, and it dovetails very nicely with Premier McGuinty's quotation as well. FDR said, in 1933, "A conservative is a man with two perfectly good legs who, however, has never learned how to walk forward." That reminds us of a quotation that our own Premier shares with us. He says—I think, by the way, in a quite inspiring and intelligent manner—that it's neither about the right or the left; it's about moving forward. With that, that opens up the opportunity for Ontarians and for this chamber and for this government to reemphasize what I would call the differing philosophies between the various parties that are represented here. There are some governments that tend to be Republican, tend to be Conservative, tend to be right-wing, whose philosophy is one of privatizing the gains and socializing the losses. That's something we were dealing with, unfortunately, in eight years of the Bush administration.

**1630**

For example, a former government in Ontario was quite happy to privatize and to sell off things like water inspection, meat inspection and possibly TVOntario. They took a \$100-billion tract of land called Highway 407 and essentially gave it away, for rent, for a 99-year lease in perpetuity, for approximately \$1 billion. They accessed outside consultants—for example the Andersen, now Accenture, consulting firm—to actually do a \$100-million analysis of Ontario's welfare system. They were called just before the privatization of the LCBO, called just before the privatization and sell-off of Ontario's nuclear assets and so on. That is not what the McGuinty government is all about. The McGuinty government is about balance. So within this particular budget you will see, for example, initiatives and measures for individuals, for business, for families, for corporations, for Main Street as well as for Bay Street.

With that, I'd like to offer a quotation from—I just recently read an article written by Joseph Stiglitz, who is a 2001 Nobel Prize winner in economics. This is from Harper's Magazine, a very current, January 2009, issue. It says: "The worst legacy of the past eight years" of the Bush administration "is that despite colossal government spending, most Americans are worse off.... This is because money was squandered in Iraq and given as a tax windfall to America's richest individuals and corporations, rather than spent on such projects"—and here is where I bring your attention—"as education, infrastructure, and energy independence, which would have made all of us better off in the long term."

The phrase "education, infrastructure, and energy independence" would, I think, very justly characterize

what is, after all, the balanced approach found here in the Ontario budget, for which—I think all of us who have had town meetings and radio, television and print interviews are really finding it to be a budget of parts, because, as we have met with our constituents, met with stakeholders, learned ourselves about some of the different initiatives and programs that are found within the budget, we ourselves are finding that it is a truly balanced package of approaches and initiatives for individuals and for business.

Individuals will be experiencing, once all the various initiatives and measures of this budget are fully implemented, approximately \$10.6 billion—\$10.6 billion—in tax relief. Businesses will be experiencing something in the order of about \$4.5 billion of corporate tax relief. About 93% of families in Ontario will be experiencing a lower tax burden. For example, as is known, as has been publicized and received very well by our communities, by our residents, by our voters and by the stakeholders, a family earning a combined income of less than \$160,000 annually will actually be receiving a \$1,000 cheque from the government of Ontario. Individuals who are earning less than \$80,000 will be receiving a total of \$300.

Now, I have to confess that, as a doctor, there are a number of things that I attempt to understand; I've always found taxation to be a bit of a mystery. But, having said that, things like the single sales tax, I am told—and it seems to be reinforced within the broader business community—are perhaps the single greatest initiative manoeuvre that the government of Ontario, from a tax policy point of view, could be doing, could have done, will be doing in terms of streamlining our tax policy with other major jurisdictions across the world, as well as helping Ontario businesses to flourish, and of course helping to lay the foundation stones for future prosperity.

As well, one of very important initiatives within this particular budget is that the tax rate on new business investment in Ontario is now going to be halved, and with that, I understand we'll become the most competitive jurisdiction in North America. Why are we doing all of this? All of this together is part of the package of reforms, the package of, as I say, multi-faceted approaches and initiatives—whether it's tax relief or other streamlining measures or cutting red tape or exemptions, which are also very well detailed—that the government of Ontario is doing to build a stronger, more prosperous and just society.

I repeat: These are not only initiatives that are, as we might say, right wing or left wing, but as the Premier has said, moving Ontario forward. Even one of the more irascible columnists of the Ottawa Citizen, not generally a supporter of the government of Premier McGuinty, or of the Liberal Party for that matter, has called this budget "a textbook example of successful issue management." That, I think, speaks very deeply to some of our own core beliefs. We are still, as I said earlier, trying to adopt the middle road, the golden mean, the medial pathway, not slashing and burning and adopting a scorched earth

technique, which we might have done had we been animated or informed by different philosophies.

Le gouvernement McGuinty s'est engagé à diriger l'Ontario vers une nouvelle ère marquée au coin de la compétitivité, de la réussite et de la prospérité. Ces progrès ne se produiront pas du jour au lendemain. Dans la conjoncture mondiale actuelle, aucun budget ne peut faire cela, quel que soit le gouvernement. Tout comme le présent budget se fonde sur les réussites des cinq dernières années, les budgets futurs s'inspireront des mesures prises aujourd'hui.

As we've talked about, in terms of not only withholding that reflex from, for example, a more right wing, Republican or Conservative reflex to actually cut and slash and burn—I remember a Premier of a previous day actually equating nurses to hula hoops and literally firing 10,000 nurses. I would, by the way, like to commend the previous Conservative government for actually building a stronger health care system. The only problem is that that health care system was in Houston or in other jurisdictions in North America, because once they actually fired those nurses and they found themselves without employment here in Ontario, they of course went abroad to the Middle East and stateside, and of course there were fairs on a regular basis essentially taking up some of the slack of the Ontario health care system.

Instead, as I said earlier, we're adopting a balanced approach. We're talking about education, green energy and health care. Of course that's why I'm very proud to be here as the member for provincial Parliament for Etobicoke North, not only speaking on behalf of my own constituents, but of course even my young ones, Shamsa and Shafiq Jr., who I know are tuned in very eagerly and devotedly.

Let me speak for a moment directly to health care. We could have slashed hospitals, fired nurses, laid off other individuals in the health care sector, cut medical school spaces, not moved so aggressively to include, for example, other medications, new therapies and new treatments in the health care system, given the fact that that is the demographic greying of the country and seniors are even using more and more health care dollars. Maybe, from a purely financial, bean-counting, numbers, Microsoft spreadsheet point of view, that might have been very popular and very easy to do. But we are Liberals. We are McGuinty Liberals, and we see ourselves as stewards of the public trust. One of those prime trusts, of course, is our health care system. So I'm pleased to report that even with all this extraordinary economic challenge and global economic meltdown, the government of Ontario is still pledging to spend, in this particular budget, \$13.2 billion more on the health care system than when we took office. This speaks to the values that Ontarians share and that in fact are defining values of Canada.

**1640**

Our budget, for example, will now be devoting itself to spending something in the order of \$42.6 billion, almost half of our provincial outlay, just on the health care system. And there are many subsectors and sub-

points that could be mentioned in defence, in support, in reinforcement of this massive health care commitment, whether it's, for example, \$40 million for high-growth hospitals, \$360 million for the emergency room wait-time reduction strategy, \$223 million for an at-home aging strategy, \$35 million for 22 nurse-practitioner-led clinics or 50 more family health teams and so on. All of these are initiatives that we have detailed, that are on the public record, that are available to Ontarians on websites. Again, it speaks, as I said earlier, to the Premier's deep and heartfelt and mobilized and actioned commitment of being neither right nor left but moving Ontario forward in a balanced, fiscally sound approach which nevertheless continues to be animated by, I would say, the Trudeau aspiration of creating a more prosperous and just society.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I'm going to have an opportunity to speak in approximately half an hour or so. But I was intrigued by my friend from Etobicoke North's remarks about this budget being neither right nor left and that it's balanced. I want him to help me a little bit.

As I see it, corporate tax cuts are something that you thought Conservatives have been bugging you about for a long time, and Duncan, the Minister of Finance, was opposed to them and now he supports them. And so he's introduced \$2.2 billion or so of corporate tax cuts, which we as New Democrats view as something that Conservatives normally would do and that you're proud of having done in the past and that you're proud to do today. A harmonized tax is something that John Tory supported, that Bob Runciman, in principle, supports and something that McGuinty, the Premier, and Duncan, the finance minister, opposed. But now you present it as something that is yours, and you say that's neither left nor right, but New Democrats view that as something particularly right and conservative. I just wonder, in the two instances that I have given, where is the left in that, when you say it's neither left nor right and that it's balanced? The only thing balanced about it is that the Tories and Liberals have a balanced approach to these issues and that in this regard both you and they are in sync with each other, which we view as right wing. So help me; where is the left in all of that again?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** I'm very pleased to speak to the budget. I compliment my colleague from Etobicoke North. I would like to also remind my other colleagues here that Ontario has benefited from strong economic fundamentals that this government has had in place for a number of years now. We've had balanced budgets year after year and we're one of the lowest debt-to-GDP ratios in North America.

Bottom line, we've taken precautions to weather this economic downturn and we're moving forward with this budget. The budget is bold. It's a stimulus package that's dynamic and comprehensive. It will help families. It does take advantage of business cuts as well as personal



income cuts to weather and recover from the global economic downturn. The budget is also about growth, it's about making sure we maintain Ontario's competitiveness. It's designed to welcome investment, encourage jobs, and create hope and opportunities for families.

I would like to speak specifically about the three components of the tax reform package embedded within this budget.

It's a modern tax reform package that talks about harmonization, which enables us to be more efficient, and there are offsets for the pricing impact that may occur, by way of exemptions as well as some rebates.

The second part of this reform package is a reduction of personal income tax. Income tax will be one of the lowest, for our lowest-income earners, and will be seen as the lowest in Canada. There are also going to be new and permanent tax credits, as well as those transitional payments, to help families adjust.

The third component is the business tax cuts. During the last number of years that I've been a member of the finance committee and doing pre-budget consultations, two issues have come out glaringly. One is, social programs need to be protected, which is part of the left. The other part is, businesses have expressed concerns that they need more facilitations, to provide incentives, to become more competitive.

I support this budget, given those initiatives.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I did listen to the member from Etobicoke North, at least a good part of it. There were certain points I chose to ignore because it was more partisan in content. I think that if he believes some of the stuff he says, you would quite often be predisposed to ignore any substantial things. He's an intelligent fellow, but sometimes that meanness comes through, and I'm sure it happens in his own caucus.

There are a couple of things that need to be brought forward. When he's talking about the left and the right, and that there's a right or a wrong, I believe that where he misses the point is, he has got to look at the facts as opposed to the rhetoric part.

Look at your own budget, on page 96, and the federal transfer payments. I can tell you, I've read a petition into the books over the last two weeks or so, since the good news came out for health care—that there isn't enough money. In fact, it's a structural deficit in health care. They've settled with the nurses and doctors and the other workers—reasonable settlements, I suppose—for 3% per year over four years, so it's 12%, but they've actually given them funding at 2%. Of the 100-and-some hospitals, 70-some of them are in deficit now—in our case, it's \$14 million. Now they're going to exacerbate it.

The Ontario Hospital Association—this is the OHA—said that they're going to lay off 5,000 nurses, yet the Liberals stand up and say they're going to hire 6,000. I have difficulty trusting what is being said.

In his remarks—and I fortunately have the privilege of speaking next—he said a few things that are completely

inconsistent. I think he's reading the notes he was given. Although he's an intelligent fellow—you ought to look at some of the notes—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. Further questions and comments?

Seeing none, the honourable member from Etobicoke North has up to two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** I would like to thank my honourable colleagues from Trinity-Spadina, Mississauga South and, somewhat under duress, even the member from Durham.

I would like to say that I would first like to step away from my desk so that there will be no question of notes.

Secondly, I think that all of us who were engaged with members of our community, whether they're from business or are modest-income folks; whether it was in Etobicoke or beyond—chambers of commerce, corporate leaders, poverty activists, individuals who are most concerned with the health care system, individuals who are essentially our educational communities—all of these people have come forward and really attested to the fact that the government of Ontario is truly moving forward in a balanced approach.

Whether you would like to evade the various characterizations of right or left or Conservative, Republican, Liberal or NDP, that is perhaps a discussion for another matter. But there are things here that appeal to all of these different groups, and that is, of course, basically part of the strong mandate that we take very seriously, here on the government side, as stewards of the public good, attempting to, yes, address concerns of business and corporations, as they're telling us about things like red tape and non-competitive taxation; and at the same time maintaining, I would say, a fundamental compassion that continues to animate our initiatives, procedures and legislative efforts here. For example, we're dealing with things like the Ontario child benefit, or the \$260 rebate or the cash cheque that will be offered to families of various income levels across Ontario.

All told, I think it is truly a budget for the times, given the global economic meltdown that the government of Ontario and other governments across the world have to deal with.

1650

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's a pleasure to stand and address some of the issues in the budget in a very limited amount of time. I would like to start by talking about a few things, really. The most important part of what we do, I believe—and some of it's in the budget, in all honesty, in all fairness—is to create a climate for investment. And with the investment, basically—as I think of it, as a Conservative, as I interpret it; not the ideology that's been described by the previous speaker. You create a vibrant economy by different policies, by tax as well as spending policies, and red tape and regulations, to encourage investments for jobs; high-value jobs are better. And with that, you create wealth or you

add wealth by value-added activities, through both knowledge and skills, so that you can spend money to improve the quality of life.

I think the best example of that is, if you look at some other countries in the world—I believe that men are created equal regardless of where they live, their race, creed, colour and all the rest of it. We could look, for instance, at Afghanistan as a place. I believe the people there are victimized by the politics of the area and perhaps a lack of a plan. But ultimately it starts with no economy. There's no real economy. The economy is an illegitimate economy, and the economy doesn't get spread around equitably. There are no rules to the game.

When you don't have an economy, you don't have a justice system to resolve disputes, whether it's the gender disputes that were in the paper today or other disputes. You generally don't have an educational system so people can educate themselves through society into better standards of living for themselves and others, and you quite often don't have the justice system, you don't have a monetary system—you don't have a system, but which came first?

I put to you as well that in those economies, there are intelligent and capable people who need resources to learn, study and progress, and if they don't have the plan and the leadership with the courage to do the right things—not necessarily the right things, i.e., American, Canadian or North American, but to look at the history of civilization. Some of the parts of the world are well renowned for studies in physics and astronomy and other things.

I'm trying to establish that I'm a fiscal Conservative, and I think I'm a compassionate person, and I believe that we have a debt to our fellow man. But all of that comes under certain kinds of responsibilities, by being honest about what you say and what you promise to do. Keep the promises you make. I'm not attributing any of this any more than the previous speaker—that one party has all of the right answers. That's completely wrong and wrong-headed, to believe that anyone here sets out deliberately and maliciously, as has been portrayed. I'm very upset, actually, by that type of approach and comment.

When you talk about the opportunity for people, I think it is a matter that, even going back to—I'll read kind of a statement here. There were earlier opposition day motions that encouraged Premier McGuinty to look at the job losses, and the one I'm looking at is starting in January 2005: 153,000 manufacturing jobs were lost by a series of companies. I could list them. There was no real action plan. It was considered back then as kind of a modest contraction, where they were shutting whole plants down. There was obviously no plan. I think this comes back from the hope that the economy would pick up.

Then the next argument was, again, to blame Jim Flaherty and Stephen Harper. We heard in the debate earlier today about the unemployment insurance rules. The person who actually changed them was Paul Martin.

So I'm not blaming them. These are the real facts of what I refer to. But even now, in the budget, when I talk about—and the good doctor spoke. Here are a bunch of cards I received from my riding. Most members have received them from their long-term-care homes. They're not permitted, because they're not in a proper format for a petition, but I will read one. It says, "How to Make the Numbers Work." This is actually written by constituents, not by me or some political commentator. It says:

"Dear MPP:

"In the upcoming budget, please ask your government on my behalf to make the numbers work for long-term-care-residents and for all Ontarians."

There was a resolution by Mr. Miller today, which was unanimously supported. This goes on to say:

"It starts with ...

"Correcting the six-year erosion in funding for house-keeping, maintenance, laundry, trading, utilities and other services that support residential care, comfort and safety."

Six years of erosion.

"It is completed by ...

"Fully implementing the already promised"—this is one of the promises—"2,500 extra personal support workers and 2,000 more nurses, and funding the three additional minutes of direct care still needed to reach a daily average of three worked hours of resident care; and

"Investing in high-impact resident care initiatives such as programs and activities, meal preparation, and in-contenance care.

"Increased care and services in long-term-care homes equals decreased ER and hospital wait times."

These are all signed, and all members got them. I'm submitting these as evidence from people from the nursing homes in my riding, which would be Strathaven nursing home, Port Perry nursing home and others—there are about four or five of them, and I do try to visit them and listen.

As was said today, there have been no long-term-care homes built. In fact, that is a deficit, and growing. It exacerbates the whole health care debate, because if there's no room in long-term care for them—they have a promise now, called the aging-at-home strategy, and I don't see much funding for that as well. I know people in long-term care are waiting to be transferred, as well as persons who can't get care in their homes. That's one topic I see in the budget.

I should tell you as well, if you look in the budget—I think it's important to refer to the actual numbers that were provided by the McGuinty government. If I look on the expenditure side, I see they have increased the funding in health and long-term care just over the billion-dollar mark. It's now going to be \$19 billion on the hospital side and \$22.9 billion across the board in health and long-term care. They have increased it, as I say, by about \$1 billion.

What I'm saying to you is: If you look at the transfer payments coming in on the revenue side, the Canada health transfer—this has been an argument for years—

has increased by \$1.1 billion, the social transfer has increased by about half a billion, and actually the equalization factor, which is the overall health of the economy adjustment factor—we are a net recipient now, for the first time in history, so we are a have-not province; I don't like to use that term, but I'm just saying it's tragic that we've slipped from being the value leader in the Canadian economy. There was \$800 million transferred from the federal government to increase the funding for hospitals.

Now, it will be allocated by Premier McGuinty and Minister Caplan, but I can tell you now that almost all hospitals—I can't account for all, but I think about 75 of the current hospitals, according to the Ontario Hospital Association, have an operating deficit.

In my riding, there's actually a bit of a disconnect between the way the LHINs, the local health integrated networks, are structured. The hospital in Uxbridge actually comes under governance from the Central LHIN, but it's physically in the Central East LHIN. I still haven't got an answer from them about their funding. Does it flow through the Central or the Central East LHIN when the population and the services are provided in the central east catchment area? They have set up a whole governance thing, called the LHINs, the local health—yeah, local. They're bigger than most provinces. Local? You couldn't drive in less than two or three hours from end to end in any one of the LHINs close to our area.

**1700**

So those LHINs are acting as a buffer between the Ministry of Health and the hospital boards. Those hospital boards, by the way, are volunteers. They are leaders in the community who volunteer. This money—I'll give you an example of how inequitably it was distributed. There was a report by Price Waterhouse that said the province allocated this year \$100 million for growth funding. Of the \$100 million, last year they flushed out about \$20 million, I think, to all the LHINs. This year in the budget they flushed out another \$30 million, I believe. My number could be off a bit. But I know the specifics of last year. Central East LHIN was allocated \$4.5 million. That LHIN covers all the way from Victoria, Haliburton and Brock down to Northumberland. It includes all of the sort of Northumberland Clarington area, all of Durham region, and I don't know how many hospitals in total. But in that area, the largest area, Durham, has 600,000 people. The Price Waterhouse people said that of the \$4.5 million, \$3 million should go to the Central East LHIN at Lakeridge.

What did they get? Here's the real problem, on the record. I'm saying this so that it can be refuted if anybody's listening and wants to pay attention. They actually allocated—of the \$3 million, the Central East LHIN allocated to Lakeridge \$900,000. Not \$1 million, not \$3 million: \$900,000. That hospital is operating with a deficit of around 10 point something million dollars. It wouldn't have solved the problem, but it would have helped the problem to not get worse, because next year

they're forecasting about a \$15- to \$17-million deficit. What does that mean? That they actually have to borrow the money, if they are permitted; they have rules around how much they can borrow. That's just the hospital I'm reporting, but the same goes for Rouge Valley and other systems as well. They're all in trouble. Not some: all.

I've talked about the long-term care. I've talked about ours. Last week in my community, and I've spoken about it three times this week, there was a demonstration in our community led by the doctors: not by the mayor, not by the regional chair, but the doctors. The doctors and nurses are saying that they're going to close the hospital. And what is the Ontario Health Coalition saying? Natalie and some of the others who are travelling the province are saying Petrolia and Kingston and almost across the—they're closing, stealthily, emergencies and obstetric wards. It's death by a thousand swords to the system. What they're actually doing is terminating a lot of these hospitals, in the general sense, and turning them into stabilizing transfer sites to major sites called regional health centres. So there's anything but good news in the health care system, as far as I can see, despite the fact that the federal government has increased the transfer.

People have been talking in the last number of years about the wait times, the five key priorities of the wait times, as if it's all—the federal government has been ponying up half a billion dollars a year for that. I never heard one mention of it. I'm quoting from the book right here, your own book: \$500 million a year. I never hear them say one thing about it. They blame them for everything.

So in fairness to the argument that was started here earlier by the previous speaker, I'm just saying, let's look at the numbers and let's deal with those. We can deal with that without dealing with personalities and sharp comments with respect to someone's position on the scale, as if they're somehow perfect. There's no one here, including me, who's perfect. Let's start at that point and we can have an honest debate.

The next thing: I'm quite concerned about the equity in the discussion and this debate this morning. We read in the paper of the transfer of some \$9 million into transit. In a general sense, I would say that's a good thing. I'm not opposed to growth and having a plan by any stretch. I think it is somewhat questionable, given the fact that they now have the largest deficit in history. Let's repeat that. Here we are with the fanfare, new suit, big picture, photo op with the ribbons; we're going to spend \$9 million—\$9 billion. By the same token, the previous day they told us they had a \$14-billion deficit, meaning they're borrowing the money. In fact, the Toronto Star said in the article—the Toronto Star is commonly known as the Liberal rag or the Liberal briefing notes. That's a humorous comment, not to comment on the people writing in it, but they have their editorial bias. It said at the end of the article—you can quote it—that they don't know where the money is coming from. I can tell you they're actually borrowing it. In fact, the way they finance capital now under PSAB, the public sector accounting rules, is they actually show

on the books the portion of the depreciation amount of capital for that year. So if it's going to last 25 years, they show 1/25 of the capital that year. They just show a capital expenditure each year. They don't show the \$9 billion.

There is a bill before the House on transit, Bill 163—it's a very important bill—and it comes out of a big report issued by Metrolinx called *The Big Move*. Well, it's a big move all right. Pay attention, Mr. Speaker. The *Big Move* report is going to require the province—that's you and I; I know the Premier is in charge at the moment. It's part of the *Move 2020* plan; these are all kinds of fancy acronyms. It all comes down to what Metrolinx promised to spend. I believe it was \$50 billion over 10 years. Think about it. We throw these billions around like they're horseshoes; \$50 billion over 10 years is \$5 billion a year. Five billion dollars a year is going to come from where? I think that's a fair question. Let's leave that question on the table.

We've got the transit plan. If you look at Bill 163, there is a requirement that in 2013—2013 happens to be after the next election—they're going to have a plan on how to fund it. I can tell you now, the briefing I had with the ministry officials is that there is going to be a P3 private sector—let's go back to the hospitals. Remember in the election they said, "Oh, we can't have private hospitals. Oh, no." All their hospitals are private, all of them. They're being funded by renting them. They're letting another private company build them and they're actually renting them.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No. The two ministers here are saying it's not true; it is true. If not, you refute it. You put the paper on the table. The one in Brampton—they're all private, okay? They're borrowing the money.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Not Peterborough.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The new one in Peterborough was actually started when we were in government.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yes, it was. I was there. I can only say that we all have a role in trying to protect our hospitals.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I know they're upset because some of this factual information is difficult for them to respond to. In fact, I'm quoting the books, the pages, the numbers—the exact numbers. Read *The Big Move*. You haven't even read it. You haven't got the foggiest idea of what you're talking about. It's \$50 billion.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I read it.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Have you read it? It's this thick.

I had a meeting with Rob MacIsaac. He told me, and I can quote it for you right now, he doesn't know how it's going to be funded. There's a whole section dealing with how they're going to pay for it. They have no clue. They announced they're going to build a subway or something up to the airport in the city of Toronto and David Miller, the great spenderama, is just tickled pink. He'll be whining about a week from now for more money.

When I look at my riding and parts of Ontario and the gas tax and the inequity of how they distribute the gas tax, it's another piece of work. This is all part of transit and it's all part of the budget and it's part of my concern about the three priorities: jobs, health care, transit. Jobs tie to the auto sector and the manufacturing decline in Ontario. It's the whole issue of fairness in how the money is distributed. It's not there in *The Big Move* plan. All we get is a bus-rapid transit system by about 2012, and that's not even for sure. The York money and the Toronto money was announced yesterday to build a subway or some kind of rail system to the airport, to the enhancement of Union Station.

**1710**

I would say that when you look at all of the things that I've put on the table here, we are in it together, if we can slow the arguments down and don't act like they're in charge of everything. I can tell you how they're going to pay for it. They have another bill out there, Bill 150. This stuff will be recorded and, for what good it is, I like the content of what we do. Bill 150 is another example. They've got us on the hook on the new energy act. It's called the Green Energy Act. It's a nice-sounding name. I support green energy. I support conservation as the first initiative. What isn't being stated truly is that they have another little thing, and people at home would know you're getting what they call a smart meter at your house. It's not a smart meter. It's actually a—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Sorry, the honourable member's time has expired.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Can I have unanimous consent for another hour or so?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I heard a no. Questions and comments? Questions and comments?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** My apologies. I was just distracted for a moment or so following the comments of the member from Durham. He opened up his comments talking about a budget and the function of government. I can paraphrase, I hope. Part of the strategy is creating a climate for investment, as part of an economic structure that allows us to provide for the welfare of those we represent in this province or in other jurisdictions.

I might say that in a very broad sense, that's what this budget has been about. As the finance minister said and as the Premier has outlined in his comments publicly, this is about retaining the security of the public services that we are entrusted with here in this place. It's ensuring that we retain those services that we have worked so hard to, might I suggest, rebuild in health and education and make many of the types of investments throughout this province that the member for Durham spoke about. It's about supporting those public services in education and in post-secondary education that will help position us such that we do have a climate for investment; that we are producing the skilled youth and adults in these communities who are able to take on the roles; to create the jobs to support the investments that are going to be made here so that we can prosper, and by doing that, be able to continue to provide for the health and education, principally, of our communities.

In addition to that, we have a substantive concern on this side of the House, shared in part on all sides, but I might say not totally, in ensuring that those who are disadvantaged in our community—that we provide for those through poverty reduction strategies, through adjustments of things like Ontario Works and Ontario disability support payments, through support to children who need it; that we lift them up with us.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I do apologize; I just got in at the tail end of the speech from my colleague from Durham.

It's rather interesting; I'm quite sure as the federal finance minister, the federal member from Whitby—Oshawa, was formulating his budget in late January—I know he's a good friend of the member from Durham—he was probably getting some advice from the member from Durham on what indeed should be in that federal budget. As we know, the federal budget certainly has a substantial amount of fiscal stimulus to get not only Ontario but other provinces in Canada moving ahead, as we have some international economic challenges that Ontario and Canada are certainly part of as we move forward.

It's interesting in this budget that there's a substantial investment in skills development and training and expansion of those opportunities within community colleges. Right now, Durham College—I know it's something that's supported by the member from Durham—is going through a huge expansion to enhance its skills development and apprenticeship program to provide those individuals within Durham region and beyond that opportunity to pursue a career of their choice. Those are very important things.

Certainly, our investment in transit that was announced will be a sufficient catalyst to give the opportunity for the good folks in Thunder Bay, represented so ably by my friend Mr. Mauro, the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan, and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Mr. Gravelle, to get those jobs in that particular riding, and indeed to get people out of their cars and onto transit, to reduce gridlock in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments? The honourable member for Willowdale, are you standing?

Further questions and comments? Seeing none, the honourable member from Durham has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I thank the members from Pickering—Scarborough East and Peterborough for their comments. I do appreciate that quite sincerely.

I just think it's important to say okay, we've got this difficulty and we're all in it together: the \$14-billion deficit; spending is up by 60%; a large deficit; debt has doubled; the cost of servicing the debt. Let's hope that the interest rate stays low. If it doesn't, we're in serious trouble. Interest always has to be greater than inflation,

so if you start to see inflation, watch the interest rate; watch the cost of debt go up.

These are the basic parameters that I tried to get to in the economics of all of this: having a stable hand and a manageable leadership group. When I look at what you're doing—you will never get underneath the health tax. The harmonization tax is one, and that's about \$2 billion to \$3 billion. It's going to cost a person to fill up their car—2,000 litres a year; that's for a year—about \$350 in additional tax, just for the gas for their car. If you look at the Ontario health tax that you've brought in, which you promised you wouldn't, it is bringing in \$3 billion. You're increasing spending on the backs of people. That's fine. The people, at the end of the day, will judge the quality of life and the standard of living that you're putting out there. But eventually people in their homes will be paying more. They're paying more for electricity, they're paying more for everything they have, and is it any better? Spending is up 60%, and I ask the people of Ontario, are you any better off? Are you waiting at the hospital? Have you got a doctor? Are your drugs any more affordable? Is there a real cure for the aging population?

There is no plan except to raise your taxes. You can be assured that your pockets will be less full next year but you won't have anything more in your other pocket.

I think this whole debate needs to be expanded, and I hope other members will participate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** It's a real pleasure to have 20 minutes to speak to the budget.

I want to speak mostly to the harmonization of the GST and the PST by Monsieur McGuinty. I want to show that there is a Conservative political proclivity here that the Liberals are trying to deny. I will give you some quotes to show the incredible rapprochement between the Libs and the Conservatives.

I'll begin with a quote. I started yesterday and I just ran out of time. What a pleasure to have 20 more minutes to be able to elucidate some of the points that I tried to make yesterday.

We have, of the Conservative Party, Mr. Bob Runciman, who said the following—he's the interim leader of the Conservative Party: "In theory, we're supportive of harmonization." Now, when someone says, "We are, in theory, supportive," what they really mean is, "We are, in practice, supportive of harmonization." There is no distinction here. You cannot break that up. You can either try to have subsets or simply say, "Put this in brackets. We really mean 'in theory' but we really don't mean 'in practice.'" But what they mean is, "As Conservatives, we support harmonization, but we really can't say that because we believe"—Tories—"that this is an issue that's going to hurt the Liberals, and we're going to get ahead of it and we're going to be very populist and we're going to show you how wrong you are." That's what I believe this is about.

Then we have the former leader of the Conservative Party—I said yesterday that I liked him very much—

John Tory. I thought he was a really decent human being. He said that “the government”—this was November 26—“should consider moves like cutting corporate tax”—and I will get to that in a very brief moment, or moments—“or harmonizing sales taxes to stimulate the economy.” That’s very unequivocal. John Tory was very supportive of the harmonization of the goods and services tax—federal—and the provincial sales tax—provincial. In my view, Conservatives like it. Mr. Flaherty, the finance minister federally, he likes it. In fact, he has been beating up on the Liberals for a whole year saying why they need to do it and how essential it is that they do it.

1720

Now, you remember Mr. Flaherty. He used to be around here for quite a long time—eight and a half long years. Yes siree, eight and a half long years. I’m assuming he was very close to the other Conservative members. My sense is that they have some affinity, politically, around issues of that sort. I could be wrong, but it’s my sense that they’re really tight on these kinds of fiscal questions. On harmonization, I can almost guarantee that 99.9% of these Conservative MPPs support it, in theory and in practice, but can’t say so and will not say so. They’re happy to separate themselves from the federal Tories and distinguish themselves as provincial members rather than federal Tories as a way of saying, “They do what they’ve got to do, and we do what we’ve got to do.”

Now I want to show, through the two quotes that I presented yesterday, how far the Liberals used to be from this issue and how close they have come to embracing it—happily, cheerfully. So you have Liberal members saying how bold this is and how modern and that it’s about growth and it’s balanced. I’m going to challenge you, as soon as I get a chance, each and every Liberal, to stand up when you speak and say, “I defend harmonization because I believe it’s good for my community.” I challenge each and every one of you who has an opportunity to speak to this to say, “I’m a believer in harmonization,” and at the end say, “Amen.” I’m looking forward to it, because there have been a couple of speakers already—with the exception of the member for Mississauga South, who actually said he supports it. I heard him say that; God bless. I want the people of Mississauga South to know that this member supports harmonization because, he says, this is the modern thing to do.

Now, I expect you, Speaker, when you have an opportunity to speak, and I expect all of these other Liberals here, the so-called rump, and one of them is going to speak here soon, to say, “I love harmonization because I think it’s good for my people.” I think the member from Willowdale is going to speak, because he has three books here, and that’s always an indication that people are about to stand to speak, which would be in approximately 20 or 25 minutes. So I want him to stand up and say, “I love harmonization. This is good for me.”

**Mr. Mike Colle:** He loves books. There’s no tax on books.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Only Ignatieff loves books. He’s the only learned federal member that we’ve got in

the whole world. He’s the only one who’s learned. Nobody else can be learned.

Here are two quotes that I want to repeat for your pleasure. Here is Mr. Dwight Duncan, the finance minister, who but a mere short couple of months ago, in November, said, in response to the badgering from the Conservative Party on corporate tax cuts—which I will get to in a while, because I have 13 more long minutes—Dwight, the minister, said, “If you think corporate tax cuts are going to solve the problem, you’re sadly mistaken.” That’s what Dwight Duncan said: “You’re all sadly mistaken”—Dwight Duncan, the Minister of Finance, November 4, 2008.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** That was just as the world economy was collapsing.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Oh, yeah, sure. Let me tell you: November, December—just to help out because, you know—January, February, March, and now we’re in early April; four or five months. In four or five months, we have had the apocalypse take place, and lo and behold, the Minister of Finance has come and seen the Conservative light and said, “We’ve got to change. We’ve got to move forward.” He said, “We have very competitive tax rates, number one, in spite of what others say,” meaning the right. Number two, he says, “We’re cutting the capital tax to the tune already of \$1.5 billion.” No siree; no, Duncan was not going to cut any more. No, Duncan was so convinced, so right, so Liberal that, no, he would never cut corporate taxes.

Where is Dwight? It doesn’t matter. He must be listening.

What happened? Minister of Finance, what happened to you? The whole world collapsed? The world collapsed all of a sudden, Dwight? Just about four months ago you didn’t know, and all of a sudden you need to cut corporate taxes in order to solve the problems of Ontario? Come on, Dwight. Dwight, please.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** He’s not here.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** You can’t say he’s not here. Minister, you can’t say he’s not here. You can’t say that. I would caution you.

Here is what mon ami Dalton McGuinty said: “If that were so, then you would think that at the House leaders’ meeting, which just concluded a few moments ago, the representative for the Conservative Party might have raised this very issue. That was not the case. Instead, they chose to do that within the context of a highly charged question period. I understand that’s their right ... but I think it undermines their credibility in this particular regard.

“Here’s the real issue,” he said, “and we need to expose this to the light of day,” member from Eglinton–Lawrence. He said we “need to expose this to the light of day.”

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Expose what?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** That was June.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I know; you’re right. That was a different time, a different world.

He said, "They"—meaning the Tories—"want to cut taxes in the province of Ontario by \$5 billion. That is not going to help businesses that are struggling today." And today—the past week and a half—McGuinty introduces \$2.2 billion, \$2.4 billion in corporate—by half. So they're meeting the Tories halfway.

So the world has changed. It's so drastic and the economy is so collapsed that, okay, he's changed his mind and he's only going to cut corporate taxes by \$2.4 billion. He can't go all the way, because the world has not fully collapsed, but he's got to go halfway in order to be able to solve the problem.

My dear friends, whoever is watching, you understand how cynical I've become. And I understand how cynical you are on a daily basis. That's why we lose credibility as politicians all the time. You've got politicians on the right saying, "Do it." You've got politicians in the mushy middle saying, "Oh, no," and then they proceed to do it. Then you've got members like my friend from Etobicoke North, who spoke a few moments earlier, saying, "This is neither right nor left; it's balanced." No, it is completely Conservative in its inclination, and the politics is Conservative to the highest degree.

I'm going to elaborate for your pleasure, member from Eglinton—Lawrence.

I attack harmonization. I believe that it's fundamentally wrong. It's a consumption tax, and we all know this. The Liberals are afraid to raise income taxes, so they are going to tax consumption. It's a consumption tax.

The problem with a consumption tax—and I think some Liberals know, or many; I don't know—is that when you tax consumption, whether those at the highest level of income pay a couple of dollars more is irrelevant. But the people who get whacked in perpetuity, eternally, are the people in the middle, the middle class, those earning anywhere from \$40,000 to \$80,000 to \$85,000 or so. These are the people who are going to get whacked forever.

Now I want you to stand up, Minister, and say your two cents' worth in two minutes. I want you to debate what I'm saying. I want you to say, "No, you're wrong." I want you to stand up and do your two minutes in a little while.

These consumption taxes that whack the middle class in perpetuity are on energy, so you're going to get whacked every time you go to fuel up. The minister—the ministers—and the government say, "Oh, no, they will pass that on to the consumers." Please. Have you met any human being who says, "Oh, yeah, you're right. Yeah, the oil industry is going to lower their price when I go to buy gas"? Because we're harmonizing, they expect that somehow some of those savings are going to be passed on to the consumer and it will all even out. Please, Minister, I want you to stand for two minutes, for my pleasure, and tell me why you disagree with me.

1730

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I will.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Okay, Mike, you stand up and do your two minutes. But I see his head shaking, as if

somehow he's got some bright thing to say. I want him to say it, so I can hear it.

No one is going to pass on the savings—absolutely no one. Not Tim Hortons, not the gasoline station, not the oil companies. They are going to absorb it and we, the middle class, will pay forever. That is what this is about: \$2.2 billion or \$2.4 billion in corporate tax cuts that go to profitable companies. What do you think they're going to do with the money? Oh, the government says it's about growth, it's about creating jobs. No, it isn't. It's about absorbing that money into their pockets, into their business; and we, the middle class, have to pay for that. That's what that is: We, the middle class, have to pay for \$2.2 billion or \$2.4 billion of corporate tax cuts. That is, my friends, the way the Liberals like it. That's Conservative politics. He, they and Jim Flaherty and Harper have this locked up. They like it. They're going to try to present it to you as a modern, Liberal, left budget. It's nothing of the sort.

There is, by the way, a one-time cheque. Actually, there will be instalments for families earning under \$160,000. You can nod, because that's what you're doing. It's one time or three instalments. But the whacking and the hit you're going to get when you go to the hairstylist and when you buy that doughnut and when you buy gasoline is going to be forever. The government says it's not about raising income. Oh? Why not? Why would any government introduce a consumption tax if not to raise money from the middle class? They pretend. They stand up here and say, "No, this is not about raising more money." Oh, really? What is it about? It is about whacking me when I go have a cappuccino and when I buy a doughnut and when I go to the hairstylist and when I go and buy gasoline or any fuel. You do that because you want it to be revenue-neutral? Come on. Do you think people are stupid, for God's sake? They are not that dumb.

You're getting \$4 billion from Flaherty to shut you up, and that's why McGuinty doesn't criticize Harper or Flaherty. That's why they have a pact. They have a contract, and it's a Conservative contract, not to say boo about the agreement they made in private, in the back rooms. It's \$4 billion to shut themselves up, and with that money they're buying all of you off. Yes, you the citizens and, yes, you the consumers.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Mr. Speaker, that's not parliamentary. I think he should withdraw that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Are you getting up on a point of order, the member from Eglinton—Lawrence?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Yes. I think that term "buying off"—the Prime Minister of this country would never do such a thing. He should withdraw.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I've listened to some debates in here, and Speakers have allowed that terminology to be used, so I'd ask the honourable member to carry on.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I love it when Speakers give us that flexibility when other Liberals try to shut us down. It's important.

So with the \$4 billion, they are shutting you up. It's one-time money. When that \$4 billion goes away, which they will use to buy everybody off, when that money blows away, you, the middle class, are going to be whacked forever—perpetually, in perpetuity. To the middle class in every riding across Ontario, it's about taking money from your pocket; yes, indeed. They say, "Oh, but we're lowering the tax bracket for those people who earn less than \$36,000 from 6% to 5%." They say, "We're helping the lowest-income people." No, that lowers my taxes. I don't need a tax cut. You need to tax me and you a little more. You're giving me a tax break. You're buying me off with the \$4 billion the federal government is giving us. This is insanity. The federal government, with the \$4 billion, is subsidizing—subsidizing—this particular problem, this harmonization, for a short while. Rather than taxing those individuals like us and those who make \$200,000, \$300,000 and \$400,000, you're giving us a tax break. You call that progressive, modern and bold? No. There is nothing bold about this budget. You are going to hurt the middle class forever. I want every Liberal MPP here to stand up and defend it. Don't get up for the two minutes and blah, blah, blah about all the great things you're doing for the left and for the poor little people. Stand up and say you support the corporate taxes, and that Dalton was wrong when he said it, and that now you're modern, and you understood it forever and that's what you always wanted. Stand up and say that. Go to your riding and defend the harmonization tax. I want to see you do that.

This consumption tax riles me. I hate consumption taxes. I support income taxes because they're fairer. They're based on the ability to pay. You should be forcing taxes out of people like us and people who make more than us. That's what you should be doing. Instead, what have you done and what do you continue to do? You shift from an income tax system and you go to consumption taxes. From now on, all the cities will go to consumption taxes because they won't have any money.

I tell you what: Tolls are coming everywhere. There's going to be a toll near you any day soon. Tolls are coming. That's another tax. You wait and see—with the blessing of the Liberal Party.

"Oh, no, the Liberals are so modern and so bold. This has nothing to do with left or right; this is just so non-political." This is the most Conservative budget I have ever seen.

I want the taxpayers and the citizens out there to join us as we defeat this lot of Liberals. By the way—but just support those Liberals who say they like harmonization. You've got to support them, because there aren't too many.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Unlike the honourable member from Trinity–Spadina, I am not cynical. I am in fact very pleased to be able to support our budget because I think it does a very balanced job of supporting families right now, when we're facing economic challenges, and

creating a climate that will attract investment to Ontario in the future.

I would like to talk about some of the things that we are doing to support families because, unlike the member for Trinity–Spadina, I think that's an important component of this budget. We are increasing the Ontario child benefit, which goes to all low-income families, so that it will be \$1,100 per child by this July. That's two years ahead of schedule. We're investing \$1 billion in affordable and social housing. That helps the people in our economy who are the most vulnerable and facing challenges in finding housing. We're decreasing personal income taxes for 93% of the people in Ontario. That helps everybody. It does help the middle class when you get a personal income tax cut. We're creating a permanent sales tax credit. Every man, woman and child will qualify for a \$260 personal sales tax credit, and that's permanent.

So, do I think this is a good budget? Absolutely. I do support the single sales tax and I support the corporate income tax cuts because they will create the climate that allows us to get investors to create new jobs in Ontario in the future. This is a very balanced budget, and I am very supportive of it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I always stay when I know the member from Trinity–Spadina is speaking, because he's always entertaining and always passionate. He speaks a lot in riddles, but he speaks, I think, quite sincerely. We all enjoy his interpretation of the world. I would say he's a joyful person. I spent some time with him. He sees the world through rose-coloured glasses, which is great. I think that's a great bit of levity here on a Thursday.

**1740**

I would say, though, that when I read the media—I'm just reading the headlines, so don't get bored here—he's partially right. Here's the Toronto Star article, and it says, "Harmonized Tax Idea Is Off Key." The Peterborough Examiner said, "It's Time to Play Name that Tax." That's the Peterborough Examiner, in Jeff Leal's riding. And there's the other one from the Hamilton Spectator: "On Borrowed Time; Ontario's Budget Motto: Spend Now, Pay Later."

The St. Catharines Standard says, "Wrong Time to be Picking our Pockets." And if I look in here, there's the Belleville Intelligencer, "More Smoke and Mirrors from McGuinty Liberals." Here's one from the Waterloo Record: "The Wrong Time for a Liberal Tax Grab." Here's the Ottawa Citizen, a respected paper: "Ontario Budgets for Six Years of Deficit."

I could go on and on, but the point here is that they have attacked the most vulnerable in society. This is why, as a person of the NDP stripe, he's very concerned about their homeless strategy, the poverty strategy—there isn't any money in that. There are tax cuts, and we can argue about what those are, Liberal or Conservative things, but he certainly made it clear. What he has here, though—this is from the Canadian Press: "Ontario Joins the Club,



Will Plunge into Deficits Totalling \$56.8 Billion over Seven Years.” That’s all borrowed money that has to be paid back.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** In my quick two minutes, I want to say that, first of all, this is a jobs budget. There’s \$32 billion for building sewers, roads, transit. That goes into the pockets of people who are losing their jobs. It’s the biggest infrastructure project in jobs for real people who need the jobs. The member from Durham doesn’t accept that we need to create jobs. I almost want to take him on rather than my good friend from Trinity–Spadina there.

Then my friend from Trinity–Spadina had the gall to say he hates the consumption tax. His own party wrote us a letter saying they wanted to increase the consumption tax by \$2 billion. Remember that? They wanted to raise the provincial sales tax from 8% to 9%. Where was he when his great leader said, “Raise the consumption tax”? I didn’t hear a squeak out of you to say anything about that. Shame on you for not saying anything on that. Shame on you.

We talk about helping the vulnerable. There is \$1.3 billion, the member from Durham, in housing, social housing fix-ups, increasing social housing that’s already there, for the rent banks. The child benefit that he voted against—the member from Durham voted against the child benefit—is up to \$1,100 per child. If you have four kids, you get that four times. That means a lot to the working people and it means a lot to our vulnerable.

The final point, the member from Trinity–Spadina: We are in the middle of economic climate change. I don’t know if he has noticed, but every country in this world is going through the same thing: huge economic destruction. You can’t sit and look at the world through your rose-coloured glasses when the world is collapsing underneath your feet. You’ve got to do something—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** It’s a pleasure to rise on the budget. I’m thrilled. I had the privilege of doing a television debate with one of the future Conservative leadership candidates the night of the budget, and I was quite surprised at the number of phone calls I got. As a matter of fact, they had an independent panel made up of social workers, businesspeople and people at large, and they overwhelmingly supported the harmonization that we presented that day, and I got calls the next morning as well.

I have to tell you that in my area we’re rather fortunate. We’ve increased the health staff. We’ve got a beautiful \$100-million expansion going on at our hospital that the province is paying 90% of. In education, we’ve got all of the basics: lower class sizes, higher test marks and 100,000 secondary students achieving graduation, which they were not doing before.

What are the cost savings? It’s not addressed very well here. I have to tell you, as a business person, there’s a multitude of cost savings that are long overdue. It is

going to cut the paperwork for businesses. It’ll save up to \$500 million for businesses throughout Ontario, and it only makes sense. You’re going to have one tax inspection, not two; you’re only going to have one tax processing on a monthly basis; you’re going to have less labour costs, and it goes on and on and on. It’s a win-win situation.

I think everybody here knows that with the new cost reductions for business, the write-offs on capital equipment that will promote new business, what we’re actually doing is creating new jobs and helping to assist in this worldwide phenomenon that has put us in a minor recession. It’s nothing but positive news, the way Mr. Duncan and our Premier have come forward with this budget.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member from Trinity–Spadina has up to two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** The member from Durham says I speak in riddles, and I would like to say to him: What riddle did I tell, and which part of that riddle, whatever it was, was incomprehensible to him?

And the member from Guelph did not state once that she supports harmonization.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** She did.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** No, no, no. I listened. She did not say it.

I listened to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence. He didn’t say it. I even listened to the member from Ajax–Pickering just a second ago, and he said, “I did a program and they”—the others calling in—“support it,” and then only partially does he say, “This is going to be good for business because you’re going to have only one filing system as opposed to two.” But he didn’t enthusiastically say, “This is good for me. I like it. I’m going to defend it.” Not once. You’re not going to find too many Liberals as cheerleaders; no, siree. There are at least 25%, 30% of them in that caucus afraid to death—at least. I guarantee it.

This is not going to be good for small business. It’s not going to be good for the middle class, who are going to get whacked in perpetuity with consumption taxes on everything from energy to footwear to prepared foods under four bucks, tobacco and alcohol. Your wine is going to cost more. Your glass of red wine is going to cost a whole lot more, not less. So many—the list is too long to get into. And the businesses that are going to be affected: We don’t know what impact of the 8% tax on the local café is going to be, the hairstylist or the barber, the health food store or the bicycle shop. We don’t know that impact, but I can guarantee you, it’s going to hurt. It’s going to hurt a whole lot of people.

We are urging all the consumers out there, all the taxpayers, all the citizens: You’ve got to let these people know. They’re worried and they’re nervous and, with your voice, we can change that around.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I’m very happy to speak to this budget. Every budget has a context. To understand this

budget, it's important to understand the context of this budget. The context of the budget is the context of our economic times here in Canada, in North America and indeed in the world.

What's happened in this past six months? Last year the Ontario economy was motoring along nicely. We had balanced budgets. Everything was just fine. What's happened is through no fault of anyone here in Ontario, indeed in Canada. We are caught in a global economic meltdown.

For instance, I was reading in the financial papers today—the Wall Street Journal, the Globe and Mail and the National Post—that the numbers on the auto sector are out. In car manufacturing for all of the North American models, and indeed the Japanese cars that are manufactured here, the output and the sales have declined by about 48%, 49%.

Here in Ontario—and the reality is, and we have to face it—we survive on an export economy. Ontario's is an export economy. To whom do we export? We export cars to the US. We export all manner of auto parts to the US. We export all manner of manufactured goods. You just have to drive around the GTA, whether it's Toronto, Hamilton, Oshawa, Pickering, Cambridge, throughout the province, and the manufacturing base is collapsing. It is down, on average, 30%, 40% to 50%.

**1750**

Where does that leave us in the budget? How does that affect the budget? If we don't get this budget right, if we don't set the context, the framework, so that we can hang on to our manufacturing base, which is our export economy here, we're in serious, serious trouble. We've got to have a strategy to draw in and to hang on to our manufacturing base, because if we don't, it's either going to shut down or it's going to move to other jurisdictions. Here are some ways that we can do that. One of them, the most important, is captured in the budget. We have heard from the manufacturing economy—that's our export economy here in Ontario—that one of the things they are struggling against is the provincial sales tax and the federal tax. They say, and the fact is, that 130 other jurisdictions throughout the world, including four provinces in Canada—and I understand that BC is going to be moving to this model—have a harmonized sales tax. They've taken the provincial and the federal tax and rolled it into one. Why is that important? It's important because it makes the manufactured product, that auto part, those parts that go into a refrigerator that's manufactured—all of that manufacturing here in Ontario, which is the basis of our export economy, needs some help from this government. One way we can help is with the harmonization tax so that businesses will stay here, businesses will stay in business and, as we get through this recession, our manufacturing base will be even stronger. Without a strong manufacturing base, our export economy cannot survive. If we don't have an export economy based on a strong manufacturing base, we have fewer tax dollars coming in from the businesses and we've got less income tax coming in from the people

who work in those plants who are going to be laid off. If we haven't got the tax dollars coming in, guess what? We have real problems funding our social programs here in Ontario, our health, our education, our bridges and our roads. That's the context of the budget. That's why it's important to move to this harmonization: to shore up our manufacturing base, which is the heart of our export economy.

In addition to that, the budget recognizes that with the harmonization piece we're setting up to assist the manufacturing base, we have to do something for families—men and women, seniors, everybody working and living here in Ontario. We've got to help them deal with the harmonization tax. What have we done? We have a number of initiatives in, and you're all aware of them. First, there are a number of exemptions that we have negotiated with the federal government so that the harmonization addition will not apply to certain items, and you're well aware of those: children's clothing, books, feminine hygiene products and other products that are used on a day-to-day basis by families and by individuals here in Ontario. So we've attempted to soften, to ameliorate, the downside of the harmonization. That was a hard negotiation with the federal government, but the province went to bat and got those exemptions in place. It's the best of both worlds: We're helping manufacturers maintain our export economy here in Ontario, and we're helping individuals cope with the extra burden that will be on them because of the harmonization.

In addition to that, we have a program where taxpayers in Ontario are going to get rebates, and the rebates are spread over a number of years. There are other tax credits that individuals are going to get. That will offset some of the stresses of the harmonization.

But I come back to my main point: We all live in Ontario. We all have family who work in manufacturing jobs. Like it or not, that's the essence, the fundamental core of the Ontario economy. If we don't get that piece fixed, hang on to our manufacturing base and hang on to our export business, we have nothing in Ontario. We'll be in real difficulty.

But this budget will help us to hang on to that manufacturing base, to build a stronger economy, to keep sending our products to the 130 other countries in the world that we deal with and to continue to send our products to the United States. Some 85% of our exports go to the United States.

So those are the two things in the budget: shoring up the manufacturing base; offsetting some of the stresses that the harmonization is going to place on individuals. The third piece is: We've got to get money out there in the economy. We've got to create jobs.

That takes me to my last point that I want to make on the budget, and that's what I'll refer to as the stimulus package—\$32.5 billion that is going to go into a host of infrastructure projects and other stimulus initiatives. What are the criteria for those infrastructure projects that we're spending that \$32.5 billion on? The criteria, essentially, is that we want shovel-ready projects. These

aren't long-term projects where something is going to happen five years, 10 years or seven years down the road. The criteria is: Let's find projects that are shovel-ready; that is, we can get people out there on construction jobs, we can get people manufacturing cement and we can get people active in the lumber industry for the stimulus projects and all of the other things that go into the construction of large infrastructure projects. That piece is going to create some 300,000 jobs in this economy. It's going to get money out there in circulation.

Those three points, coming back to go over them again: shoring up our manufacturing base so we continue with our export economy—85% of our stuff manufactured goes offshore. We need that. We can't survive without that strong manufacturing base. The budget is designed to enhance that, to hang on to that. The budget has significant pieces in it to offset the anxieties and expenses that individuals are going to have to bear because of the harmonization rules. I've walked you through those: the rebates, the exemptions on various products. The third piece, of course, is the infrastructure stimulus package—\$32 billion out there, creating jobs. I suppose the other thing this budget does is that, in my view, it creates confidence.

I had a town hall meeting in Willowdale on the weekend, and people had a lot of questions about harmonization. They had a lot of questions and anxieties about manufacturing, layoffs and all of the things we've been reading about in the press. When I walked people through the context of the budget and why we had to approach the budget in the way we have, thoughtful

people understood it, and thoughtful people said, "You are on the right track. Save our manufacturing export economy. Get stimulus and infrastructure projects going. Get that \$32 billion out into the economy. We appreciate and welcome the efforts you've set out in the budget so that individual taxpayers find some amelioration in some of the side effects of the harmonization."

Overall, when I walked thoughtful people through that, they understood the context of the budget. They understood the three pillars of the budget, and at the end of that town hall meeting people spoke to me and said, "We understand that budget, Mr. Zimmer. Keep at it. Congratulate your colleagues." This budget gives Ontario citizens the expectation and the hope that we're going to pull through this recession together and that at the end of the recession we're going to have a stronger economy and we're going to have better infrastructure projects up and running, whether it's LRT or subways. People in Ontario are going to be assured that the tax revenues after the recession are going to come back, they're going to grow, and they can preserve the things that are near to their hearts: education, the health care system, roads, bridges. It makes Ontario a really satisfying place to live.

I'm very proud to speak to this budget and to endorse the core concept of the budget, given the very stressful economic time.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1801.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Aggelonitis, Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
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Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Broten, Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development / Ministre du Développement économique
<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
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<b>Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)</b>	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture
		Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
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Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
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		Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	

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Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
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Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (IND)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of International Trade and Investment / Ministre du Commerce international et de l'Investissement
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme
<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services / Ministre des Petites Entreprises et des Services aux consommateurs
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	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 officielle
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop  
Gilles Bisson, Bob Delaney  
Garfield Dunlop, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Tim Hudak, Amrit Mangat  
Phil McNeely, Yasir Naqvi  
John O'Toole  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /  
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jean-Marc Lalonde  
Sophia Aggelonitis, Ted Arnott  
Wayne Arthurs, Toby Barrett  
Pat Hoy, Jean-Marc Lalonde  
Leeanna Pendergast, Michael Prue  
Charles Sousa  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité  
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Oraziotti  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jim Brownell  
Robert Bailey, Jim Brownell  
Linda Jeffrey, Kuldip Kular  
Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro  
Carol Mitchell, David Oraziotti  
Joyce Savoline  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité  
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Présidente: Julia Munro  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Michael A. Brown, France Gélinas  
Lisa MacLeod, Gerry Martiniuk  
Julia Munro, David Ramsay  
Lou Rinaldi, Liz Sandals  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de  
la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeff Leal  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Christine Elliott  
Peter Kormos, Jeff Leal  
Dave Levac, Reza Moridi  
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité  
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon  
Bob Delaney, Joe Dickson  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Sylvia Jones  
Norm Miller, Mario Sergio  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jerry J. Ouellette  
Laura Albanese, Ernie Hardeman  
Andrea Horwath, Phil McNeely  
Jerry J. Ouellette, Liz Sandals  
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité  
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller  
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle  
Rick Johnson, Gerry Martiniuk  
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch  
Yasir Naqvi, Michael Prue  
Tony Ruprecht, Mario Sergio  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon  
Laurel C. Broten, Kim Craitor  
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Helena Jaczek, Shafiq Qaadri  
Khalil Ramal, Peter Shurman  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Select Committee on Elections / Comité spécial des élections**

Chair / Président: Greg Sorbara  
Howard Hampton, Greg Sorbara  
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité  
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott  
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas  
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones  
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial







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