



Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario

First Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario

Première session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 28 September 2009**

**Lundi 28 septembre 2009**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
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Greffière  
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Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



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Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 28 September 2009

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 28 septembre 2009

*The House met at 1030.*

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

*Prayers.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'd like to welcome municipal leaders and members of Mississauga and Oakville residents' associations who have worked really hard to clean up the polluted Clarkson airshed, including Mayor Hazel McCallion, city of Mississauga; Pat Mullin, councillor, city of Mississauga; Max Khan, Oakville city councillor; Allan Elgar, Oakville city councillor; Dorothy Tomiuk, secretary of the Mississauga Residents' Associations Network; Doug MacKenzie, president, Chartwell-Maple Grove Residents Association of Oakville; and members of the Whiteoaks Lorne Park residents' association, the Clarkson Fairfields ratepayers' association, the Sheridan Homelands in Mississauga, and the Joshua Creek residents' association of Oakville. Welcome, everyone.

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** Also joining this illustrious group from Mississauga and Oakville, I would like to mention that joining Her Worship Mayor McCallion, we also have Julie Desjardins; Pat Mullin, the councillor; Dr. Boyd Upper; Mike Douglas; Hugh Arrison; Maureen Shaw; Andrew Ganguly; Bill Wittman; Liesa Cianchino; Wendy Davies; Michelle DeGasperis; Ivan Sack and more. I apologize to those I have missed. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** In the gallery we have, visiting us from the great riding of Brant, the parents of page Beth: Susan and Henry Stulen. They do have—unable to join us today—an exchange student from France, who will be told the entire story of how we behave in question period.

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** I'd like to welcome two guests from my riding, Michael and Eileen Holmes. They're here visiting Queen's Park for the first time from the beautiful town of Bethany.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** There are many residents from Oakville in the audience who are here today to protest the OPA's proposal. Among some of the residents' groups that are here are Chartwell-Maple Grove, Clearview, Joshua Creek, and Trafalgar-Chartwell.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm delighted to welcome the family members of page Kaitlin Wagner. With us in the gallery today, we have her mom, Johanna Wagner; her

aunt Linda Van Wyk; and a former page who has come back to visit us, Elise Wagner, who is Kaitlin's cousin. I assume Elise had a great experience, and now her cousin has come back.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** We will shortly be joined by some 100 students from grade 10 at Brother André Catholic High School in Markham.

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield:** I'm pleased to announce that we have a guest, the father, John Grassby, of page Robbie Hamel-Smith Grassby, who is here in the gallery with us today.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** On behalf of page Connor, I would like to welcome guest Kyle Ahluwalia, who is the brother of the page, and Eileen Riley, the grandmother. They're in the east gallery.

### ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On Monday, September 14, 2009, the member for Leeds-Grenville, Mr. Runciman, rose on a question of privilege, alleging that certain government ministers had misled the House when they indicated last June that a private company had been retained to conduct an outside audit of eHealth Ontario. The member for Welland, Mr. Kormos, and the member for Nipissing, Ms. Smith, also made submissions on this point of privilege.

I've had an opportunity to review Hansard, the relevant precedents and parliamentary authorities, and I am now prepared to rule on the matter.

As the member for Welland indicated when he spoke on the matter last Monday, there is a difference between privilege and contempt. Let me briefly explain the meaning of each. Erskine May, at page 75 of the 23rd edition, describes privilege as follows:

"Privilege, though part of the law of the land, is to a certain extent an exemption from the general law. Certain rights and immunities such as freedom from arrest or freedom of speech belong primarily to individual members of each House and exist because the House cannot perform its functions without unimpeded use of the services of its members. Other such rights and immunities such as the power to punish for contempt and the power to regulate its own constitution belong primarily to each House as a collective body, for the protection of its members and the vindication of its own authority and dignity."

Erskine May, at page 128 of its 23rd edition, defines contempt as follows: "Generally speaking, any act or

omission which obstructs or impedes either House of Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any member or officer of such House in the discharge of his duty, or which has a tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results, may be treated as contempt even though there is no precedent of the offence.”

That is what Erskine May says on privilege and contempt.

It is important to be aware of the distinction between the two because, having reviewed our precedents and parliamentary authorities, I am of the view that a question of privilege alleging that a member has misled the House follows under the rubric of contempt as opposed to a breach of privilege. The same view was taken by Speaker McLean in an October 17, 1995, ruling and by Speaker Carr in a June 17, 2002, ruling.

In the 2002 ruling, Speaker Carr explained the parameters for finding a prima facie case of contempt relating to a charge of misleading the House as follows: “The threshold for finding a prima facie case of contempt against a member of the Legislature on the basis of deliberately misleading the House is therefore set quite high and is very uncommon. It must involve a proved finding of an overt attempt to intentionally mislead the Legislature. In the absence of an admission from the member accused of the conduct, or of tangible confirmation of the conduct independently proved, a Speaker must assume that no honourable member would engage in such behaviour or that, at most, inconsistent statements were the result of inadvertence or honest mistake.”

In coming to this view, Speaker Carr examined the infamous Profumo incident in 1963, when the UK House of Commons passed a resolution to the effect that a minister was “guilty of a grave contempt of this House” after he admitted that he had misled the House when it was revealed that parts of a prepared personal statement he had made in the House earlier that year were not true.

The value of citing the Profumo incident lies in demonstrating how different that situation is from what is before me now. In that case, there was not only clear evidence that the House had been misled but that Profumo had deliberately set out with the intention of doing so. I would submit it is not the case here.

Also in his 2002 ruling, Speaker Carr examined a February 1, 2002, ruling by the Speaker of the Canadian House of Commons, a ruling that was mentioned by both the member for Leeds–Grenville and the government House leader. In that ruling, Speaker Milliken dealt with an allegation that then-National Defence Minister Art Eggleton had deliberately misled the House. By the time Speaker Milliken ruled on the matter, Mr. Eggleton admitted to the House that incorrect information had previously been provided, but that “at no time did I intend to mislead the House. I was answering with what I believed to be the correct information....”

#### 1040

This fact situation in the House of Commons is thematically more similar to the case at hand in that there

is an absence of any evidence of a deliberate intent to mislead the House. Indeed, the member for Welland, during his arguments on this point of privilege, conveyed his belief that back in June “neither the Minister of Health nor the Premier had full possession of all of the accurate facts.”

This question of intent is of utmost importance. David McGee, in the third edition of *Parliamentary Practice in New Zealand*, addresses this effectively on pages 653 and 654 of that volume:

“There are three elements to be established when it is alleged that a member is in contempt by reason of a statement that the member has made: The statement must, in fact, have been misleading; it must be established that the member making the statement knew at the time ... that it was incorrect; and, in making it, the member must have intended to mislead the House.”

In the absence of any such criteria establishing intent, Speaker Milliken did not find a prima facie case of privilege had been made out in the Eggleton case. Nevertheless, he allowed a motion to be put to refer the matter to a standing committee, without objection from any member of the House. I have no reason to believe there would be similar tolerance of me taking such a liberty in this case.

In that vein, let me address the opposition House leader’s suggestion that I could make a direct referral of this matter under standing order 108(g) to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, without the House having dealt with a privilege motion in response to a finding of a prima facie case of contempt in the Legislature. This is simply not possible. The member will know that standing order 108(g) only allows the Speaker to request that the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly review the standing orders and the procedures in the House and its committees. Nothing in that standing order cloaks the Speaker with the authority to make a referral concerning a member’s conduct to the committee.

Earlier I quoted part of a statement that the member from Welland made when he argued this point of privilege on September 14. In fairness to him and to the record, let me finish the quote. The member for Welland went on to say that “what we’re not prepared to live with is that they didn’t correct the record at the earliest opportunity.”

Here again, David McGee in *Parliamentary Practice* is helpful. Specifically addressing ministerial replies to oral questions, he says:

“A deliberate attempt to mislead the House would be contempt, and if a minister discovers that incorrect information has been given to the House, the minister is expected to correct the record as soon as possible. But subject to these circumstances, accuracy or otherwise is a matter that may be disputed and the Speaker is not the judge of it. It is a matter for political criticism of the minister concerned if members believe that a minister has answered incorrectly.”

It seems apparent, in the absence of such corrections or retractions, that the Minister of Health is of the view not only that he and the Premier had not made a misstate-

ment, but also that they believed their statements in the House were accurate at the time they were made and that there is nothing to correct. Presumably this view is bolstered by the fact that by the time the House resumed earlier this month, additional information had become common knowledge.

The Speaker is therefore left without any clear evidence of a deliberate attempt to mislead the House and instead with what comes down to disagreement between members on opposite sides of the House as to the facts.

Since the circumstances that are the subject of this point of privilege fall short of establishing “a proved finding of an overt attempt to intentionally mislead” the House, I cannot find that a prima facie case of contempt has been established. I appreciate that members may hold divergent interpretations as to what transpired in June and during the adjournment, but these matters can be pursued and have been pursued in question period and other proceedings; it is not a matter of contempt.

In closing, I'd like to thank the member for Leeds–Grenville, the member for Welland and the member for Nipissing for their helpful suggestions in this matter. Thank you.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I respect your ruling and accept your ruling. In your comments you talked about the restraints placed on you by precedent and the standings orders, and I would ask for unanimous consent from this House to put a motion to the assembly to refer this matter to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member seeks unanimous consent for a motion to refer this to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly. Agreed? I heard a no.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Acting Premier: The McGuinty Liberals initially forecasted a \$600-million surplus for 2008-09. Then the Premier revised his plans and forecasted a \$500-million deficit. He revised them yet again and said it would be a \$3.9-billion deficit, and then we found out late Friday the actual deficit for that year: \$6.4 billion. How can Ontario taxpayers trust the Premier when he missed his projections by some \$7 billion?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Governments around the Western world have experienced similar situations. In fact, our government was the first one to acknowledge that deficits were happening. I remember the day I announced it, our federal counterparts were talking about surpluses into the distant future.

These are challenging times. We did see a drop-off in our corporate tax revenues of almost 50%—48%—resulting from the enormous downturn in the economy, and we

have laid out a plan to address the challenges in the economy to create jobs that is consistent, straightforward and will let Ontario get back to a rate of growth that will allow us to sustain the very important public services that we, on this side, want to protect: health care, education and a cleaner environment.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A \$7-billion error is equivalent to the entire budget of the province of Saskatchewan, and the Premier's projections for this year are no more credible. First, he said it would be a deficit of a whopping \$14.1 billion, and then again, at the end of the day Friday, he revised that figure to say he plans to spend \$18.5 billion more than he takes in in revenue. People simply no longer believe Premier McGuinty's numbers, and they don't believe that we've hit bottom with this record \$18.5-billion deficit. Is Premier McGuinty going to plunge Ontario into \$20-billion to \$25-billion deficits?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think the member's wrong. I think people do understand. I do—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think the member's wrong. I think the people of Ontario, Canada, the United States and Great Britain understand that we've had the worst economic downturn in history. I think his concerns are completely misplaced. I think that we've invested in those areas and continue to invest in stimulus like our federal partners did. I remind the member that our deficit, the GDP and all the ratios that matter are all consistent with what's happening to governments of all sizes across Canada and the Western world. I disagree with the member. Ontarians do understand it, and I think they are glad we've invested in stimulus.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I notice that the minister avoided answering how deep a hole he's going to dig. Here's what rightly angers hard-working Ontario families: Premier McGuinty increased taxes on Ontario families and businesses after promising that he would not; he raked in an additional \$27 billion in revenue and then he blew every penny. Now, we find out that Premier McGuinty has turned a \$27-billion cushion into a deficit hole of untold billions. I'll ask the finance minister very clearly: Will you confirm that the deficit for this year will not be a penny more than the record \$18.5 billion?

1050

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Our government, unlike the previous government, has been completely candid with the people of Ontario. I remember that when we came to office, there was a \$5.6-billion hidden deficit. Unlike my Conservative opponent, I don't think spending on education is a waste of money. Unlike my Conservative opponent, I don't think better health care outcomes are a waste of money. Unlike Mr. Hudak and our Conservative opponents, I don't believe that creating the greenbelt is a waste of money. There is no doubt that there are enormous challenges in our economy today, and there's no doubt that they call for leadership and difficult choices.

The people of Ontario entrusted those choices to this government because they don't trust that member or his party to act in their best interests.

### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Acting Premier: Certainly the Ontario PC caucus believes that multi-million dollar contracts to Liberal-friendly consultants at OLG and eHealth are an egregious waste of taxpayer dollars. The Ontario Liberals used to delight in pointing out that every hour, the Bob Rae government spent a million dollars more than they received in revenue. Today the McGuinty Liberals are spending \$2.1 million more per hour than you receive in revenue. Acting Premier, how is it possible that you have been able to make Bob Rae look like a financial wizard?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'd remind the member that we have pretty good company in Jim Flaherty in the federal government. He trivializes the challenges in the economy. He makes fun of the investments we're making in infrastructure, for instance to build roads, hospitals and schools to employ tens of thousands of Ontarians. He trivializes the need for governments to take an aggressive approach, which has been determined, by the way, by the International Monetary Fund, the OECD and the G20. We have chosen to invest in those stimulating programs to create jobs as the economy goes down. There is no question that there are difficult choices ahead, and we will undertake those decisions in a clear, candid and honest way, just as the people of Ontario have entrusted us to do.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Let's be clear: We all know that a global recession hit, but Dalton McGuinty uses it as his crutch. Under Premier McGuinty's failed leadership, Ontario fell first, it fell faster and it fell farther than any other province in Canada. The Premier had a \$27-billion cushion of additional revenue, and you turned it into an eye-popping deficit. You're now adding \$2.1 million to the deficit every single hour of every single day. Blaming the global recession for that simply is not credible.

When will the Premier quit blaming everybody else and get his own fiscal house in order?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member opposite won't take my advice on this, so here's what Jim Flaherty said on May 26: "It's necessary in the short term to run a large deficit ... to make sure that Canada gets through this well." We concur. That's why our deficit-to-GDP is very comparable to the Canadian. That's why it's actually in better shape than some other comparable jurisdictions.

There's no question that a deficit of that order of magnitude is something that should be of concern to all of us, and there's no question that we will continue to manage, through these challenging times, the best we can.

What I can assure the member, however, is that unlike the member opposite and his party, we will not eliminate the deficit on the backs of those most vulnerable. We will do it in a responsible fashion. We will make sure the

books are completely transparent and open so that any government, when it comes to office, doesn't have to find what we found: a hidden deficit of \$5.6 billion.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** To the minister: A short-term deficit; give me a break. This is a record, whopping \$18.5-billion deficit, and you plan on running deficits for seven more years at least—as far as the eye can see. Minister, the first step to recovery is admitting that you have a problem. You've been in office for six years. You increased program spending in those years by some 60%. There's not a family in the province of Ontario that has done the same.

Just like Ontario families, the Ontario PC caucus believes that governments should live within their means. To the finance minister: Why did Premier McGuinty increase spending by 60% when he knew it would leave us vulnerable when times got tough?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Now that he has confirmed that, let's find out: Does that mean he and his colleagues are opposed to new hospitals? Does that mean they're opposed to rebuilding our schools? Does that mean they're opposed to retrofitting schools? Does that mean they're opposed to new transit lines?

**Interjection:** They can't have it both ways.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** They're trying to have it both ways; they haven't laid out a plan. There's a whole range of things, and as they try to have it both ways, they can't.

We've done what governments throughout the Western world have done. We've done it in a way that's responsible, and in keeping with the measurements of these things, we will continue to make those kinds of responsible choices, the choices the people of Ontario have entrusted this government with.

### RELEASE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the finance minister. The public accounts released Friday included a sign-off letter from the Auditor General dated July 31, 2009. Why did it take the McGuinty government an additional 55 days to publicly release the audited statements?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Throughout our time in office, on at least two other occasions, we have released the statements in late September. This year, by the time we had incorporated the signed-off public accounts numbers into our forward-looking approach with respect to the next fall statement, which will be coming up shortly—I'll have information on that soon—this was the appropriate time to do it. It will be delivered in this House, and it will be done in an open and transparent fashion, as we do with all documents.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In 2008, 2007 and 2006, the public accounts were released in August. But this year, with a bombshell that blows the government's fiscal assumptions wide open, they were delayed until after a

by-election, coincidentally. Can the minister provide an explanation to this House?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member conveniently ignored 2004 and 2005, and in 2004, it turned out that there had been a hidden deficit of \$5.6 billion. We released the fully audited statement towards the end of September, as we've done in past years. It is an open and transparent process.

I'll have more to say about the implications of those numbers with respect to the full year ahead at the time of my fall statement. We will continue to focus our efforts on creating jobs and addressing the enormous challenges that face governments throughout the Western world.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Ontarians have a right to know about the province's finances. After all, it is their money that we're talking about. The budget information belongs to all of us. It's not the personal property of this minister or the Premier.

In Ottawa, the parliamentary budget office provides impartial analysis on the state of federal finances. Will this minister create such an office here in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** This government created the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, the most sweeping piece of legislation designed to protect the interests of Ontarians. That act requires the auditor not only to sign off on our quarterly statements and public accounts, but to attest to the veracity of budget numbers going into an election.

That is the most far-reaching piece of accountability legislation that exists in Canada. It is the right approach, it's the approach we took some years ago, and it remains the right approach to ensuring that the people of Ontario have full and meaningful accountability of their government with respect to the management of their tax dollars.

## PUBLIC SERVICES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Again to the Minister of Finance: The Minister of Finance made it clear over the weekend that Ontarians should expect drastic cuts to public services. I'm going to quote what he said: "We are going to have to take a hard look at everything on the expense side and make some difficult choices." What is this minister planning to cut?

1100

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member opposite may not want to engage in that kind of discussion, but we do have to take those kinds of serious discussions.

I would suggest that she embellished my language that she quoted—a moment after she embellished it.

I would say this—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd just ask the honourable member to withdraw that comment, please.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I withdraw that—a moment after she had extended the intent of what I had said.

I would submit—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The sustainability of our public services is dependent on our ability to pay for them.

I look forward to the debates going forward that will allow us to sustain and enhance those public services, and I look forward to the contribution the member opposite will make.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The minister is talking about slashing public services but does not say whether that means fewer nurses or longer hospital wait times. Meanwhile, the minister seems to be perfectly content with a \$2-billion-a-year corporate tax giveaway. When we're closing hospitals and threatening further cuts to public education, how can the minister justify such a massive giveaway?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The challenge to all Ontarians today is to ensure a competitive economy that will yield the ability to preserve and indeed enhance our vital public services. This requires difficult trade-offs and difficult choices. You cannot have it both ways. We will be engaging in this sort of a dialogue as we move forward.

I acknowledge that these choices are difficult. I acknowledge that they will require leadership with respect to promoting a stronger economy to enhance the revenues that we need to invest in public health care, but I also assure the people of Ontario that we will have that robust kind of discussion and we will work very hard to not only protect but enhance those vital public services that all of us come to depend on.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** On the weekend the minister is ruminating about belt-tightening, but it's children in schools and seniors waiting for long-term care who are going to be feeling the squeeze in this province. Yet the minister is completely unwilling to reconsider his reckless plan for \$2 billion in corporate tax giveaways.

There was a time, once upon a time, when this government actually talked about balanced priorities. Does this minister think that forcing cuts on people and the services they rely on in these very difficult times, while giving away \$2 billion in corporate tax cuts, is showing balanced priorities for the people of this province?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** What we don't want to do is give away jobs in the future because we can't compete with other jurisdictions.

These are enormously difficult choices that all governments—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There are jobs gone in every major jurisdiction in North America. Those in the United States and heavily industrial jurisdictions like ours have been particularly hard hit. It's incumbent upon governments and incumbent upon all of us to describe very carefully how we are going to get Ontario through these challenging times, create the jobs and create the revenue base that will not only sustain but allow us to enhance the vital public services that all of us come to rely on. Those

are difficult choices, they are difficult balances that must be found, but we are committed to enhancing and improving the quality of public services across this province and, most importantly—

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

#### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Norm Miller:** My question is for the Premier. Last week, the Premier ushered his Liberal friends on eHealth out the back door and helped them avoid accountability for spending scandals. On Thursday, the Premier tried to avoid his accountability for his huge tax grab by saying he hadn't read the four-page MOU that he negotiated. On Friday, he ducked accountability again by filing the public accounts just before the Clerk locked the office to go home for the weekend—the 12th press release of the day on Friday. Is it because he's embarrassed for promising a budget surplus when it turns out he delivered a \$6.4-billion deficit?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think the people of Ontario recognize and understand that governments throughout the Western world have experienced precisely what Ontario has experienced. Yes, we did seriously overestimate our corporate tax revenues last year—there's no question about it—as did the federal government, as did a number of our provincial counterparts.

**Interjection:** By billions?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, by billions, absolutely, and we saw what the results of what happened in the downturn were. This government will continue to implement the policies we believe very strongly are the right policies for the time, the sensible measures that will create jobs, create investment opportunities and help restore the economy to the point that we can enhance and invest in those vital public services that all of us believe very strongly in.

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

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Again for the Premier: This morning, CBC Radio's financial columnist said it was obvious several months ago that there were serious problems with your budget numbers. The reporter said the McGuinty Liberals were either "incompetent or dishonest." To the Acting Premier: Which is it?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Notwithstanding that he was quoting, I would just ask him to withdraw that comment, please.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It was on the radio, but I'll withdraw that.

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

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The reporter on CBC Radio was wrong. Last October, at the fall statement, I acknowledged that Ontario would have a deficit. I also signalled very clearly that that deficit could continue to rise if the downturn in government revenues continued. I updated those numbers in December and again acknowledged that those numbers could in fact be out of date; we may see an increase. I again acknowledged it in March, that it

would be going up, and unfortunately, that acknowledgment bore out the truth.

So, in fact, we've experienced what the federal government has, every other provincial government, the government of Canada and the government of the United States. It's difficult times. We're putting forward a plan to get out of them; that party has not.

#### RURAL HEALTH SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre des Finances. Ontariens are already seeing where some of the cuts are being made. It is perfectly clear as this government shuts Fort Erie's emergency room. The residents, the mayor, the regional council and the Ontario Medical Association have all called for a moratorium on this closure until the recommendations of the rural and northern health care panel are released in a month's time. Why has this government ignored this community's request?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I want to remind the member opposite that in fact this government has made enormous investments in health care. We have to always be looking forward in terms of how we best manage the challenges in the health care system. I would remind the member that both the absolute dollar value investments in health care as well as the percentage of the provincial budget have continued to grow in quite a robust fashion.

I'll have a chance to speak to this in my supplementary, but we've made enormous progress on a whole variety of fronts, in terms of reducing wait-lists and so on. Again, these are always difficult issues to manage, but this government will manage them with the eye to ensuring that we continue to make those investments in the vital public services that all Ontarians come to rely on.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** We're talking about an issue of access in rural Ontario. Your government established a rural and northern health care panel, it has been up and running since this summer, yet nobody can get access to their mandate. My question will be very simple: When will the government release the rural and northern health care panel mandate? And can the minister guarantee that, in that mandate, every community that wants a public consultation will get one?

1110

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** No government has moved to address the challenges in rural health care more than this government. I would remind the member that we have funded 1.69 million new procedures and reduced wait times for all Ontarians, including those in rural Ontario. We have funded—907,000 more Ontarians have access to family care, including people in rural Ontario. We have 14 new MRI machines and are doubling the number of MRI hours of operation; the people of rural Ontario benefit from that. There are 1,794 more doctors practising. Those doctors are serving all Ontarians, including Ontarians in rural communities.



This government will continue to work with rural Ontarians. It will continue to work with all Ontarians to ensure that we have the finest quality of public health care available and will make the decisions that have to be made to ensure that Ontarians can continue to count on those vital services—

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

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Windsor-Essex has been one of the hardest-hit areas of the province during this economic downturn. The restructuring of the auto industry and the decreased demand for manufactured goods have resulted in significant plant closures and layoffs in my riding and in the surrounding area. Job security is a top concern for my constituents and, quite frankly, the constituents of many communities across the province of Ontario. It's for this reason that I ask the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, what's the government doing to help the Windsor-Essex region rebound from the negative effects of the current economic downturn?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I'm very pleased to address this question from the member from Essex, who works tirelessly on behalf of his constituents and frankly advances a number of projects that have sat for years as merely dreams, but in fact today are becoming a reality. This member in particular has participated in more capital projects in Essex than any other MPP in the history of Ontario's government, which is a tribute to this particular member.

Let me say that we know the bailout of two of our Big Three was probably the most significant action in this past year that has had much influence over all of southern Ontario—in particular, Windsor-Essex—for our auto parts and auto assembly workers. In addition, we've made some significant changes to tax policy so that we know our businesses will stay competitive as we go forward.

These are important initiatives. We look forward to a bright future in Windsor-Essex and we are doing a number of things to make sure that new industry will come to our area.

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

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** It's certainly reassuring to know that this government's working so aggressively to counteract the negative effects that the current downturn is having on the people of Essex-Windsor and the rest of the province. I applaud you for these efforts.

However, in the response, the minister mentioned the need to diversify and attract new industries to bring new capabilities and new jobs to our economy. The minister also made mention of the government's five-point economic plan, with reference to the needed support of innovation and to be partners in business. It's for this reason that I ask the minister, what have the ministry and

this government done to bring leading-edge business to Ontario, specifically in the economically challenged regions of the province like Windsor-Essex?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I'm very pleased to announce that both the member from Essex and I were participating in an announcement this past Friday in Windsor. It was actually right on the border between this member's riding and that of the member from Essex. It is the perfect example of two parts of our five-point economic plan, which include supporting innovation as well as supporting these leading-edge businesses by partnering with them. WindTronics announced on Friday that it is setting up shop in Windsor. It's very telling that it will be in a facility that was formerly used to make auto parts. They will be making a small wind turbine that will be used for both small commercial and residential applications.

This is the perfect example of turning to the future and looking for additional manufacturing opportunities outside of the typical automotive sector, but knowing that we can produce products that will be in demand around the world. This is an example of government—

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

#### GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is to the Acting Premier. I'm wondering if the Acting Premier could answer a technical question about the public accounts for me today. Where is the column showing the money that went to your Liberal friends?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'd remind the member opposite that the format for public accounts is agreed to by this Legislature, and presumably she and her caucus agreed to it.

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

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Again for the Acting Premier: The Liberals gave \$1.3 million in the past two years to the Premier's former chief of staff at Pollara. Allard Johnson Communications, of Adscam fame, received \$3.5 million as a quid pro quo, one could assume, for donating \$20,000 to the Ontario Liberal Party—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I think the honourable member is treading down some territory and making accusations that—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'm going to move to a new question.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** To the Minister of Education: Minister, your government is obsessed—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock for a moment. I welcome the member's point of order, but I would certainly welcome it at the end of question period.

The member for Trinity-Spadina.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Minister, your government is obsessed with EQAO test scores. Your control and manipulation of the process reached new heights when we found out that Lorna Earl, who is on the board of directors for EQAO, also runs a private company which specializes in showing boards how to get the numbers up. What Ms. Earl is doing in her own interest is also in your interest. Is that why you're ignoring this clear conflict of interest?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I spoke with the chair of the EQAO this morning. The EQAO does, as the member opposite I'm sure knows, have conflict-of-interest provisions in place. But in order to be completely transparent, the chair is referring this situation to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, and we will await a ruling on the situation.

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

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I'm glad that you're doing that, Minister, because in the interview on CBC, you didn't think there was one. We were concerned about that because, in my mind, this is no different from a teacher tutoring students on a for-profit basis to pass a test that he or she has influence over.

Here are some quotes from school board documents showing why Linda Earl was hired:

"To refine school improvement planning and interpretation of data"—from Thames Valley.

"Emphasis will be on system-wide improvement of student results on a measure of performance targets"—from Lakehead.

So Linda Earl is hired to improve the test scores, and the government, through Bill 177, is prepared to take over school boards that fail to improve their test scores.

My question was, how could the minister allow this clear conflict of interest to continue? But I'm glad you are referring that for a conflict.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm not going to comment on the specifics of the case except to say the woman's name is Lorna Earl, not Linda Earl.

The facts are that we are very conscientious in terms of our oversight of the EQAO tests. I spoke with the chair. I've said that the issue is being referred to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. I think that the understanding that what we need are the best professionals to be advising us on our student achievement is exactly what we have attempted to put in place with all of our agencies and with all of our bodies.

The member opposite needs to get his facts straight. I have said to the press that this has been sent on to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, and I will not comment on the specifics until we hear that ruling.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Dave Levac:** My question is for the Minister of Revenue. The transportation and warehousing industry plays an important role in the riding of Brant, and the transportation and warehousing sector provides a sizable number of good jobs in Brant. The people provide for

their families through these jobs and contribute to Ontario's economy. Employers such as Keith Hall and Sons Transport Ltd., which employs 150 people in the county of Brant, and Lumsden Brothers, which employs roughly 500 people in the city of Brantford, make an incredible difference in our community. Trucking and warehousing businesses come in all shapes and sizes, from large firms to small mom-and-pop operations, as you know.

I've been talking to my constituents in this particular sector, and they have concerns about the implementation of the HST and what it's going to mean to them and their families and employees. A report by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business last week shows that there is little understanding of HST in the community. Minister, what effect is the HST going to have on these sectors in my riding?

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**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank my friend for the question, and from my recent visit to his riding, I know how important the transportation and warehousing sector is in the riding of Brant. I want to let you know—and I hope you can share with your constituents—that estimates show that Ontario's transportation and warehousing sector will save roughly \$500 million a year, net, as a result of our tax reforms. I know that is good news in Brant and across the province. Now, this includes some \$480 million through the harmonization of sales tax plus another \$60 million through corporate income tax savings, another \$35 million as a result of the elimination of the capital tax.

Times have changed, and we have to make sure that our businesses can compete and win in a highly competitive global economy. Our tax reforms, the harmonization of the sales tax, and some \$15 billion worth of income tax cuts over the next three years for people, for small businesses and corporations is designed to get people back to work—

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

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I appreciate the minister's bringing some clarity to this, and we all know that there's some misinformation out there regarding the HST. Some people are only telling half the story—half the story. Minister, Michael Smart's study on the effect of HST on the Atlantic provinces revealed that harmonization led to consumer price reductions and an increase in business investment. Over 130 countries, as we know, have already harmonized their sales tax. Supporters of the HST in Ontario include TD Financial bank, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Ontario Association of Food Banks, and the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association. I know that a group of businesses recently came together to support the government in its HST, and that is the Ontario Trucking Association and the Ontario Road Builders Association.

Minister, Ontario needs to be more competitive and create jobs. How can we believe one side that tells us half the story, or do we want to trust the Ontario Trucking Association—

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

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** Well, I want to assure the House that on this side of the House we will always tell the whole story about our tax reform package—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. I just admonished an honourable member over her line of questioning—over imputing some motive. And here you go doing exactly the same thing.

New question. The member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

#### SKILLS TRAINING

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, dozens of people have been laid off, and they were shocked and devastated to be notified late last week that they would not receive funding from the Second Career program for courses which were to begin today and into the future.

Minister, this is cruel, and it's very insensitive. People who have been laid off have enough problems trying to meet their rent and their mortgage payments and seeing the end of their EI, and now they have to deal with this sudden, last-minute cancellation of their retraining plans. As one man said in an e-mail, "A promise was made and broken by the government. I have hit rock bottom." Minister, will you tell these people today when the funding for the Second Career program will start again?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I appreciate the honourable member's question. I just want to provide a little bit of context to the Legislature about the Second Career program. It came into play in June 2008 with the target of 20,000 people over three years. I informed the House last week, I believe it was on Wednesday, that we had 17,500 people who had been approved. I'm happy to inform the House that as of Friday, we have approved close to 21,000 people.

At the same time, this September, we have approved close to 10,000 people into the program. That is an 800% increase over what happens in a normal month. The average is about 1,200. I recognize that there is a backlog in the system, and officials—

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

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Minister, your response is cold comfort to the laid-off workers in Waterloo region and elsewhere who are dependent on retraining. I talked to Conestoga today—people showed up this morning hoping against hope that you would have restored the funding. I would like to tell you about Mike Weppler. He was laid off as a land surveyor after 20 years. He was to start today at Conestoga. His EI will run out on November 14. He says, "I need help.... I need retraining"; about people like Jane Code, a 46-year-old woman who says, "I need the course.... I need to work.... I'm a widow"; and Chris Laramie, whose EI payments finished on Friday and who planned to start a course today.

Minister, you have broken your promise to these people. When will the funding be restored for the Second Career program?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I know that the honourable member would never want to leave the impression that there are people whose approvals have been revoked. We have approved close to 10,000 people. I acknowledge that there is a backlog in the system. Officials were working over the weekend and they continue to work to address this backlog, and also to bring forward new guidelines for the program so that we can manage it moving forward.

I'd like to remind the member that it's her party that first of all voted against this program and spent last year standing up in this House criticizing it. We have been able to help nearly 21,000 people in the province of Ontario. I am very proud of the success of Second Career, and we're going to continue to work with the program to make sure we can welcome more people into it.

#### ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Local politicians and residents from Oakville and Mississauga are here today. They want to know why this government insists on building a billion-dollar, polluting gas plant near their homes when electricity demand is down across this province, when 23,000 residents have signed a petition against the plant, and air pollution contributes to the premature deaths of more than 1,000 Peel and Halton residents each and every year. If the McGuinty government is so committed to green energy, why is it bulldozing ahead with a polluting gas plant?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** First of all, let me also welcome the people from Oakville and Mississauga here, including of course Mayor Hazel McCallion, the dean of Ontario's municipal leaders.

Let me also say that I've had the opportunity to meet with the various groups in the Mississauga area on at least two occasions—the last being about two or three months ago, a meeting that was attended by Mayor McCallion as well. I can assure you that any plant that is going to be built there is going to meet the high air quality standards that we have in the province of Ontario.

*Interruption.*

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** You know, they can laugh about it, but we are—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We welcome our guests here to the Legislature. We ask that you observe the deliberations. As much as you may want to participate, you're not allowed to. Thanks.

Minister?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** We have improved the air quality standards in this province by 57 new standards since we became the government. I can tell you that any proponent will be required to address the cumulative

potential impacts that there may be as a result of any plant being built in the area. We want to make sure that the people of that area and the people of Ontario have the best air quality that can possibly be in the province of Ontario.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The government talks about offsetting pollution from the plant by reducing industry emissions, but the gas plant will pollute so much that the government would have to shut down Ford, Petro-Canada and dozens of other plants to offset this gas plant's emissions. Since this government has already stalled the plant for a month to come up with the half-baked, offset idea, will it now commit to a one-year moratorium and put in place an independent review of the health impacts and alternatives to this polluting gas plant?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** We have been dealing with this issue for the last two years within the Ministry of the Environment on an ongoing basis. Let me once again state to the member that the proponent will be required to address the potential cumulative impacts of this particular project at all stages of the approval process. First of all we need energy; we all turn the lights on at night, including the people of Mississauga and Peel, so we want to make sure that the air quality standards are as high as they can possibly be and that any cumulative impacts that this plant is going to bring into the equation will have to be dealt with to meet our air quality standards.

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#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, I understand that this morning, you announced that over the summer the McGuinty government delivered over one million library books to Ontario schools. I know that schools in my riding of Ottawa Centre have benefited from this investment, as have vendors in Ontario.

We know these are tough economic times. I want to ask the minister if she can tell the House why this is a sound economic investment.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to thank the member for Ottawa Centre for his work, particularly on the economic file. He understands that there are a number of things that we have to do as a government to deal with the economic downturn. Restructuring our tax system is one of them. The other one is we've got to make sure that our students are successful. We've got to make sure that they have the resources that they need.

This morning, I was at Terry Fox Public School with the member for Ajax-Pickering. By the end of this school year, we are going to have delivered more than two million school book resources to our schools' libraries. That means that students in schools across the province have new materials to work with, that means that kids who maybe aren't engaged in traditional materials have graphic novels to read, that means they have talking

books that they can use on MP3 players, that means that the resources in our schools are up to date, and that means that more kids will succeed.

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

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** The minister referred to the future competitiveness of Ontario and economic success. My riding of Ottawa Centre is home to many young families. Parents often tell me about their concerns regarding their children's education prospects. Investing in more library books sounds like a great idea.

How does the minister know that the government's investments and initiatives in publicly funded education are working?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** On top of the advantage to our kids, there are 72 Ontario vendors which were part of this process and which were able to provide these resources.

When I go to schools around the province—I know that everyone in this House who has visited schools can share in this opinion—there are wonderful things happening because of the staff in our schools and because of the support that those adults are giving our kids.

According to the pan-Canadian assessment program, Ontario's English-language students were the only ones to score above the Canadian average in math. The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study: Ontario's 9- and 10-year-olds rank among the top readers in the world. By any objective measure, our students are doing well. We can pit our kids against kids from other countries. We're coming out very close to the top, and that's because of the investments that we've been making in our publicly funded education system.

#### VICTIMS OF CRIME

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is for the Attorney General. Patricia Marshall and her daughter were here last Wednesday asking for your help, and they're here again today. They left last week shocked by the fact that you simply accepted the decision of the crown attorney in St. Catharines, a decision not to proceed with a charge of criminal harassment against a young man who was caught on video masturbating outside her daughter's bedroom window. Despite a videotaped, properly obtained confession, the crown withdrew the charge.

This is clearly not a case where there was no reasonable prospect of conviction. Can you tell us, Attorney General, why these charges were dropped?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** As I indicated last week, the conduct that affected the family was deeply disturbing. People have the right—the right—to be secure in their homes. They have the right to be secure and to know that they will be secure in the future. The police investigated, as they should, thoroughly. Then the matter went to consideration by the crown, who is, of course, required to apply the facts to the provisions of the Criminal Code as they exist.

The crown wrote a very extensive letter to the family where he indicated that one thing he should have done—

absolutely should have done—is sit down with them. He didn't do that, but he always had his responsibility, as the crown, and the protection of the community—

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

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** The fact remains that Ms. Marshall and her daughters are not living in safety in their own homes. They feel threatened. The threatening continues. They've been abandoned by our justice system, and the only means of defence they have right now is a video camera in their backyard. Even that's not secure because last Friday, they received a letter from the young man's lawyer telling them that they needed to remove the camera or there were going to be consequences.

Attorney General, you have options. What are you going to do to ensure Ms. Marshall's and her daughters' safety?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** With respect to the latter matter, I won't discuss anything in relation to the video camera. I think there are other avenues within the community that it's not my power to intervene on.

I would simply come back to this: I understand. I get the fact that somebody in your situation, I say through you, Speaker, to them, would be very, very concerned—absolutely. It is deeply disturbing conduct. The police conducted a very thorough investigation and they provided the material to the crown, who did his responsibility, who reviewed the facts in relation to the charges laid and took a look at the factors, assessing community safety, and made the decision. We all want to safeguard—

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

#### DRIVER LICENCES

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, you will know that one of the important things for young people is getting that driver's licence. If you can get your driver's licence, as a young person it's the first step towards independence and sometimes getting a job. It's no different for the people living on the James Bay coast, but here's the problem: They're required to have the licence, which is right, but you can only get a drive test twice a year in Moosonee.

Tell me how that's fair for those people to be able to get access to get their drivers' licences in Moosonee. Shouldn't we increase the service beyond twice a year?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I would be happy to review that with the member. I'm glad he asked that question. He represents a northern community and many of the sites are much more remote in the northern part of the country than they are elsewhere, and there are different circumstances. I think that when we think of the province as a whole, we recognize there are many areas that are adequately served. The member draws to our attention a specific—and he may even have some other circumstances where he feels that people are not served as they might be. It's particularly important for employment purposes, I know that, but even for doing things that

families have to do together and so on. All of that is extremely important.

I'm very pleased that he took advantage of the opportunity in this House to raise this issue with me and I'll be more than happy to look into it and get further information from him on that and perhaps other circumstances that are facing people within his riding.

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

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** To the minister, is that really untenable? If you live in Attawapiskat, Fort Albany, Fort Hope or any other place, you cannot get a test to get your driver's licence. You've got to pay big money to get on an airplane, because they're landlocked communities, a thousand bucks a pop to get into a town like Moosonee or Cochrane to get your drive test.

Here's what's worse: They make appointments, they buy the airline ticket, they fly themselves at \$1,000 a pop down to Moosonee or Cochrane, then they get cancelled at the last minute. My question to you, Minister: Are you prepared, at the very least, to reimburse these young people for the flights they've had to take because of the cancellations by DriveTest?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I have to say to the member that I'm more than happy to look into the issue. I'm glad that he provided me with further details on it, and I know that if I were to ask him to do so, he would provide even greater detail on it. I fully expect he is going to, because for the people who reside there it's extremely difficult. We want to ensure that, as much as possible in the province, we have an opportunity for people to be able to obtain a licence.

I say that there's a particular circumstance that the member has brought to our attention where there's an extreme cost to come down, and the cancellation is extremely unfortunate. So I will be happy to look into that with the member and work with him, as I always do, so carefully on matters of this kind.

#### CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** My question is for the Minister of Consumer Services. Minister, as you are no doubt aware, consumers play a vital role in Ontario's economy. In fact, three out of every five dollars in Ontario's GDP is attributed to consumer spending. This is the largest percentage of any Canadian province. Now, more than ever, an informed consumer is a source of strength and confidence in our markets and our economic growth.

Ensuring that consumers have access to adequate information and enjoy consumer protection is extremely important. In my riding, I know my constituency office is frequently contacted by Ontarians concerned about business practices who are looking for information about their rights as a consumer. How does your ministry protect consumers?

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**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Well, what can I say? My thanks, obviously, to my honourable colleague. He's ab-

olutely right: Consumers do play a vital role in the Ontario economy.

I'm proud to say that the McGuinty government is standing up and protecting consumers every single day. Our view is that we're here to help.

The consumer protection branch at the Ministry of Consumer Services works with Ontarians to ensure that they know their rights and responsibilities as informed consumers. This involves dealing with thousands—in fact, over 10,000 concerns last year: everything from collection agencies, home renovations, telecommunication services, motor vehicles, what have you. In the last year, our ministry has secured over \$570,000 in refunds for consumers and over—

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

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** Minister, I'm pleased to learn that your ministry takes consumer complaints seriously, and I'm surprised to learn of the volume of inquiries handled by your ministry annually. However, enforcement and corrective action taken by your ministry are just one side of the coin. While it is vital that Ontario's consumers have a method to redress potential wrongs, it's equally important that we create the conditions to minimize complaints and nip problems in the bud.

In my riding, I often hear from constituents, especially seniors, about their concerns and desire for greater consumer education.

Minister, what steps does your ministry take to educate consumers, and what are some of the rights consumers in Ontario deserve in the marketplace?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Again, my thanks to my honourable colleague who fights so hard to protect consumers in his riding.

Annually, my ministry contributes to effective consumer education through a variety of resources. Many members of this House know and, I'm sure, distribute our annual Smart calendar, which provides useful information about preventing identity theft, protecting seniors—

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** In different languages.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** —and in many, many different languages, my colleague adds. He's correct.

We deliver over 100 public consumer education seminars annually and we do this because we believe Ontarians need to know their rights as consumers.

Smart consumers are good for business, and smart businesses value informed consumers.

#### DRIVER LICENCES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, there's more fallout from your DriveTest centre strike. A constituent of mine inadvertently allowed his licence to expire and was told that the one requirement to have it reinstated is a vision test. So far, so good. Unfortunately, he can't get that vision test—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Minister of Municipal Affairs, I would ask you to just withdraw the comment and watch what you're saying.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Please continue.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Unfortunately, the ministry only recognizes their own vision test. It's no good to get a vision test from an optometrist, which he's prepared to do so he can have his licence reinstated. They're telling him, "No, you've got to have it done here at the Drive-Test centre." Well, the DriveTest centres are closed. This person now has had to hire a driver at great expense to get around because your ministry will not reissue his licence. Will you remedy this now, Minister?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I wish it were that simple, I must say. I must say to my good friend who has brought this to my attention—I want to say to members of the House, first of all, he was kind enough to bring it to my attention earlier and we had a discussion about it. He's very good at doing those kinds of things and is genuinely concerned about it.

The problem that you encounter is consistency: consistency of vision tests that are administered in the province of Ontario. The second is, even if you were able to get that information from an optometrist or ophthalmologist, it still has to be processed by the people who work for Serco itself. It has to be entered into the system. They are on strike at this point in time. I would hope that both sides would work together to end the strike—

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

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Minister, you're on the record as saying that someone would not be denied a renewal of their licence because of this DriveTest centre strike. This is precisely what is happening because of a technical thing. If you're going to get your eyes tested, are you telling the people of Ontario, "Don't go to the optometrist anymore, don't go to the ophthalmologist. Come to one of our DriveTest centres. We're better"? This is no reason to be holding a man up from getting the licence that he requires to make a living. He is a dance instructor who drives from community to community and has now had to hire a driver in order to make a living.

This is a technical thing that you can, I believe, remedy. Anybody who can get a test from a qualified ophthalmologist or optometrist should be able to get their licence reinstated while this DriveTest centre strike is going on. Will you rule in their favour, please?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** In this specific case, and the member was kind enough to point this out to me when we had our discussion, the individual had allowed his licence to lapse. In other words, he did not renew that licence, unfortunately. Where there are people who want to renew a licence and want to make an appointment to do so, we said that we would extend it. In this particular case, the individual had allowed his licence to lapse. There are not exceptions made for people who allow that to happen. It's unfortunate. They don't do it deliberately.

You and I know that they don't do it deliberately, but it does happen that way.

Your government set up Serco, my friend, and you will recall that there were some very difficult challenges that arose when you privatized Serco in the province of Ontario.

I know the member and I will continue to work together on this. I wish it were as easy as the member thinks. Unfortunately, it is not in this case and we will work hard with the Minister of Labour to get—

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

#### USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: This point of order is related to at least two standing orders, 23 and 37, and deals, of course, with your ruling finding the question from the member from Nepean–Carleton out of order earlier today.

Your ruling, Speaker, has significant implications for the opposition parties. I would like to give you notice, Speaker, that I would appreciate the opportunity to research precedent and take a closer look at the standing orders with respect to this issue because of its implications for the opposition to perform its role effectively. What I would suggest is that I will pursue the details with respect to the point of order tomorrow, if that's appropriate from your perspective.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I spoke briefly with the opposition House leader about this matter and about our desire to join with him in this point of order. It's a peculiar thing, because we're certainly not challenging the Chair by any stretch of the imagination. As Mr. Runciman indicated, we're referring to 37, in particular 37(a), and also to 23(h) and (i), both of which involve, first, making an allegation against another member and, secondly, imputing false or unavowed motives to another member.

Our job here is to hold the government accountable. This is what question period is about: It's about accountability. So with respect—and I appreciate that this is a dog of a little bit of a different colour—I ask you to accede to the request of Mr. Runciman, and I indicate that we will be joining with him. It won't be lengthy. Quite frankly, you may want to tell us what time you prefer that we deal with this so we can do it in a manner that's most convenient to you.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that they are challenging your authority to make the ruling that you made earlier today. We do support you in your ruling of earlier today, but should you choose to hear this in a more fulsome manner, we will be prepared to make submissions as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I would like to thank all the honourable members, and I certainly welcome and will hear the deputation from the honourable members and would encourage everyone, because I think anything that we can do to help improve the flow of question period benefits all members. We've had a lot of

discussion in this chamber about questions coming from all sides of the House, and I think that anything that we can do to help improve that, because—a couple of things. I will say that certainly, to my mind, I have warned members about imputing motives, and that comes from both sides of the House.

Yes, I recognize that, as the honourable member has said, it's specifically a member. I did listen closely to the honourable member's supplementary. It was very clear and unequivocal that an assertion was being made that there were motives.

As I say, I certainly welcome hearing from the member from Leeds–Grenville, and I would welcome the input from the member from Welland and the government House leader. If there's anything that we can do to help improve the performance of question period, I would welcome it.

I think it would probably be preferable to see that after question period, if it's after question period tomorrow. I wouldn't want to do it before then. I think it would be better to do it following question period.

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

*The House recessed from 1151 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I want to take the opportunity to introduce Teresa Osterback from Dundas–Flamborough–Ancaster West, if I haven't mangled the name of the riding too badly, our guest today.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### McMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** The McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg showcases much more than art. It showcases the very best in our province and our country. Soon the rest of the world will have the chance to see that too. I'm pleased to report that the McMichael collection exhibit Challenging Traditions is en route to the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland. It's all part of that museum's exhibition program recognizing Canada's hosting of the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, just over four months away.

The McMichael exhibition highlights some 40 living Canadian artists using the traditions, forms, styles and materials of west coast First Nations art. The exhibition also builds on the tradition and extraordinary generosity of the late Robert and Signe McMichael, who I was honoured to know.

I want to acknowledge the artists' creativity and their important place in the cultural history of Canada. Further, I want to congratulate Tom Smart and all the staff at

McMichael for their exceptional job in creating this timely and groundbreaking exhibition.

I'm privileged to serve as the opposition critic to the ministers of culture and aboriginal affairs. The McMichael exhibit shows us the best of both.

A few days ago, I returned to the McMichael gallery, one of my favourite art galleries, and the first one I visited more than 20 years ago. It was great to be back and see first-hand the works that depict our scenic beauty in Wellington-Halton Hills. We in Ontario are very fortunate to have this cultural gem in our own backyard.

#### POWER PLANT

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I rise in the House today to announce my support for Oakville's demand for cleaner air and better health.

You may know, Speaker, that my community has actively protested the Ontario Power Authority's proposal to build a natural gas power plant in the Oakville community, and their efforts have my support. The residents of Oakville have sent hundreds of e-mails, they've signed petitions, and they've attended rallies. Today, they were with us at Queen's Park. They're asking the Ontario Power Authority to cancel their plans.

Oakville town council, led by Mayor Rob Burton, has also fought the plan and urged for a reduction in pollutants. I commend the approach they have taken. Town council has passed an interim control bylaw that bans the construction of power plants within Oakville.

Our government promised to take action to improve the health and the environment of our province. Today, during question period, Minister Gerretsen promised action on cumulative emissions, and that certainly is welcome news.

The Green Energy Act, the Toxics Reduction Act and a commitment to close coal plants by 2014 will significantly improve Ontario's health and the environment. However, the Ontario Power Authority's plans to build a power plant will simply increase emissions in what is already an overtaxed airshed. So I join with my community and municipal leaders in urging the Ontario Power Authority to reconsider their intention to increase pollution in Oakville and to meet my community's demand for clean air and better health.

#### JADE SCOGNAMILLO

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I am very pleased today to honour a young woman from my riding of Dufferin-Caledon. This summer, Jade Scognamillo from Caledon officially became the youngest swimmer ever to cross Lake Ontario, at the age of 15. Jade completed this historic swim in 19 hours, 59 minutes and 49 seconds.

Swimming across Lake Ontario should have been enough, but Jade did all this for a great cause—two great causes, in fact. Jade did the swim to raise money for the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. Jade's swim helped raise more than \$47,000 to purchase an incubator

for the hospital's neonatal unit. She also raised another \$5,000 for the local Headwaters Health Care Centre in Orangeville.

I had the pleasure of meeting Jade this summer as she took her oath of citizenship on Canada Day. You see, Jade just became a Canadian citizen on July 1. She wanted to be able to do this historic swim as a Canadian.

Jade has proven to be a fantastic role model for young people across the province. Jade's motivation to improve the lives of others and volunteer within her community really does make a difference.

Congratulations, Jade.

#### WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I would like to take a moment to remind members about the McGuinty government's initiatives to address the serious issue of workplace injuries. Our workers are among the most productive, and this government is committed to having the highest safety standards to protect workers and their families. As a key part of this injury prevention strategy, safety inspectors will blitz construction throughout October to eliminate electrical hazards that could lead to injury or even death.

The dedication of the McGuinty government to the safety of Ontario workers has been exemplified through the Minister of Labour's compliance program that ran from April 1, 2004, to March 31, 2008. This program helped reduce lost-time injury rates by 20%, or more than 50,000 incidents. This reduction also saw a drop in the annual rate of lost-time injuries, with employers avoiding about \$5 billion in direct and indirect costs over the last four years. This lessened the strain on the health care system, and fewer workers off the job meant increased productivity in Ontario's economy.

The McGuinty government recognizes the skill and value of Ontario workers, and while there's always more to do, we will continue to implement strategies to promote the overall well-being of Ontario workers.

#### POWER PLANT

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Speaker, as you know, we heard from visitors in this House today on just how lost this government has become in planning for future energy needs. Since 2006, the Conservative member from Halton, Ted Chudleigh, has been trying to get the government's attention to allow the people of Mississauga and Oakville and, indeed, people across the province input into power plants planned for their area.

The year 2006 was the same year that the Ministry of the Environment found the Clarkson airshed was taxed or compromised and contained elevated levels of particulate matter in the air. Yet, in that same airshed, this government has pushed forward with plans for an 850-megawatt gas-fired power plant—a plant that 23,000 have now signed petitions against, a plant that close to 1,000 came out to an Oakville park this summer to protest, and a plant that people have packed the galleries to object to.



As the Halton member told the Oakville crowd, “I fail to be convinced that we need this power plant. I’d like to see the government build power plants in airsheds that aren’t overtaxed. I’d like to see the government build power plants in areas where people aren’t.”

Perhaps the government members haven’t heard that their lack of planning has turned an economic downturn into a debacle and has made it unnecessary to build these kinds of new generating stations. It’s time for this government to go back to the drawing board, crunch today’s numbers, not those of three years ago, and clean up the air.

### SMART METERS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** There’s no question that building a smart grid in Ontario is advantageous to us, but the investment in smart meters in individual homes and small businesses is a mistake. It’s the wrong direction for Ontario, and it means that we are going to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on penalizing people for trying to cook lunch for themselves at midday when we could be taking that hundreds of millions of dollars and putting it into insulation in people’s homes, on long-term rental or lease programs. We could put it into solar panel siding for hospitals and schools. We could be putting it into a wide variety of efficiency and conservation investments. But that money is going to be used up making sure that seniors who spend their whole day at home with a refrigerator going they are not going to turn off, listening to a radio or watching television, just trying to get about their daily lives, are going to pay more in future than they’ve paid in the past for everyday living. That is not the direction this province should be going in.

I’ve heard from seniors and I’ve heard from small businesses that they are hit hard during the day because they don’t have the opportunity—well, frankly, would it be a good thing for them to stay up all through the night to take advantage of the low-cost electricity and sleep during the day? That’s not a practical thing for them; they can’t shift that way.

The province, the Liberal government, has made a huge mistake with this, and we will continue to pay for it for decades to come.

### SHOP THE SHORE

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** In Etobicoke–Lakeshore we are passionate about what is good for the community and we’re always looking for ways to harness past success into future opportunities. So this year, our local business improvement areas, along with the Our Lakeshore group, have brought back the highly successful Shop the Shore. Shop the Shore brings residents together to discover all the lakeshore has to offer. At its core is the desire to do better for our neighbourhood and increase revitalization of the lakeshore community. It is the dedication of involved community members that has brought this event

to life. The lakeshore BIAs are helping to ensure that this year’s event is even bigger than it was in 2008.

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Shop the Shore gives us the opportunity to shop locally and discover our businesses, both new and old, in the area. By doing this, we all help to support the local economy as well as the hard work that community volunteers put into organizing a great event for residents of all ages.

Last week, I shopped at the shore in Long Branch; this weekend, I shop the shore in New Toronto. I want to extend my thanks and congratulations to all involved. As we like to say in Etobicoke–Lakeshore, “Shop local. It’s good for our community, good for the environment and good for you.”

### REGIONAL EQUINE AND AGRICULTURAL CENTRE OF HURON

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** I rise today to tell you about a wonderful success story from my riding and from my own hometown. Just over two weeks ago, the town of Clinton in the municipality of Central Huron held the grand opening ceremonies for the wonderful and long-awaited Regional Equine and Agricultural Centre of Huron. This state-of-the-art centre will function as a “motel for education,” offering innovative programming as well as recreational activities to support both the equine and agricultural industries. The REACH centre combines a large indoor riding arena with a full-service educational facility that includes classrooms, boardrooms and media rooms. There’s also an outdoor show section for exhibitions and other entertainment purposes.

This grand opening was especially exciting, as the government played a large part in its coming to fruition. As a government, we provided \$850,000 through the rural economic development fund and the rural infrastructure investment initiative. This government has continued to show its support for all facets of the agricultural sector in rural Ontario. This is yet another shining example of that strong commitment.

I want to wish congratulations to the community of Clinton and invite all of you to stop by and see this absolutely magnificent facility, if your travels take you to the most beautiful riding in the province of Ontario, that being Huron–Bruce.

### MID-AUTUMN MOON FESTIVAL

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I am pleased to share with the Legislature that the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival which will be celebrated across Ontario on October 3. The Mid-Autumn Moon Festival, also known as the Chinese Moon Festival, is one of the most important days on the Chinese calendar and has been celebrated for over 3,000 years. This holiday marks the end of the summer harvest season and is held when the moon is at its fullest and brightest, symbolizing abundance and togetherness. It is a time for family reunions and friendship.

The Mid-Autumn Moon Festival is traditionally celebrated by gathering with friends and family to admire the full moon and, of course, by eating the many varieties of moon cakes prepared for the special occasion.

The Chinese community in my riding of Ottawa Centre is a vibrant community. Organizations such as the Federation of Ottawa Chinese Community Organizations, the Chinese Community Association of Ottawa and the Federation of Ottawa Chinese Canadians enrich our society by sharing the values, customs and heritage of the Chinese people.

I'm also pleased to announce that the government of Ontario is contributing \$125,000 towards the construction of a gateway to Ottawa's Chinatown. The gateway, a traditional arch designed by the city of Beijing, will become a cultural landmark in the city of Ottawa, and will enhance tourism and economic development in Ottawa's Chinatown. It recognizes the important contributions of Ottawa's Chinese community to the rich cultural mosaic of our city.

I would also like to thank the Somerset Street BIA, the gateway committee and the many volunteers who have made the gateway dream a reality. Together we are creating a united and prosperous Ottawa.

## PETITIONS

### TAXATION

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition to do with the McGuinty sales tax and it reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government is planning to merge the 8% provincial sales tax and the 5% federal sales tax; and

"Whereas the new 13% sales tax will be applied to products and services not previously subject to provincial sales tax such as gasoline, home heating fuels, home renovations, haircuts, hamburgers, television service, Internet service, telephone and cell services, taxi fees, bus, train and airplane tickets, and dry cleaning services; and

"Whereas rural and northern Ontarians will be particularly hard hit by Mr. McGuinty's new sales tax, as will seniors and families;

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

"That the McGuinty government should remove the new sales tax from its 2009-10 budget."

I support this petition.

### AIR QUALITY

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) conducted 22 months of ambient air monitoring and

determined that the Clarkson, Mississauga, airshed study area was taxed for respirable particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>); and

"Whereas the average annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations measured in the Clarkson airshed were among the highest found when compared to data obtained from the ministry's air quality index monitoring stations; and

"Whereas the interim 24-hour ministry ambient air quality criterion for PM<sub>10</sub> was exceeded on several occasions; and

"Whereas the study found that emissions of acrolein and acrylonitrile exceeded provincial limits; and

"Whereas concentrations of toluene, xylene, styrene, ethyl benzene, trichloroethene and acrolein were higher than those at the 12 Environment Canada national air pollution surveillance stations in Ontario, including those located in Toronto (4), Brampton, Windsor, Hamilton, Sarnia, Kingston, Ottawa, Kitchener and London; and

"Whereas annual average 24-hour nitrogen dioxide concentrations were found to be among the highest when compared to provincial air quality index stations in the greater Toronto and Hamilton areas; and

"Whereas the MOE stated that industrial emissions may contribute as much as 25% of the PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations in the Clarkson airshed study area; and

"Whereas the MOE stated that it would focus on achieving reductions of the target pollutants from the 57 identified emitters that currently operate in the area; and

"Whereas the Ontario Power Authority is accepting proposals from companies for the operation of a gas-fired power plant in the Clarkson airshed study area that would see a new, very significant source of additional pollution into an airshed already determined as stressed by the MOE;

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

"That no contract be awarded by the Ontario Power Authority for the operation of any gas-fired power plant that would impact" the east Oakville environment and "the Clarkson airshed study area."

I agree with the petition and will sign it and send it down with Robert.

### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"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 agree with this petition and am pleased to affix my name to it and give it to page Kingsong.

#### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It is my pleasure to present another 200 names regarding a petition to bring a PET scan to Sudbury. It goes as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service...; and

"Whereas by October 2009, insured PET scans will be performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

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

#### AIR QUALITY

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** I have a petition that reads as follows.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) conducted 22 months of ambient air monitoring and determined that the Clarkson, Mississauga, airshed study area was taxed for respirable particulate matter (PM2.5); and

"Whereas the average annual PM2.5 concentrations measured in the Clarkson airshed were among the highest found when compared to data obtained from the ministry's air quality index monitoring stations; and....

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"Whereas the study found that emissions of acrolein and acrylonitrile exceeded provincial limits; and....

"Whereas the MOE stated that industrial emissions may contribute as much as 25% of the PM2.5 concentrations in the Clarkson airshed study area; and

"Whereas the MOE stated that it would focus on achieving reductions of the target pollutants from the 57 identified emitters that currently operate in the area; and

"Whereas the Ontario Power Authority is accepting proposals from companies for the operation of a gas-fired power plant in the Clarkson airshed study area that would see a new, very significant source of additional pollution into an airshed already determined as stressed by the MOE;

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

"That no contract be awarded by the Ontario Power Authority for the operation of any gas-fired power plant that would impact the Clarkson airshed study area."

I affix my signature and provide it to Jacob.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty said he wouldn't raise taxes in ... 2003..., but in 2004 brought in the health tax, the biggest tax hike in Ontario's history; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax at a time when families and businesses can least afford it; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's new ... sales tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as: coffee, newspapers and magazines, gas at the pumps, home heating oil and electricity, postage stamps, haircuts, dry cleaning, home renovations, real estate transactions, veterinary care, arena ice and soccer field rentals;

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

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes, once and for all, on the hard-working families and businesses of Ontario."

I affix my name in support.

#### SHARK FISHERY

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas over 100 million sharks are being brutally killed, mutilated and butchered by the abhorrent practice of shark finning, which involves the removal of the fins of live sharks and then throwing the finless, immobile, shark back into the ocean, where it is destined for a slow and torturous death;

"Whereas sharks are a vital component of the ocean's interconnected ecosystem...; and

"Whereas the practice of shark finning can have disastrous effects on other fisheries...; and

"Whereas the United Nations General Assembly itself has noted that the decline in the shark population could have 'an impact on broader ecosystem functions';

"We, the undersigned, urge the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the prohibition of shark finning and to call upon the federal government to support the prohibition of this cruel act ... and these wasteful and inhumane methods used to obtain shark fins for the purpose of making things like shark fin soup."

I support this petition and I affix my name to it.

#### FERTILITY TREATMENT

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I have a petition here from many residents petitioning the Legislature for full funding of in vitro fertilization. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the prevalence and growing incidence of infertility in our population is a medical issue that demands the attention of our public health care system and should be placed on the agenda for funding;

“Whereas fertility treatment, including in vitro fertilization, is a proven medical solution that is unfairly limited to those with the financial means to pursue it and it should receive significant coverage through the Ontario health care system as soon as possible;

“Whereas in vitro fertilization should be fully funded when deemed medically necessary, without discrimination based on cause or gender; and

“Whereas it is long overdue that financial assistance for fertility treatment be offered to” all “Ontarians. We are residents of the province of Ontario and request that the Ontario provincial government address this important issue.

“We, the undersigned, strongly support the inclusion of financial assistance by the Ontario Ministry of Health under the Ontario health care program for all fertility treatment for Ontarians, male and female” alike.

Since I agree with this petition, I’m delighted to sign my name to it.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I have a petition for the Legislature here.

“Whereas residents in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke do not want the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, hydro, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to home sales over \$400,000; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

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

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario families.”

I support this petition. I affix my signature to it and send it down with page Carlos.

#### GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas current changes to ServiceOntario will expand and improve access to licensing, registration, health card renewal and other services, it will also close effective and service-oriented local businesses and cost

us local jobs, such as the licence office that the Donald family has owned and operated in Whitby and Durham region for over 50 years; and

“Whereas we recognize the quality of service provided by the Donald family to be rated above the 100% efficiency level, including extended hours;

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

“That the Donald family be maintained as a licence bureau of the highest quality in the region of Durham.”

I do present quite a large assembly of petitions and I affix my signature to it and pass it to this young page, Kaitlin.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I have another petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas residents in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke do not want the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, hydro, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to new home sales over \$400,000; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

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

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario families.”

I support this petition strongly and I pass it to the table with Robert.

#### GO TRANSIT TUNNEL

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I have this petition that you may be familiar with, but since I received it last week, I have to read it to you again. It’s to the Parliament of Ontario and minister of infrastructure services and the Minister of Transportation. It reads as follows:

“Whereas GO Transit is presently planning to tunnel an area just south of St. Clair Avenue West and west of Old Weston Road, making it easier for GO trains to pass a major rail crossing;

“Whereas TTC is presently planning a TTC right-of-way along all of St. Clair Avenue West, including the bottleneck caused by the dilapidated St. Clair Avenue–Old Weston Road bridge;

“Whereas this bridge ... will be: (1) too narrow for the planned TTC right-of-way, since it will leave only one lane for traffic; (2) it is not safe for pedestrians (it’s about

50 metres long). It's dark and slopes on both east and west sides, creating high banks for 300 metres; and (3) it creates a divide, a no man's land, between Old Weston Road and Keele Street. (This was acceptable when the area consisted entirely of slaughterhouses, but now the area has 900 new homes);

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that GO Transit extend the tunnel beyond St. Clair Avenue West so that trains will pass under St. Clair Avenue West, thus eliminating this eyesore of a bridge with its high banks and blank walls. Instead it will create a dynamic, revitalized community enhanced by a beautiful continuous cityscape with easy traffic flow."

I am delighted to sign this because I believe in it 100%.

1330

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### PUBLIC SECTOR EXPENSES REVIEW ACT, 2009

#### LOI DE 2009 SUR L'EXAMEN DES DÉPENSES DANS LE SECTEUR PUBLIC

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 24, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 201, An Act to provide for review of expenses in the public sector / Projet de loi 201, Loi prévoyant l'examen des dépenses dans le secteur public.

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

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to continue the debate on Bill 201, An Act to provide for review of expenses in the public sector. The lead on this bill is the Minister of Government Services, Mr. Takhar.

I did have an opportunity on Thursday to start speaking to this bill. It's my feeling that the bill is really a PR exercise, and it's come about because of the scandals we've seen happening this summer, particularly the scandals at eHealth, with the spending, the out-of-control expenses at eHealth—the \$25,000 speech, the \$2,700 a day for consultants—which were brought to light by the PC Party and the freedom-of-information requests we put forward and were very diligent with to eventually get a lot of information.

The same can be said for the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp., where we started back in January doing freedom-of-information requests. The government has taken a different tack with the Ontario Lottery and Gaming commission, deciding to just drop all of the information—except for information about untendered contracts—at one time hoping that it wouldn't be a media story with quite as much legs, I would say.

But I find it ironic, as I've stated before, that the minister responsible for bringing this bill to the Legislature, Minister Takhar, is the only member who has ever been found in violation of the Members' Integrity Act. Coulter

Osborne, in his January 4, 2006, report, found the minister in violation of the Members' Integrity Act, and yet nothing happened from that. The Premier didn't do anything about it, didn't hold the minister to account. He has yet to hold any minister, really, to account in the government, and Minister Takhar is still a minister.

Now he wants, with this bill, to have the the Integrity Commissioner's office provide oversight for some 80,000 employees of 22 of the larger agencies and boards. I think that's just not possible for the Integrity Commissioner, with their staff of nine people, unless they're planning on a huge bureaucracy being built at the Integrity Commissioner's office. So I certainly have concerns about that.

Let's look at the numbers. If each public servant only put out one report each month, then nine people will have to review 960,000 documents each year. If each staff member at the Integrity Commissioner's office worked 35 hours a week—that's 1,750 hours a year, less the two weeks of vacation—every hour his staff would have to review and scrutinize a minimum of 68 expense reports. That's less than a minute per document. How could they possibly do that?

So this isn't a real plan. This is a public relations exercise for the government to change channels on all the scandals that have been coming forward. That's certainly my position on this.

If the government is really interested in accountability—the public accounts just came out, and they have to come out by today, which show how much the government actually spent last year. So how did the government—this government that's supposed to be in favour of accountability—release the public accounts? Well, it was Friday afternoon. In the 12th news release of the day, on Friday afternoon, is when the actual public accounts were released. I think just when the Clerk was about to lock the office for the day is when they were released. I'm sure that was planned so as to draw as little attention to the public accounts as possible. Because back in March, when the budget came out, the Minister of Finance stated that the deficit was going to be \$3.9 billion. He had revised that, and I'll cut him a little slack: Obviously, when they started the budget year, they weren't expecting the huge, worldwide financial meltdown. But they revised their budget so that in March, at the end of the year, they said the actual deficit was going to be \$3.9 billion. What we learned in public accounts was that the actual deficit for the year that ended March 31, 2009, was \$6.4 billion, and that was largely attributed to a drop in corporate tax revenues.

As I drove in this morning, I was listening to CBC. They had the financial analyst—

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Michael Hlinka.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** —Michael Hlinka on, and he said that surely the Minister of Finance knew, and that it was either incompetence, if he didn't know, or dishonesty: They made a deliberate decision not to reveal the true numbers back in March of this year. That's what was on the radio this morning as I drove in: The minister would

have had to know. So the way they released the public accounts was a strategy on the part of the government.

I asked a question about this today. I had to ask the Deputy Premier, even though I would have liked to ask the Premier, but I think that is also part of the strategy. I can't talk about attendance, so I won't talk about attendance, but I did ask the question of the Deputy Premier today, as much as I might like to have asked the Premier about this release of the public accounts.

But I think the public accounts really confirm what we've known all along: Dalton McGuinty has lost all credibility when it comes to managing Ontario's economy. It really raises the question, how can you believe the McGuinty government? The government is drowning in red ink. This new figure for last year is a \$6.4-billion deficit. In March of this year they said the deficit this year was going to be \$14 billion, and now we learn it's going to be \$18.5 billion. At least that is what they're saying at this time. Who knows whether they're going to revise that again?

There was a big drop in corporate tax revenue. I think the drop in corporate tax revenue is one more sign of how terrible the business climate has become under the high-tax, high-regulation reign of the McGuinty government.

Dalton McGuinty cannot simply blame this on the global recession. Ontario was already falling before the global recession hit. We fell faster and harder than the other provinces. The unfortunate thing is that there's still no plan to dig us out of this very large hole the government is putting us in. As I say, we're going to have an all-time record deficit this year, if it doesn't grow still bigger. We asked questions about that today in question period, and the Minister of Finance conveniently didn't answer the question, "Is it going to be greater than \$18.5 billion?" That makes us worry that the deficit will grow still more.

It was pointed out that back in the Bob Rae days, the then-opposition, the Liberal Party at that point, was making a big deal about the fact that Bob Rae was spending \$1 million an hour more than he was bringing in. Every hour his revenues were \$1 million less than expenses. Now this government, with the current \$18.5-billion deficit, is spending \$2.1 million an hour—every hour, 24 hours a day, the whole year round—more than they're bringing in. That's a big hole that's being dug.

I pointed out in the past that I don't buy the government's plan to get us out of the deficit—they say they're going to restrain government program spending to 2.3% a year—when in effect their average increase in spending over the last six years has been 7.4% per year. So I just don't see that coming.

I can see I am pretty much out of time.

I definitely view this as more of a PR exercise than anything else and find it very ironic that it's being introduced by the only minister who has been sanctioned by the Integrity Commissioner.

1340

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I've had occasion to listen to not only this latter part of Mr. Miller's contribution but also to the first part when he began it—a valuable participation in this debate.

I'm interested in hearing what government members have to say. There are a number of them here—obviously, enough to keep a quorum; not much more than that—and I'm eager to hear what they've got to say.

So I say this—and I'm going to have a chance, and Peter Tabuns and Howie Hampton are going to have a chance, to speak to that later today, because today is day four: This really isn't about expenses review. It's about government scandal and an effort to deflect attention away from the gross mismanagement and lack of ministerial responsibility, in particular, most recently on the part of the Minister of Health. What this does is create a barrier, an insulation. It's the flight from responsibility. It's the abdication of responsibility. It allows ministers to say, "Don't ask me. We've got an office that deals with that. Don't expect me to supervise or oversee those agencies that are accountable to this ministry." That's what it does.

It's just like—and I'm going to have a chance, and I'm going to repeat it—the recent amendments to the Coroners Act which relieved the Solicitor General, the Minister of Community Safety, of the responsibility and right to order a public inquest into a death. It makes life so much easier for the minister when he doesn't have that power. I'm going to have a chance to speak to this more later.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm pleased to offer a couple of minutes in response to the comments from the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka on the Public Sector Expenses Review Act, 2009, brought forward by Minister Takhar on behalf of our government.

I think it's a bit of an unfortunate turn of phrase to refer to what is before us today as a public relations exercise. I'm not sure that anybody who is following the debate on television who has an interest in this particular topic will ever view the effort to advance transparency and accountability as a public relations exercise. The opposition parties may have some feelings and opinions on this, that they feel it isn't going far enough or it should go farther, and perhaps during their time to speak on this particular piece of legislation they'll make suggestions in terms of what we could do to make it even better. But to refer to something such as this as a PR exercise, I think, is a bit unfortunate.

I do want to speak just a little bit specifically to one of the comments made by the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. He quoted a number in his remarks, in terms of the number of filings that he expected were going to occur should this legislation pass. I forget the number, I didn't write it down, but it was in the hundreds of thousands; I think I heard the member say something like 700,000 or 900,000. It was a very large number. While I'm not able to stand here today and tell you exactly how

many people will have to file these expense claims, I don't think it's going to be 700,000 or 900,000. I think it's very clearly articulated in the legislation that there are 22 agencies that are going to be affected by this legislation, should it pass, and that the only people in those agencies who are going to be expected to file their claims are senior management personnel. So I think that there's a bit of an exaggeration there. And if it does require a bit of cost on behalf of government to ensure transparency and accountability, I think we're all willing to contribute to that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Wellington–Halton Hills.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I was glad to hear the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka give his presentation this afternoon, following up on the speech that he initiated last Thursday with respect to Bill 201, and I found it very interesting. Our member for Parry Sound–Muskoka is our newly minted critic for finance, and he was able to bring a number of issues related to that portfolio into the discussion.

Certainly, he informed the House today, I think for the first time, that the government's deficit of \$18.5 billion means that the government is spending about \$2 million an hour more than it's taking in. I recall sitting here in the years between 1990 and 1995, when our party in opposition reminded the House and the people of Ontario constantly that the government was spending \$1 million an hour more than it was taking in, and it was seen to be a fiscal crisis as a result. Now we see the current government spending more than \$2 million an hour, something to ponder and something to think about.

I have before me the Hansard from the Minister of Government Services, who, when he introduced this bill for second reading debate on September 17, said that this bill was intended "to provide further accountability and transparency with regard to the use of taxpayers' dollars."

Interestingly, this Minister of Government Services is, I think, still the first and only member of this Legislature who has been condemned by the Integrity Commissioner for a breach of the Members' Integrity Act. So it is highly ironic—I think if I were a government member I'd find it very embarrassing to have to stand up in this House and defend that minister and talk about Bill 201, which would have the effect, according to the government, anyway, of creating more transparency and accountability.

So I look forward to further debate on this issue. I know our party has many serious concerns about this, and we're going to have a lot of speakers talking about it this afternoon. We look forward to their participation and I look forward to the participation of all members as we continue to debate Bill 201.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Member from Toronto–Danforth.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's a pleasure to rise and speak to this issue. There is no question that the events of the last year have shown the necessity of an opening of doors so

that there can actually be an assessment, an accounting for, an understanding of what has been spent in the name of the public.

This government showed through a variety of events, such as the so-called Collegate spending, a year-end dishing out of large amounts of cash to organizations without any process whatsoever for assessing the validity of those applications, without giving the rest of the public an opportunity, that it had a huge amount of difficulty in actually accounting for the public dollar. The eHealth issue that has come up, the OLG—in all of those circumstances we have a government that does not seem to have learned many of the fundamentals of accounting and spending control.

When I speak about spending control, I don't talk about those terms used as code words for cutting back on social services. I talk about the simple business expedient of being able to know that the money you put out the door is actually being spent on something of value. This government doesn't seem to be able to do that.

We heard today about the construction or the proposed construction of a gas-fired power plant in the southwest GTA. Demand for power is dropping. We have a health problem in that area already. Mayor McCallion was here, residents were here, all making it very clear in their arguments that a rational assessment of options and needs had not been made in making that decision. This government needs a lot more than this act to clean up its act.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you for the comments from the member from Welland, who pointed out that government members, other than doing the two-minute hits per speech, have decided not to speak to this legislation. The member from Welland also talked about ministerial responsibility and accountability, and that's something that seems to be sorely lacking in the McGuinty government.

I really am not sure what a minister has to do to lose his job in the McGuinty government, but certainly it's my feeling that ministers need to be a lot more responsible and need to be overseeing the areas of their responsibility more than they are. The Minister of Finance has repeatedly claimed that his government has been open and transparent. Is that why the staff in the Premier's office tried to block our freedom-of-information requests, as was stated by Kelly McDougald, the fired CEO of OLG, in her statement of claim, in which it's pointed out that the government delayed giving out information, delayed the freedom-of-information applications from our party on every occasion?

**1350**

Let's be clear: The reason this bill is being debated in the Legislature is because our party did freedom-of-information requests and found out there was a lot of money being wasted at eHealth Ontario and at the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. We've done hundreds more freedom-of-information requests on other agencies

because there are 630 agencies and boards in the province of Ontario. We've done two of them, and we found a lot of waste, and we will continue with that.

This bill, I believe, is a PR response to a scandal that the government has faced at eHealth and OLG.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I've only got about 20 minutes to speak to this legislation. It's not a lengthy bill; that's because most of it isn't here. There's a big hole—it's a doughnut bill. There's a big hole in the middle of it because it's all about regulation. We have no idea what the government's talking about, what's going to be reviewable and what's not going to be reviewable and how it's going to be addressed.

I do want to share with my colleagues, though, a fascinating reference. The Speaker this morning referred us to McGee's Parliamentary Practice in New Zealand. Of course, all of us always struggle to abide by the rules—people like Mr. Yakabuski, who shares with me this passion for ensuring that we stay within the goalposts, that we don't go over the edge. Again, I was so grateful when he was sitting closer to me because he and I would counsel each other about saying, "Whoa, slow down. You're getting close to the edge here." I can tell you, we were very upset from time to time when we were found to have violated the standing orders or broken the rules in one way or another. It hurt. It's like a blow to the solar plexus. So we struggle, we fight with ourselves and with our passions to ensure that we remain inside the rules of the game.

So I was delighted to see this reference in McGee's Parliamentary Practice in New Zealand, because it has all to do with the business of misleading: We can't accuse a member of lying. One of the ironies about this place is that you can lie but you can't be called a liar. I suspect it happens every day, even the little white lies, little fib lies, and maybe sometimes really big ones. People can do that because, of course, everybody's presumed to be telling the truth.

But I found this remarkable observation, and I want to share it with you too, Speaker, because I know you're going to be called upon, I'm sure, in short order to rule on this type of language. McGee at page 189 says, "If an accusation that a member has deliberately misled the House was correct"—and the Speaker gave a ruling on that this morning, a very high standard, so you've got to be beyond any doubt—"the member would have committed a contempt, and a member who believes that another member has misled or tried to mislead the House should raise this as a matter of privilege." That's fair enough; we've all learned that over the course of the years. "That a member must not accuse another of lying does not mean that the correctness of the other's statements may not be questioned and it is in order"—it is in order, not out of order—"to accuse a member of having misled the country"—or, I presume, the province, or the people of Ontario, or the voters of Ontario.

So I say to my colleagues, in the interests of civility here in the provincial Legislature, let's remember that you

can never accuse an honourable member of lying, you can never accuse another honourable member of misleading the House, but we can accuse them of misleading the province. We can accuse the member of misleading the people of Ontario. We can accuse the member of misleading the voters of this great province of Ontario: McGee, Parliamentary practice in New Zealand, page one hundred and—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Welland is most eloquent, but I would ask him to return to the order of the day, which is Bill 201.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I have to explain to the member, my good friend the previous speaker, that there are two ways to get to Welland from Toronto.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I like the long way.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** You can take the QEW, then go down the 406, six and eight lanes of traffic and you get there fast, but it ain't very attractive. Or you can go down to Regional Road 24, go south to Highway 8, maybe, or pick up Highway 8 off of Highway 20 in Hamilton, and it takes a little longer to get to Welland. But it's a heck of a lot prettier and a heck of a lot more interesting, and you've got a chance to contribute to the economy of Niagara. So here we are. Sometimes we take the express route and sometimes we do the milk run, and this afternoon we're a bit on the milk run.

I want to also thank the parliamentary assistant for staying in the chamber during this debate. I have great respect for PAs who understand the convention that either a minister or his or her parliamentary assistant should sit through the debate. It's true. It lends some relevance to it. From time to time, newer members who become PAs don't understand that role, but this parliamentary assistant has shown an honourable commitment to his job by doing that, when I suspect maybe he wishes he were somewhere else. It's not imputing motive; I'm just suspecting.

As I said earlier, this bill is all about ministerial responsibility. It's about not just arm's length, triple arm's length, quadruple arm's length. Over the course of my modest years here—and I don't know if Mr. Sterling has spoken to this bill yet or not; he's been here a good chunk longer—we've seen this incredible flight from ministerial responsibility as compared to ministerial accountability. Accountability occurs here in the chamber during question period, when the minister is obligated—well, not obligated, because he isn't obligated, but he's obligated to at least submit to questions. We know he's not obligated to answer them but he is obligated to submit to them, unless he or she doesn't feel like showing up that day.

Ministerial responsibility is a far different matter. It effectively, as I understand it, means that the buck stops here. That the minister is responsible not just for the policy but the conduct within his ministry, and in my view those agencies that fall under the stewardship of his or her ministry. He needn't have known about the transgression, because the concept of ministerial responsibility says that he or she ought to have known about the trans-



gression. There's this amazing growing tendency—and it's remarkable: Our colleague Gilles Bisson from Timmins got quoted in a Toronto Star article last week with his heckle. Heckles don't get printed in the press very often. I had to ask people about it. What was that 1960's stalag comedy? Sergeant Schultz and so on—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Hogan's Heroes.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Hogan's Heroes. Gilles Bisson heckled to the government, "You're just like Hogan's Heroes: "I see nothing, I hear nothing"—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** "I see nothing, Hogan"—

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** —Mr. Yakabuski says. But there's that increasing trend. "Don't ask me. I don't know. Not my job." I can tell you this much: If you started here 21, 22—ask the Solicitor General of the day, a wonderful woman who happened to go into a police station in Lucan to inquire about the well-being of a young constituent—no fiddling interference; just inquiring. She was my first minister. Back then you could ring bells and you'd be gone, and she was gone.

Ask Ken Keyes, who just happened to be another Solicitor General. He had a beer on a boat with the OPP. A beer. He wasn't drunk driving. He wasn't operating the boat. He was there with cops. But as I understand it, you need a latrine on the boat or something to make it more akin to a domicile for you to be allowed to drink on the boat. I can't imagine fellows out on Lake Erie, from time to time, not having a beer when the hot sun's beating down on them and the perch aren't running.

**1400**

It's called ministerial responsibility. Bob Runciman, when there was an inadvertent reference to a young offender—who, in fact, was being celebrated because the kid was being saluted at a graduation ceremony, right? It wasn't exposing a young offender who didn't want to be talked about; this kid was happy. It had been published; there was an agenda for the graduation ceremony with all the kids' names in it, so it's not as if it was some ministerial secret. Ministerial responsibility: Bob Runciman says, "I have to resign." That's ministerial responsibility.

So what do we have here? High-priced, multi-thousand-dollar-a-day consultants expensing a tea at Tim Hortons for \$1.65; \$3.99 for Choco Bites—I have no idea what the hell they are; a \$30 car wash; a speech that cost \$25,000. What is the matter with these people? You see, this isn't about legislation called the Public Sector Expenses Review Act. It's, one, about common sense; and two, it's about abandoning the sense of entitlement.

Also, three, let's understand: There's something very corrupt about all this. We had occasion the other day to ask the minister why it is that everything he touched turns to scandal: OLG, eHealth, London Health Sciences. My poor colleague Ms. MacLeod from Nepean-Carleton in question period today was—I knew what she was trying to do. The Speaker made a ruling and God bless, and we're going to discuss that on a point of order tomorrow. She said, "Hmm, very interesting here: a \$20,000 donation to the Ontario Liberal Party, a \$1.3-million contract."

"Hmph," I said, and then I made the observation, "It beats the heck out of mutual funds, doesn't it?"

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's a good rate of return.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** "It's a good rate of return." You bet your boots it is.

Here is a member, Ms. MacLeod, for whom I have regard, putting the facts out there. If they're wrong, any one of these people can say they're wrong, because they're entitled to say, "You're full of hot air. You don't know what you're talking about."

I asked the minister the other day, "Hmm. You've had some experience with games of chance. What do you think the odds are that there would be this much scandal under your oversight? Is it just coincidence?" I don't know about you, Speaker, but I buy the occasional 6/49 ticket, and I'm afraid I'm going to be a very, very old man if indeed I live long enough to win one of the \$10 prizes.

You win the lottery when you're one of the government's politically connected consultants. That's when you win the lottery. I don't know if anybody won last Saturday night, but I'll tell you, people have been winning that lottery over at eHealth on a daily basis: \$25,000 for a speech. How long was that speech? I can understand if it was a 25-hour speech; that would be \$1,000 an hour, and even that's pretty high-priced. But most speeches—as you know, the rule of thumb for a stump speech is 20 minutes. Leave them wanting more. That's what the various literature and scientific analyses tell us. I haven't seen the speech, but I suspect it was maybe 30 minutes long. But \$25,000? That's not a fee, that's a payoff. It's grease.

Now, I can understand the need for gyms in view of some of the food expenditures of these people. They're going to want to work some of that poundage off, because you've got some pretty high-flying players in this operation. I understand why you're going to need a gym membership, because one vice-president at OLG spent \$3,713.77 on one meal.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** He was hungry.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Miller says he was hungry. He sure as heck was: \$3,713.77. And the minister says, "Don't ask me. It's not my job. We've called Price-waterhouseCoopers." We don't even know whether they actually called them, but they rode that one for a good three weeks—more than that—until the Parliament rose and they were freed of question period.

This bill is about ministers saying, "I'll sit in my seat. I'll get in the back of the limo. I'll collect my paycheque, but don't expect me to do any job." This bill reduces ministers to ribbon-cutters and photo ops. It does, because it means that ministers don't—you see, ministers, good ministers, start early in the day, and good ministers don't make friends; they make enemies amongst their staff, which is often the demise of many a good minister, because they ask the right questions. You've got to know which questions to ask because, you see, the "Yes, Minister" syndrome means you can and will be spun. But the minister who's told, "Don't worry, Minister"—this is

by a DM or an ADM—"You just let us handle things and everything's going to be all right," is a dullard to begin with; incompetent, to continue; lazy; slothful, and isn't doing his or her job.

The minister was asleep at the switch, because if he didn't know that this kind of stuff was going on, he ought to have known, and he didn't take the time or have the inclination or the intellect to inquire. The Minister of Health is no babe in the woods—hardly a babe. His mother was a very prominent member of this Legislature and a minister in her own right. I don't know—"Let's call in PricewaterhouseCoopers," which they didn't do, even though they insisted they did because they tried to take the heat off themselves. "Let's call in the Provincial Auditor."

I regret that we are fleeing from ministerial responsibility. I regret that the cabinet is but a symbolic role. I regret that governing doesn't occur at the cabinet table, but it occurs in the back rooms of the Premier's office and then, from time to time, in the huge mansions and suburbs north of Toronto at \$1,000-a-plate dinners.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Ten thousand—what the heck? Go big or go home. If you're going to rent a government for a day or two, you might as well pay for it, because that's what these dinners are all about. That's not the kind of—you see, it's not only not participatory democracy—far from it; that's a different discussion. But it's not even representative democracy, is it? I'm increasingly convinced that the only—sadly, and this is no disrespect, but the most important role being played in this Parliament now is by the opposition parties.

We saw a piece of legislation come down—it's not finished yet for second reading—on school board trustees, basically telling them, "Your job is to sit there, attend meetings, follow rules of conduct and not criticize and not object." Don't pull a Josh Matlow, never mind a Christine Nunziata—she's just a flake. She just blew her brains out on lingerie at the taxpayers' expense. But Josh Matlow had the courage of his own convictions to stand up and criticize the school board for mismanaging a health issue in a school here in Toronto, and then got censured. The efforts they did weren't successful because they didn't have time, but the bill that's being presented to us will allow the board to censure him, to silence him, to exclude him from meetings. Good grief.

I say that if the minister is not going to perform his role of accepting responsibility for his ministry and its agencies, then the minister should not accept his role in the back seat of a limousine. He should hand back the key to the ministerial bathroom.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I always enjoy the delivery of comments by the member from Welland. I don't think there is any other member in the House who delivers comments with the flair and tact that he does, and it's quite enjoyable, but there is a lot of substance.

I have to say that there is a lot of truth in what he is saying. But we tend to forget that above everything else,

ministers, subs, members of this House and staff in general are all human as well, and things do happen and have happened in every government. But having said that, it should not happen, and when it does, no matter whom, no matter at what level they are, I think there should be serious repercussions. Only then will we see, and will they learn, respect for taxpayers.

I totally disagree; I do not concur that any particular bureaucrat, it doesn't matter what position—usually the higher they go, the more money they make and the more responsibility they have, which should be part of their responsibility toward other employees. That they will charge for a coffee or a Band-Aid or whatever when they are making hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, I don't agree.

Finally, today we are at this level of government, and we have a Premier who has said, "Hey, this is not going well with us, and we are going to call on everyone." We have 22 agencies, with hundreds of thousands of employees, and of course we would rely on the conscience of those people. If they don't, we have a Premier who says, "You will have to abide by the Integrity Commissioner's report."

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Carleton—Mississippi Mills.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** I always enjoy the member from Welland's remarks in this Legislature, but today I think he hit upon a concern I have had with regard to this issue. The issue is that it indeed is the responsibility of the ministry, but it's about the responsibility of the government as well in terms of how they're running the province.

We saw in the early stages of this government where they brought in legislation regarding government advertising. Essentially, they set up a legislative officer as the screener for their political ads. They would spend government money, and they would go to the Auditor General and ask him whether or not an ad had such a great amount of political bent to it that it should be excluded. Before that, the government had to make a decision when they were putting an ad out as to whether or not it was partisan, or whether or not it was information about the government of Ontario's programs, which is fine. Now they have the screen of the Auditor General.

What I object to in all of this pre-screening is that we never see where the government stepped over the line. What ads has the Auditor General turned down? How often have they come close to the line with regard to government advertising, and the Auditor General takes on the responsibility of saying, "Hey, you're being partisan here and you can't do it"?

When you have the pre-screening process by a legislative officer, you put no responsibility on the head of the organization—the government—to not only be clean but to appear to be clean and act in an honourable way and have the integrity they should have.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Toronto—Danforth.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** At one point in the presentation made by my colleague from Welland, you wanted him to focus on the bill, and he talked to you about the various routes one could take to get from Welland to Toronto. It is clear in his speech, and it was certainly the tourist route that he took us on, for a long detour through Grimsby and a variety of wineries. We sampled, we judged, and then we moved on. It's the nature of the way he speaks, and I have to say, as someone who spends part of his life in these afternoon sessions, I'm very appreciative for the kind of speech that he delivers.

**Interjection:** Sometimes.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Sometimes. Fair comment.

That being said, we are touching on very substantial issues here with this bill. The reality is that this bill has only come before us because we have had explosions. Things blow up in the background; we see the debris scatter over the landscape. The government realizes that it has a huge problem, and once its hand has been pruned out of the till, once the cookie jar has been broken badly, then there is a realization that, hey, maybe there should be some scrutiny here so that in fact the interest of the public, the people who work extraordinarily hard to put dollars into this government—maybe their interests have to be looked after and the expenses made in their name have to be scrutinized.

This bill may have some use, but in the presentation by the member from Welland, it's pretty clear that there is a bigger problem than this bill will solve. I'll take a small point, and I'll address it later when it's my turn to speak: The office of the Integrity Commissioner has got something like nine staff. It is being given huge new areas to focus on, to deal with. One actually has to ask, will it be able to carry that burden? That is an open question.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Brant.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** The opposition is doing what it's supposed to do: It's supposed to oppose and, in some cases, propose. So what we're hearing in the last little while, particularly from the member from Welland, is what's wrong, and Bill 201 tries to tell us what can be right and what we're moving towards.

No one, including the opposition members or the members on this side, has a monopoly on how the evolution of legislation takes place. There have been pieces of legislation that have been produced and performed by all three parties in this province that have improved circumstances that have been seen as holes that plugs need to be put in. The parliamentary assistant, the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan, will be addressing some of those issues as to what exactly Bill 201 is trying to do.

What I find interesting is that I haven't heard anyone say they are going to stand up and be against this bill 100%. Are they going to vote against the bill? Because if they're going to vote against the bill, they're saying to us that at this time this particular piece of legislation is not good enough. It's not going to do the job. It's not going

to do anything to make the province any better or it's not going to bring any more clarity. Have there been incidents in the past that have taken place that have offered us reasons and opportunities for us to introduce more legislation to make improvements for things going on? Absolutely, by all three governments, by all three parties. What I'm suggesting, as the member from Welland has pointed out, is that there are reasons that we should be evaluating what it is we are doing with the taxpayers' dollars. I have no problem with that. As a matter of fact, I think it's laudable that we do point those things out.

But what has happened is turned into an opposition opportunity. What we're looking at is, "Let's mark them up and see how much we can scar them and make it stick for the public," and I want to talk about the value Bill 201 is bringing to the place. Is it making us more responsible with the taxpayers' dollars? If we pass this legislation, even as it is, without amendment, we are going to see some improvements made in how money is being spent. That's what I'm trying to get at, and I wonder if the member for Welland will be voting for or against the legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Welland has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I should mention to the member from Brantford that I met one of his constituents down at the Wainfleet fair, which is growing, quite frankly. It's one of the rare fall agricultural fairs that is growing—no carnival, no rides, a real old-fashioned winter fair. I met one of his constituents and I spoke well to that constituent about Mr. Levac. So I just ask Mr. Levac—it's a good thing I met him last week.

Look, I'm concerned about the culture, I'm concerned about the parliamentary culture, the ministerial culture, the responsibility and accountability culture. I'm concerned about our drift away from it. I'm concerned about centralization of power in the Premier's office, in the back rooms. I'm concerned about creating all these various watchdogs that are doing the job that ministers and their staff should be doing.

**1420**

I read the Ombudsman's report every year, and I'm a big fan of this Ombudsman. I've been a big fan of all the Ombudsmen who have served since I got elected, from Roberta Jamieson on. André Marin, who I know is very popular with the Liberal cabinet ministers—I'm amazed when he reports on things. I'm going, "What the heck is going on? This is so obvious." It isn't subtle stuff. It isn't hidden-away stuff. It's stuff—you give your head a shake. And it takes André Marin, a tough guy in his own right, with a huge team of very good staff, to uncover this and lean on the government. We shouldn't need that. We shouldn't have to have this legislation. This is silly. If we had responsibility and accountability, and if we abandoned the sense of entitlement, we could be debating something far more relevant to the welfare of workers in this province right now.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's always a pleasure to sometimes precede and many times to follow the member from—

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** On a point of order, Madam Chair—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Sorry. A point of order, government House leader.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Sorry, Madam Chair. I did rise in order to make a point of order prior to my colleague taking his turn in the rotation.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Would you like to make that point of order, then?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I just note that we will be meeting the 6.5 hours of debate in the not-too-distant future, and it is our intention and our desire that we continue the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** It's my pleasure to have some time this afternoon to speak on the Public Sector Expenses Review Act. Before I do, though, I will begin by, as others have already commented, thanking the member from Welland for his comments. I'm always happy when I commit the time to stay in the Legislature when he's speaking, because you always know you're going to learn something. Today I learned that there are, as mentioned by the previous member, two ways to get to Welland. As a member from Thunder Bay, the QEW one I can figure out, but the other one that he was referencing, I'm not sure where it was.

He also spoke for some time—I guess you could say it was his theme over at least five or 10 minutes of his speech—about ministerial responsibility. I suppose it wouldn't take too many of us too long to remember some examples of, perhaps, a lack of the same, I might say, when it came to the five-year period when the NDP governed. I could tell the member from Welland—he would remember better than me; he has a much longer corporate memory than I—about a specific example where one of the ministers in his government of the day in fact stumbled, I should say, a little bit, and at some point ended up needing to take a lie detector test to prove that the stumble wasn't what it was and therefore avoid responsibility for what should have been clearly something responsible to the minister. The names aren't necessary. I only raise that in the context that the member from Welland seemed to speak at some length about that, as have the members of the official opposition. There are obviously all kinds of examples, on a go-forward basis or historically, where anybody in this House with any corporate memory at all could stand up and make reference to those sorts of things.

I also want to make one comment before I get directly to the legislation. The members of the official opposition have spoken on more than one occasion in their remarks on this particular bill, Bill 201, about the deficit being in the order of magnitude of \$18 billion to \$20 billion. But I think it's important for us to mention to those who are listening that, of course, \$18 billion to \$20 billion is not a

structural deficit. It is a deficit, but certainly not structural. The number that is embedded and that we have to deal with and wrestle to the ground is obviously much smaller than the \$18 billion to \$20 billion where we think we're going to land.

It's important to remind people that a lot of that money is infrastructure stimulus funding that we brought forward. I think that there's probably not a member in this place who hasn't seen the benefits in their own particular ridings of the infrastructure stimulus funding that we brought to the plate. I don't think there's anybody who would want to see that rolled back. In fact, some would say that the reason the recession we have found ourselves in has not deepened, and the reason this recession has not become a full-blown depression, is because of the different reactions that have been taken by governments all around the globe, not just here in Ontario, but other provincial governments and other national governments all over the globe. They would make a very strong argument that the reason it has been a recession only and not a depression is that governments have played a significant role, and this infrastructure stimulus money that we've brought to the table plays a significant part in that. So when they use the \$18-billion number, I think it's important that we remind people that that is not entirely a structural deficit.

I do want to offer the folks who are listening some specific comments on the detail of this particular piece of legislation, the Public Sector Expenses Review Act, 2009. I apologize that I was not here last week for some of the debate that occurred. Some of this may be on the record already, but as a government member, I think it's important that I ensure as best I can that those listening and interested in this legislation have a bit of a sense of the detail in the minutia that is, at the end of the day, what really is important. As has been stated here, much of what is going to come out of this legislation will flow from the regulations, but the legislation has some broader detail in it that I think it's important we share with people early on.

On September 16 this year, our government introduced this piece of legislation. The Public Sector Expenses Review Act, 2009, would give the Integrity Commissioner the legal authority to review senior management expense claims made within Ontario's 22 largest agencies and take appropriate action should irregularities be discovered. I just want to hang on that point for a second and remind people who are interested in this issue that the Integrity Commissioner is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. We have, I think, eight or nine independent officers, the Integrity Commissioner being one of them, others being the freedom of information commissioner, the auditor, the Environmental Commissioner, the Integrity Commissioner and the Ombudsman, and two or three others that I'm not remembering off the top of my head.

But it's important for people to know that this legal authority that this legislation will give to the Integrity Commissioner will be vested with an independent officer

of the corporation. This is not an officer who reports back to the government. This is an officer who reports back to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. So I make that point. I think it's an important distinction that we need to make for the people of Ontario.

The proposed legislation would require the Integrity Commissioner to prepare and make public an annual report on the review of expense claims. Under the proposed legislation, the government has the power to require any government agency, board or commission to abide by these rules by regulation. The proposed legislation requires employees and government agencies to abide by the same level of accountability and oversight that cabinet ministers and political staff must follow under the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act.

An expenses officer for each agency would be named in the regulations under the act and be responsible for submitting the expense claims of designated employees and appointees of the public entity to the Integrity Commissioner for review. The proposed legislation applies to expenses incurred on or after September 1, 2009. The government consulted with the Integrity Commissioner as the legislation was drafted and will continue to do so as the regulations are developed.

On September 14, 2009, Premier McGuinty announced four additional measures the government is taking to improve accountability. These efforts were communicated to all OPS and all agency staff.

There is a new two-page summary of guidelines for travel, meals and hospitality expenses which apply to all OPS employees and employees at Ontario's agencies, boards and commissions. This was provided to staff.

All OPS employees and employees at 22 of the largest government agencies will receive online mandatory training on expense claims. While that might sound a bit underwhelming, I think it's important. We don't want people to still be in a position after this legislation, should it be passed, comes into effect where they will be able to say, "We didn't understand and we didn't know what was expected of us."

Expenses for OPS senior management, cabinet ministers, political staff and senior executives at Ontario's 22 largest agencies will be posted online. How's that for transparency? This will start no later than April 1, 2010.

There will be more random audits of expenses to ensure rules are being followed. During audits of Ontario's agencies, boards and commissions, external auditors will be required to look at expense practices to ensure rules are followed and controls are in place.

**1430**

On September 1 of this year, the Premier announced that 22 of the largest agencies, boards and commissions will be required to have their claims reviewed by the commissioner. This requirement is similar to the one already mentioned under the cabinet ministers' and opposition leaders' review act. Before this announcement, only government ministries and agencies classified under the agency establishment and accountability directive were

mandated to follow those rules in the travel, meal and hospitality expenses directive. The Premier broadened the application of these rules to include Ontario's largest agencies, boards and commissions. Starting this fall, senior executives of these entities will be required to have their expenses reviewed by the Integrity Commissioner.

I want to list for the public the 22 largest agencies that will be affected by this legislation. These new rules will apply to the following: the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.; Ontario Power Generation; Hydro One; the Independent Electricity System Operator; Ontario Power Authority; WSIB; LCBO; eHealth; Cancer Care Ontario; Ontario Infrastructure Projects Corp., or Infrastructure Ontario; the Ontario Energy Board; the Alcohol and Gaming Commission; the Ontario Financing Authority; Ontario Realty Corp.; the Ontario public service pension board; Metrolinx; the Ontario Human Rights Commission; the Metropolitan Toronto Convention Centre Corp.; the Ontario Educational Communications Authority, or TVO; and here is my first stab at French in six years, since I've been in the Legislature—

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Okay, we're ready.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Are you ready for this? I'm going to do the best I can. Maybe I should have my colleague Mr. McNeely here read it for me: l'Office des télécommunications éducatives de langue française de l'Ontario, or TFO. Not bad, eh? I kind of stumbled through it. My grade 9 French teacher is laughing at me now—the Ontario Racing Commission; and the last of the 22 is the Ontario Clean Water Agency.

The Premier also directed all government agencies, boards and commissions to strictly adhere to the rules in the OPS travel, meal and hospitality expenses directive. This includes entities that previously did not have to comply with these rules.

We also announced that there will be external government-wide review of accountability at all agencies, boards and commissions to ensure that the interests of taxpayers are protected.

On August 31, 2009, the government made public all expense claims for the OLG executive and senior staff for 2007-08. On the same day, the CEO of the OLG was dismissed and the board of directors resigned after expenses were deemed unacceptable by the government.

In July 2009, an addendum to the travel, meal and hospitality expenses directive was approved that prohibited payment of meal, hospitality and incidental expenses to consultants to ministries, classified agencies and non-classified entities to which Ontario directly or indirectly appoints the chair of the board of directors and/or the chief executive officer. Further amendments to strengthen the travel directive are expected in the fall. These will include clarifying when alcoholic drinks may be reimbursable, i.e. for pre-approved hospitality events, and direction on claiming expenses for multiple individuals.

I know that was a bit dry, but I think it's important that that be in the Hansard, on the public record, so we can ensure that people who are interested in the detail of

this legislation will have an ability to have heard it or read it online, should they wish to do so.

Having listened to the bit of the debate today that I've had the opportunity to listen to—as I mentioned, not having been here last week towards the end of the week—I think that some who are listening and watching on TV might be left with the impression that this is the first time that the government has tried to move forward with transparency and accountability measures on behalf of the taxpaying public in the province of Ontario. I think that, by way of example, it's important that I—and I'm sure other members of the government may have already done so, or will as we go forward—give further examples of what we've done heretofore to show quite clearly, I think, that this is not the only or the first time that, as a government, we have made an effort and in fact have brought in legislation that has enhanced significantly, I would say, accountability and transparency for the taxpaying public in Ontario.

I'll start with the enhanced roles and responsibility of the Provincial Auditor; it's one I remember very clearly. I know there are many members around here who have a longer corporate memory than me, although Mr. Yaka-buski is not one of them; we came in at the same time. There are many here who can go back a lot farther than I, but I do remember very clearly the election of 2003, when I was running in the riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan for the very first time in a provincial election. We were told very clearly as we were campaigning that the budget—the books of the province of Ontario—was in fact balanced. In fact, right up until about two days before election day in 2003, that was the position that was maintained by the government of the day. In fact, we found out not too long after being elected in 2003 that that was not the case, that there was a \$5.6-billion deficit left to the people of the province of Ontario and left to us as a new government in the province of Ontario. We found that out. It's not just us saying it. I remember a very large bold headline—I know there's a couple across the way that are a bit upset—a very large bold headline in the *Toronto Star* very shortly after the election in 2003, very clearly indicating that, in fact, that was the case. So what did we do in response?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would just caution the member, as I did before with the member from Welland, to stick to the bill, Bill 201. Thank you.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm getting to the point exactly right now. What did we do in response to that? The bill is about transparency and accountability, and in response to that particular situation, the Provincial Auditor in the province of Ontario now, before every provincial election, will give a state of the finances of the province of Ontario so that everybody will very clearly know, going into the election in 2011, as they did in 2007, what the state of the finances in the province is. That's a very clear reaction to what occurred in 2003. I think on behalf of our government it clearly articulates that we have for some time been trying to move the yardsticks forward when it comes to transparency and

accountability. This particular piece of legislation is not the first time that we've done that. It's not the only time that we've done that. I think it's on topic.

One of the other things I discovered as a newly elected member in 2003 was a great deal of anger exhibited by many health-care-sector providers who felt that their particular sectors were continually being underfunded in terms of their ability to provide services as a result of hospitals in the province of Ontario—not all hospitals, and I don't want to paint them all with the same brush—traditionally and often coming back to the government of the day, whoever that government may have been, after having overspent their budgets, and saying, “We need more money.” Almost always the government of the day, and this is not a partisan comment, would flow funds to the hospital sector so that they could meet those increased demands that they said they needed the funds for.

One of the first things that we did in response: value-for-money audits in the hospital sector. When I found out as a new member that before that point hospitals were not having their books audited, it was quite staggering, I have to tell you. When we first got elected there were \$30 billion or \$32 billion being spent in the province of Ontario on health care. It's now \$40 billion or \$42 billion. And in 2003, when it was \$30 billion to \$32 billion, about one-third of that, if memory serves me correctly, was being spent in the hospital sector—about \$11 billion approximately. I might have the numbers wrong but it's a significant number, and that money was not being audited. Many health-care-sector people thought it was to their detriment. They felt that they were not able to get the financial resources that they needed to take care of their particular sector because the hospital sector would always come—they would overspend, and they would get to the point that the hospital sector would have their demands met. So we brought in value-for-money audits for the first time in the history of Ontario.

Connected to that, for more transparency to try and tie back into that particular policy piece, we now have a situation where hospitals are required to sign accountability agreements with the LHINs. Tied to the value-for-money audit process that will provide transparency and accountability, we require the hospitals to enter into a accountability agreements now with the LHINs. Before the evolution of the LHINs or the establishment of the LHINs, it was directly to the ministries and the governments. It all makes perfect sense. It's all a very good thing to do.

When we were also first elected, I remember very clearly—and I know that the official opposition has a more difficult time with this particular one—that Hydro One, Ontario Power Generation and I think the entire MUSH sector were not being audited. There were no accountability provisions applied to those particular sectors. It's a staggering, staggering thing. I can remember some of the debate, where I think the official opposition—and I'm stretching my memory here a little bit—voted against us extending the ability of the auditor to go into those particular sectors and perform audits at

OPG, Hydro One and the MUSH sector. I think they also spoke very publicly against the fact that we were extending the freedom-of-information requests available to the public to Hydro One, to Ontario Power Generation, to municipal hydroelectric commissions and to universities.

**1440**

So while many in this assembly will have an opportunity to speak to this particular bill and try and articulate to the viewing public that this is a bit of a johnny-come-lately approach by our government when it comes to transparency and accountability, I would say, first of all, that's completely incorrect. I've tried to show some of the other examples that we brought forward so far. But also, and more to the point, members of at least one particular party have spoken very publicly and are on record as having taken a position of restricting the public's access to major agencies that are acting or supposed to be acting on behalf of the public interest. There is, I would suggest, quite a contradiction in that approach.

I listened to the member—and I'm going to scramble here and try and find the proper riding—of Carleton-Mississippi Mills and his comments about us having to flow the advertising through to the auditor. He tried, again, to convey to the public as if this was somehow a bad idea: "How close did they come to the line where they almost got something approved?" The fact is, we drew a line and we gave the authority and the power to the Provincial Auditor to review advertising in a very public, transparent way, so that as a government we couldn't be seen to be taking advantage of taxpayers' money in a partisan nature, and he took his two minutes to try and somehow express that that was another failed attempt on behalf of our government to somehow skirt the issues or mislead the public, when in fact exactly the opposite was the case.

The Public Sector Expenses Review Act: Pretty straightforward legislation. We're hoping and will be watching, as will most members of the province of Ontario who are interested in this topic, for the support of both of the opposition parties.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** The member from Thunder Bay-Atikokan has raised a number of questions that I would like to raise in my two minutes. He spent a good chunk of his time early on talking about the benefits of the Integrity Commissioner and how that process of vetting the expenses going through the integrity commission will be a good thing.

I don't think there's any doubt that everyone in the House understands the good work that the Integrity Commissioner has done. The question that I am left with—and if the parliamentary assistant could enlighten us—is, how do we truly intend to have nine staff, which is the current staff component of the Integrity Commissioner, vet 22 agencies as well as the five job responsibilities that that office currently has? Is there an expansion of the office in the works that we have not been made privy to? There are 22 agencies that will now

be vetted, their expenses will now be vetted through the integrity commission if Bill 201 is passed, but in fact there are over 600 agencies, boards and commissions operating within the province of Ontario. How were the 22 chosen? Why were the 22 chosen? Was it because there were pre-existing issues and problems with them? Was it because the ministers who are heading those 22 agencies are not up to the task of monitoring and ensuring that expenses are being properly vetted?

If those questions could be answered by the parliamentary assistant, I think that that would go a great way in terms of alleviating some of the concerns that we have with the existing legislation, as it is written in Bill 201. Nine staff in the integrity office are not going to physically be able to cover all of the staff for 22 new agencies, boards and commissions.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to reiterate some of the comments made the other day about this situation. When you talk to the people in your community and people come in to your office and—for instance, a single mom who's being forced out of her apartment and has two children standing in front of the counter looking for help, and all the agencies are on overload and they can't help that individual. Then you see a consultant getting \$3,000 a day, charging \$1.87 for a Tim Hortons, \$4.55 for a latte—I don't know where the coffee's from but it must be special—and \$30 for his car wash, and here's this woman standing at my counter and she can't even feed her kids.

The average Ontarian is sick and tired of cover-ups, of lack of control over spending. When I was campaigning, at every second door people would say to me, "Oh, why should I vote? Nothing ever changes. It's always the same—the same bunch. They can't answer for their spending," and it just went on and on. I understand why Ontarians are fed up. I understand why Ontarians are asking for controls and accountability from their government. Until this government and any other government starts getting these matters under control, this profession is not very high on the respect level.

I think we can start here now to change the attitude slowly. It's going to take many years to change the attitude toward governments and agencies that are abusing the system. It's been going on for years, and I think until we get a handle on it, the level of respect for this profession will remain where it is.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I'm struck with a sense of déjà vu when I was first elected in October 2003. The government of the day had said just before the election that their budget was balanced, and then less than three weeks later, and I note just before our government was actually sworn in, we found that in fact Ontario was facing a \$5.6-billion structural deficit, which later came in as a \$5.5-billion actual deficit. I remember the headline in the Toronto Star that said, "Outgoing Tories outright..." and I can't use that word here.

So we cleaned that up, and now Ontario's books are audited just like those of any private corporation. That's why the Auditor General and the Ombudsman can now get inside crown corporations like Hydro One, OPG and many others. That's why nobody has to guess what the real numbers are in Ontario's budget anymore, because you get the real numbers. That's why the Auditor General now has to review all government advertising and make sure that ads such as the one that we see running at the federal level, where all that's missing is the tag line that says, "Vote for the governing party," never again appear in Ontario.

The opposition benefits from access to information that in previous years nobody ever had. That's some action our government took to bring that to light, and as a good opposition should, they brought to light problems to fix. So as a good government should, and we will, we'll fix them, just as surely as Ontario's mainstream ministries and crown corporations now benefit from having cleaned up their acts.

This is our money. We want to see that it's well spent and we want value for it. This legislation is going to enable Ontario to get value for its money and to show accountability. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I'm somewhat disappointed, I'm somewhat disillusioned, that we are debating legislation 201, Public Sector Expenses Review Act, which has forced this government's hand to go to the Integrity Commissioner to essentially do the job that the Premier and various cabinet ministries should be doing on their own with respect to something like an expense account. I'm really concerned that members in this House essentially are sully their own reputations by defending the transgressions of some of their colleagues, and I'm thinking of at least one cabinet minister who should have resigned over this issue. I feel that actually every member in this House is brought down a notch with respect to public esteem not only of us as elected representatives but the public esteem, that we should be fighting for in this Legislative Assembly. We really have to come up with something better than this to rebuild the public's faith in this institution and in this government and its various institutions, and certainly try to rebuild faith in cabinet responsibility and specifically in agencies like the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. and the eHealth organization.

1450

True, this is an issue of integrity. I disagree with sloughing this off on the Office of the Integrity Commissioner and the handful of staff over there. This is essentially an issue of ethical behaviour, and in my view, this is an issue of honour and something you would expect a different course of action on under our system of responsible government.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I thank the speakers from Haldimand—Norfolk, Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Mississauga—Streetsville and Dufferin—Caledon.

The member from Dufferin—Caledon spoke about the 22 agencies that have been selected and, like one of the members of her party a little earlier in the day, talked about the potential number of filings and the cost that could accrue to the taxpayers of Ontario. As I said in my remarks earlier, I don't believe the number that was quoted by the member from Parry Sound—Muskoka is going to be anywhere near the actual number, although I don't pretend to know what it will be. But as we articulated, the senior management team of 22 agencies are the people who will be responsible to file, and if we have to hire another staff person or two to ensure that these expense claims are being filed properly, I don't think there are going to be too many people in Ontario who are going to have a problem with that—though I don't know what that number will be.

The good news so far, I think we should all say as members of the government side, is that I haven't heard a single member of either the official opposition or the third party stand in their place and suggest that they're going to vote against this legislation. I think we, on our side, will take that as some implied support for the legislation. Given the other examples I raised in my earlier 20 minutes, we are in fact continuing to move the yardsticks forward when it comes to transparency and accountability. Perhaps we'll find that out in short order, when the vote is called.

I think the member from Mississauga—Streetsville raised a good point, and I tried to give examples of that in my first 20 minutes; that is, that over the course of the last six years, our government has brought in legislation that has significantly enhanced transparency, accountability and fiscal responsibility for the taxpayers of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate? The member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's for real this time, Speaker? Thank you very much.

It's a pleasure to join this debate, and as I was beginning to say earlier, it's always great to follow my friend from Welland. It's interesting: Most people would presume or conclude that we sit on different edges of the political spectrum, but it is kind of uncanny how sometimes—and many times in this House—we could be reading each other's notes from the point of view of how we see some of the problems with what this government is doing. I guess it speaks to the fact that when something is not being done right and a government is not responding properly, even people perhaps as different in some ways as my friend from Welland and I can find the likeness in their views on that particular issue.

I'm not going to drive all the back roads of Renfrew county today, down Opeongo Road or Hopefield Road or any of that. Speaker, I trust you have probably never been through Renfrew county. If you have, I'm sure you have enjoyed it tremendously, and if you haven't, we'd



love to have you up there, because you would certainly enjoy it. Quite frankly, I would say it's a nicer ride than the ride from Toronto to Welland, but then I would not pretend to be totally objective on that subject at all.

What the member from Welland was talking about primarily was—again, I can't speak to all of his McGees or McKees; he would stand as an authority on legislative rules, procedures and precedence. That's one of the things he's a tremendous source of, and I would not pretend to be that at all. He is clearly of that ilk and I don't question any of his rulings in those facts. Many times I actually turn to him for some advice on some of the constitutional history of things that have gone on here and in other legislative bodies elsewhere.

The crux of part of his speech was ministerial responsibility. That's what we should be talking about here, not "An Act to provide for review of expenses in the public sector." We should be talking about the responsibility of a minister to his or her ministry. What is happening here is a big game of deflecto. We'll have a chance to elaborate on that a little later based on the events of the summer etc., but this is a big game of deflecto to try to take some of the heat off what is clearly being demonstrated out there in the public forum for the tremendous and terrible disregard for ministerial responsibility on the part of the McGuinty government.

We're going to go through the background a little bit. The premise behind this whole bill is, "Let's get these people off our backs. Let's tell the people out there that we're doing something about scandals, scandals and misspending"—can I use the word "stealing"? Can I use that word, Madam Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** No.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I can't; apparently I can't. I withdraw that then. But all of the stuff that has gone on at eHealth and OLG and other ministries that is only now coming to the light of day, they want to use this to try to block and try to put the public off their game on this, and think, "We're actually doing something about it." But what it really is: The Premier is again thumbing his nose at the people. I'll tell you why: the very fact that he decided to put this in the hands of the Minister of Government Services. There are 27 people in that cabinet—27 people. Why did he put it in the hands of the only minister in the history of this province to be found in egregious contravention of the Members' Integrity Act? The only one ever—not one of just a few, like just a few people have been to the moon; this is the only member in the history of this province to be found, and I'll quote the Integrity Commissioner's words here, "egregiously reckless" and in egregious contravention of the Members' Integrity Act.

So why would the Premier choose that minister? Let's go back in history a little bit about why the minister was found to be that, just a little background in the newspaper here from back on June 12, 2005. You'll remember at the time that the minister was accused and admitted to having meetings at his former place of business, Chalmers industries. He asserted in his testimony that he

never had anything to do with the business, had nothing to do with it. But when he was running for office he had on his website that he was the CEO of one of the country's best-managed companies and that it was under him that it was one of the best-managed companies. You can't have it both ways.

Anyway, he was found to be having meetings at Chalmers industries and went on to say that he was having those—and, no less, a ministry car taking him to and picking him up from those meetings. "Nothing is prohibited; you should know that," he said in an interview. "We are entitled to get regular reports from our trustees whenever we want." To which a spokesperson, at that time, for the Integrity Commissioner replied, "They are not permitted to have any knowledge of what is going on and the trustee is not to discuss anything with the minister"—spokesman Lynn Morrison said.

**1500**

He went on to say that he was having meetings with his wife to discuss their daughter's college education. It was the only time that he could meet with her, he said, because his long hours, combined with his wife's household chores, meant that's the only time he got to chat with her. "I went to see her to talk to her because there is no time to talk at home. I get home late. She is always busy cooking or doing something else at home," he said. I don't know; she must cook at midnight. But that was the kind of story that we were expected to believe, not only in this Legislature but the general public at large. When the Integrity Commissioner found him guilty of contravention of the Members' Integrity Act, that was an opportunity for this Premier to say, "If a minister of this crown"—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I didn't; he did.

"If a member is going to be in contravention of that act, then he is not going to sit in Dalton McGuinty's cabinet." But no, what did the Premier do? He kept him on with no penalty. Contrast that with Bob Runciman, when he was the Solicitor General and it just happened that he mentioned a young offender's name in the Legislature. He resigned and was put in the penalty box until that issue could be dealt with. It was in the throne speech, but he was held responsible for it. So you have to ask yourself, is the Premier really serious? There were 26 other people who could have handled this portfolio, and he decided to give it to the only minister who has ever been held in contempt by the Integrity Commissioner in the history of this province.

Let's talk a little bit about the history of the summer and why this government doesn't want ministerial responsibility. Dalton McGuinty, the Premier, does not under any circumstance want to bend and do the right thing and fire a minister for wrongdoing. He would rather try to cover it up, hide the facts, obfuscate the whole issue and then pass it on, bring out a bill in this Legislature to try to take the heat off. That's what this bill is about.

Why would the people believe that the Integrity Commissioner should be the one to answer for spending

outside of the rules? Why would the people expect that? The minister is the one who should be responsible. They're the ones who should take charge and take responsibility for the misdeeds of those under their authority. If the minister is not going to take charge and take responsibility for it, then this Legislature is no longer the governing body of that part of our provincial operations. We ultimately have to be responsible, and in order for this Legislature to be responsible, we have to have ministerial responsibility. This bill is anything but, does anything but bring this responsibility under the hand of a minister. In fact, it does everything to protect the minister. It does everything to take the responsibility of running your show out of the hands of the minister.

It's the same thing that has happened, for example, with the LHINs. The Minister of Health built these LHINs, multi-million-dollar operations that now act as a shock absorber for the minister. So whenever there's an issue that the minister doesn't want to deal with, he just says, "That's in the hands of the LHIN. I don't have anything to do with that. I don't make those decisions. It's in the hands of the LHIN." Well, we all know who created the LHINs, and we all know who directs the LHINs when it comes right down to it. But they always have that cushion, so to speak, so that when they don't like the news that's coming out, they can hide behind the LHIN. Now they want to hide behind Lynn again, but that's Lynn Morrison, the Integrity Commissioner. So it's from LHIN to Lynn, but they're still hiding, and that's the problem here: They're still hiding. They don't want to face the issue, which is government accountability and ministerial responsibility.

Let's talk about one of the reasons that we got here. This government had to do something, or—sorry; what it really had to do was the right thing and have the ministers responsible for eHealth and the OLG mess—it should have been both Minister Caplan and Minister Smitherman because their hands were all over it. And the Premier's hands were all over it because he personally intervened and hired Sarah Kramer at eHealth. Then they had to fire her, but they'd rather do that than fire the minister. That's what really should have happened. If that would have happened, we wouldn't be dealing with a very, very complicated process where now the expenditures of 80,000 civil servants are going to be handled by the Integrity Commissioner's little office of nine people. It's not only unworkable, it's impossible. What kind of oversight can you have when you have to deal with that many people? It's just not possible. There are going to be errors and omissions at a grand level because of the fact that you can't do that with that many people.

What did happen at eHealth? It all started with people starting to dig into the fact that we had this eHealth thing going on here that has spent \$700 million or so and hasn't produced electronic health records, which they continue to promise they're going to get. So some digging was done. It was a result of FOIs—freedom-of-information requests—on the part of our party that were continuously being blocked. We had to reapply, change

the wording and ask in a different way, and all of that kind of stuff because they tried to do everything they could to prevent us from getting at them.

The government talks about transparency and accountability, and when Dalton McGuinty was elected Premier, in the very first throne speech he waxed on and on about the importance of accountability and transparency and about how much he would assure and guarantee that that would be the watchword of this government. Well, that's all it was.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Just words.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much to the member from Sarnia-Lambton—just words. That's all they were: words. There was no meat on that bone at all. It was just a way to try to, again, paint a lovely Alice in Wonderland picture to the people of the province of Ontario, but we know what we've got is anything but. I think it's the Mad Hatter who may have taken over somewhere along the way and we're paying the price for that.

Sarah Kramer: It starts out that she gets hired just last year, and again, the Premier had his hands on the hiring. Shortly after that, she gets a bonus of \$114,000, after three months on the job. She barely found her way to the executive washroom. She had only delivered one speech—a \$25,000 speech, mind you. We should all have copies of it. For goodness' sake, we should somehow get our money's worth out of that in one way or another. Maybe we could send it around to all the schools in the province and feel like we got something back for the investment. A \$25,000 speech, and she gets a \$114,000 bonus—but in McGuinty's Ontario, it doesn't matter how much you spend on someone as long as you're prepared to get rid of them if they might cause you a little bit of heat. So out the door she goes with—she got a severance equal to at least her salary of \$380,000, after three months on the job. Unbelievable.

Then it was all about untendered contracts—over \$5 million in untendered contracts at eHealth. People like the Courtyard Group and Michael Guerriere—very connected to the Liberal Party; Anzen Consulting; Allaudin Merali and Donna Strating. Here are people who were getting paid in the neighbourhood of \$2,700 a day—\$2,700 a day, and I'm not talking a month, just for the people out there listening or watching this on television. You can't watch it on television in very many places anymore, because the cable companies have pretty well cut us out. Bell ExpressVu doesn't even carry this channel anymore, but they do carry Saskatchewan. So I'm sure there are plenty of Ontario people able to tune in on that.

**1510**

But for the 12 people who are watching, that's not \$2,700 a month; that's \$2,700 a day. That's what they were being paid on untendered contracts, and it always seemed that the people who got these contracts had very close connections to the Liberal Party. Coincidence? I hardly think so. But even at that, \$2,700 a day, apparently nobody built in the Timmy's clause. And you

know, the Timmy's clause, that's the one that covers you for that dollar-whatever cup of coffee or tea or the mid-afternoon pick-me-up. Choco Bites, was it, or something there?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Choco Bites.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** What's that, Coco Bites or chocolate bites?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Choco Bites.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Four dollars, or three-something?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Chocolate-covered ice cream bits.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, chocolate-covered ice cream bits. They're worth a few dollars, but those folks couldn't manage to dip into their own pockets to pay for those. They had to bill the taxpayers here in the province of Ontario.

Flights—what about the big party they held for all these eHealth folks? Remember that, at that convention?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** In Quebec.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** In Quebec City. How much was that?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My goodness gracious, a big party. They're doing such a good job spending almost \$1 billion and getting nothing for it that they figured they better throw them a party for their good work.

So that's the kind of stuff that was going on under the minister's nose. A person using any logic would ask himself, "Well, who's responsible?" Or, more importantly, who needs to be held responsible for these kinds of misdeeds? Who has got to take the bull by the horns and say, "That one's on me"? Well, logic would dictate that the head of the agency, being the minister, would be the one. Not in McGuinty's Ontario. No, that would be the CEO, Sarah Kramer, who was fired without cause because this minister wouldn't step down and that Premier wouldn't fire him.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Well, we have had two of the better orators in this chamber speak today: My colleague from Welland, although under the weather, as I said earlier, is able to give a great tour of the issue. It's not often that I hear a member of the House refer to Alice in Wonderland. He didn't talk about magic mushrooms being part of the expenses that came through, but he did pretty much cover the rest of the landscape.

I think everyone on this side of the House is pretty certain that when this bill is adopted—as it most likely will be, given there is a majority—the sale of Choco Bites in this province will drop precipitously, because clearly they've been underwritten very heavily by the public purse in the last while.

I appreciate what the member from Renfrew has had to say. In fact, we know we have a government that sets aside the interests of the public when it comes to their spending decisions, that has a culture within which people would think that they could get \$3,000 a day and

on top of that deserved, were entitled to their entitlements, entitled to expense a cup of coffee.

People understand the big numbers as a problem—a \$25,000 speech is a problem—but they understand the small numbers as a symptom of a lack of concern for the public as a whole. It's contemptuous. If you're making \$3,000 a day and you are charging for your coffee—you've got to be kidding, right? You've got to be kidding. People understand that that's just simply cheap.

And so I say to you that in this bill there will be some elements that will be useful, but there is a larger question—and it has been touched on by this speaker and by others—and that's that if you have a culture in which people expect that they can charge everything, then they will charge everything.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** I'm pleased to rise and make some comments on this very important bill, Bill 201, the Public Sector Expenses Review Act of 2009.

I want to begin by letting folks know that the proposed Public Sector Expenses Review Act would give the Integrity Commissioner the legal authority to review senior management expense claims made within Ontario's 22 largest agencies and take appropriate action should irregularities be discovered. Now, some comments from the opposition—and more than one member has pointed out that there are currently nine people working in the Integrity Commissioner's office and we have all these public servants who would be providing their accounting of their expenses. Well, it seems to me that logically the Integrity Commissioner has discretion to make recommendations for other steps as appropriate, and that might be to hire a few folks to help him or her out. I would think that's just logical, that there would be some assistance in this regard.

As members of this Parliament, we provide forms to the Integrity Commissioner. Our disclosure is made on a standard form. I would think that, logically, there might be a standard form implemented for these 22 largest agencies so that the expenses can be overviewed in a fashion that provides for timeliness and great accountability. So I think we need to move beyond this a bit. I suspect that if the opposition were to vote against this and if they were ever to be in power, they would therefore want their ministers to be responsible. But I think this is where we should be moving: to the Integrity Commissioner with these forms—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I am very pleased to comment on the words of my good friend from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. He painted a very vivid picture of the workings of the freedom-of-information act. When you pick up that rock out in your garden, you see all sorts of things running for cover. It's basically ministers of the crown who don't want to take responsibility for the actions of this government. It's quite amazing.

I remember way back in school, I thought we lived under something called responsible government. Some-

how, no one wants to take responsibility. It's being pushed off and pushed off. The LHIN is there to make sure that no minister can be in any way accused of not doing their job because they're not responsible. It's an appointed board, and a very expensive appointed Liberal board, I should add, in most cases.

So what's going on? Why is this government hell-bent to destroy a tradition of responsible government that has extended right back to the days of Magna Carta? Will it work? Is the public that naive that they will buy the fact of a minister standing up and saying, "I'm sorry. I didn't know that they were paying somebody \$2,700 plus lunch"? That's not for a week, by the way, ladies and gentlemen, that's not for a month; that is for one day, one day where you get paid \$2,700, plus all you can eat.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I was out of the Leg for a little while, while the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke was speaking, so I didn't hear all 20 minutes of his remarks, but as I look across the chamber at him I don't think in his 20 minutes he suggested that he was going to vote against the bill. I'm looking at him now, seeing if he'll shrug his shoulders or nod his head one way or another, but nothing indicated, so we are going to continue to take some implied consent in the fact, so far, that this particular bill may have their support. If so, we would look forward to its passage and continuing to move the yardsticks forward when it comes to transparency and accountability in the province of Ontario.

1520

They have continued to speak, when they rise on this particular bill, I would suggest, and neglect to talk about the significant role that the Integrity Commissioner plays in the province of Ontario, just like every other independent officer does who reports to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. To suggest that by giving this responsibility to the Integrity Commissioner this is a whitewashing of responsibility, that this is a public relations exercise, is really straying, I would suggest, getting about as far away from being accurate as one can go. We know, everybody in this Legislature knows, about the powers and the impact and the authority of independent officers who report to this Legislative Assembly, including the Auditor General, including the Ombudsman, including the Environmental Commissioner, who are all independent officers who come here and don't report to the government but report to the Legislative Assembly, and everybody up in the press gallery can hardly wait until these gentleman and these officers and these ladies bring their reports into this Legislature all the time. They carry weight. They're powerful. To suggest that by giving them this responsibility, it's a deferral of doing something substantive, I would say is a bit of a stretch.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I want to thank the members for Toronto–Danforth, Chatham–Kent–Essex, Thunder Bay–Atikokan and Cambridge for their comments or

remarks on my comments. I would like to respond briefly to the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan that, yes, that's exactly what this is: a whitewashing. And the Premier has already shown that he doesn't respect the rulings of officers of this Legislature. When he had an opportunity to do something with the Integrity Commissioner's report on the then Minister of Transportation in 2006, he looked at it, the minister was found in egregious contempt, and do you know what he's basically said? "Thank you, Mr. Integrity Commissioner. I'll be keeping him on. You go back to your offices at Yonge and Bloor, the 21st floor or whatever it is, and I'll let you know if I need you again." That's basically what he said to the Integrity Commissioner.

Why would we expect that this Premier would do anything less, or more, with anything else coming out of the Integrity Commissioner's office, or any other office of this Legislature? Quite frankly, if you want to get to the bottom of this, if you want to be accountable to the people and if you want to be accountable to this Legislature, there is only one proper route to take, and that is to make ministers responsible for their misdeeds. We have ministers on that side of the House who should not be in cabinet because of how they have failed in their responsibility to their ministries and agencies under their ministries. If this Premier wants to show leadership, he can start by sanctioning those ministers and send a message to everybody else in that cabinet that if you step out of line in here, or out there, you're going to be sitting in the back row.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate. The member from Toronto–Danforth.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Boy—well delivered. My colleague has made a number of very strong, very relevant, very clear points about the limitations of what's before us today. There's no question that having a bill in which the Integrity Commissioner has power to look at people's expenses can have some utility. I mean, who's going to say it's bad? But the more fundamental issue is, what is the culture of the government that actually is in place? Is it a government in which there is ministerial responsibility, within which ministers actually dig into the agencies that they have some responsibility for, and who make sure that within those agencies a mental framework is in place so that they understand that they have to treat the public funds with which they are dealing with some respect? Is that what we have? Because if we don't have that, simply having the Integrity Commissioner given the power to look into and report on is not going to solve the fundamental problem. That is a position that I think has a lot of validity, and if in fact we want to have government that is not exploding every so often with these sorts of landmines in agencies and commissions, that sort of change has got to happen on the government benches, has to happen in the Premier's thinking, has to happen in cabinet thinking and has to be diffused throughout the body of government so that we aren't in a situation where whenever a reporter or an opposition researcher, through freedom of information, is about to blow the door open

on something, we have a big stand-up, tears in the eyes, bellowing and hammering on the desk that such things will never happen again. That's bad news for us. That says the government is not in control of its agenda, not in control of the agencies it is supposed to be in control of and not in control of the direction this province has to take.

When members on the government side stand up and say, "Are you going to vote for it or not," I think they're missing the essential point that there's a problem around culture and thinking that has to be addressed. That leadership has to come out of the Premier's office. It has to be expressed in cabinet. There have to be consequences for failing to follow the direction that the Premier sets. That ultimately will be far more important than this act.

Who would particularly disagree with giving the Integrity Commissioner ability to look into these things? In fact, I don't have a problem with that. But I don't think that is going to solve the problem this government faces and that other governments will face. It is not just this government and this particular Premier. I believe this particular Premier has failed, but others will do the same if they do not adopt an approach that says to all those bodies that are components of the government: "This is the approach you have to take to public funds. This is the way you have to deal with things. If you don't, there will be consequences for you politically within my cabinet and within my jurisdiction." That is a fundamental reality, going beyond today's government. But today's government has a fundamental failing that this bill will not correct.

The bill, for those who are watching—I think it was my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke who said earlier that there are 12 people watching. Probably my mother is one of those 12. She's a fan of yours, Madam Speaker. She will watch to see how you rule on what I have to say today.

This bill gives the Integrity Commissioner the responsibility to review expense claims of government agencies designated by cabinet, and a number of agencies are listed here. Ontario Lottery and Gaming: I haven't been in this Legislature that long; I've been here since the bye-election in 2006. Twice we've had explosions at OLG, once when Mr. Caplan was minister and clearly once when Mr. Smitherman was minister, and then it was passed on to Mr. Duncan—twice. One would think there should have been a realization a few years ago that there was a problem here that was more fundamental than simply the people at the top, that there was a problem with the way the whole organization was purposed, directed and focused.

It's interesting to me that Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One, the Independent Electricity System Operator and Ontario Power Authority are all listed. Frankly, I think it makes sense that their expenses should be open to scrutiny and inspected by the Integrity Commissioner. But I have to tell you that this bill will not deal with the biggest problems that those agencies, those corporations we control, will introduce in this province.

Today in this chamber, Mayor Hazel McCallion and members of her community came to speak about the fact that they see substantial problems with the building of a new gas-fired power plant in their riding. That won't be caught with this unless there is some expense for Choco Bites by a major contractor. But, in fact, that is a huge waste of public money: a massive misadventure in terms of energy policy in this province. That's something that needs to be addressed by this Premier and this government. It's not going to be addressed in this context.

**1530**

An announcement that was made last week as part of the green rollout to cover over the government's energy policies was the announcement of investment in transmission lines. Buried in that press release, that media release, was the line that because of the size of the investment, there may be agreements with third parties to finance these transmission lines. That's the beginning of the privatization of the hydro transmission system in Ontario. To me, ultimately that matters a lot more than a \$25,000 speech or a \$3,000-a-day consultant. That will have huge impacts on the lives of people in this province—huge impacts.

I am not saying that the other matters don't need to be dealt with. But I am saying to you that those very big public policy issues that will shape our lives for decades to come, which will have impact on kids with asthma in south Mississauga, in Clarkson, in Oakville, all of those things will be unattended to by this bill and unattended to by a government that, on the very highest levels, does not make decisions that are economically rational.

I know often the right wing uses a term around economic rationality—no offence to my colleague in opposition—I think to justify policies that really express interests of particular business sectors against the interests of the population. But in fact this government could make investments in electricity that would be dramatically cheaper than they are making—and economically and environmentally far more sustainable—and is caught in a road, caught in a framework of spending a fortune on gas-fired power plants as an adjunct to their nuclear fantasies. That has a huge impact on our health and, in the future, on our pocketbooks.

I note as well that Metrolinx is coming under the jurisdiction, under the purview of the Integrity Commissioner. As you well know, Madam Speaker, Metrolinx is engaged in a project in the west end of the city of expanding train lines. We need train lines. We need public transit, but instead of doing the right thing and making them electric trains, making what, for the long term, is the most rational economic decision, they've decided to plant their feet firmly in the 1960s and put diesel trains in place instead of going to electric trains.

It's often argued, "We have to make these transitional moves." You know, if I ask you to cross the street and you walk back and forth on the sidewalk and never actually cross the street, you're not accomplishing the purpose; you're not getting to the other side. This government, in its approach, creates far bigger problems than

we're seeing with these expenses, and I think in some ways is using the expenses issue as a cover to move aside those more expensive, more substantial problems.

Now I have to say, having set out the context, that this bill leaves a number of agencies untouched. One has to ask why that is. Why not the Ontario Securities Commission? They are of tremendous consequence in this province. People I have talked to, going door to door in my riding, who invested in stocks on the advice of stock salesmen, who have seen their savings drop by 30% to 50%, have concerns about the integrity of securities commissions. People who have become victims of outright Ponzi schemes or schemes that relied on unrealistic predictions about the value of very fanciful financial instruments have been hurt. That's a key commission. Why is it not being under supervision? Why isn't the insurance and pension regulator being checked out?

These commissions and bodies have responsibility for very large volumes of money. To understand that they're properly run and to understand that those who are running them are responsible with public dollars is of consequence to us. I have to ask, and I believe the government has to answer, why they haven't actually extended it to those other very sensitive and important agencies.

A question that was raised earlier by members of the opposition was whether or not the Integrity Commissioner's office has enough staff to actually carry through this new mandate. As I understand it, this office now has nine staff. It was originally created to oversee the integrity of the expenses of members of this Legislature and cabinet ministers. As you well know, that's a lot of cats to herd. The purview of this office has been expanded to include the Ontario public service and now, beyond that, to these agencies, boards and commissions. That is a substantial increase in its workload. I don't think it's wrong to expand their purview, I don't think it's wrong to expand their supervision, but frankly, you have to ask, will they actually be able to do their job? Will they be able to do an adequate assessment of what's before them? Will they be able to follow up with reports that will be of consequence? Will they be in a position to make a difference?

You and I both know, Madam Speaker, that even now the Ministry of the Environment in this province has a record of non-enforcement. The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario has reported a number of times and the Auditor General has reported on lack of enforcement on the part of the Ministry of the Environment. When you talk to staff in the Ministry of the Environment, they're very clear: They don't have enough bodies on the ground to actually enforce the law.

The question I have to ask and the question this Legislature has to ask of this particular act is, are there enough bodies to enforce all that is being given to the Integrity Commissioner? I would say, on the face of it, no. That has to be answered by the government. Is this simply another feel-good sort of initiative, or are they actually going to put people in place to make it a real law, a real move to serious supervision?

If you look back, this past spring and this past summer we've seen some very disturbing developments. I don't think it's just members of this Legislature who feel that way; I think it's the general public, Ontarians across this province, who are quite worried. They want to know, when you go door to door, that their tax dollars are being spent wisely. They want to know that they're getting value for money. Because it takes a lot to get money in the door in the first place. If it's going out, they want to know it's going to something worthwhile. They see needs for those dollars.

I don't know about others, but my guess is that other members of this chamber, when they listen to their constituents who come to them, hear about the call for more child care; they hear the call for more nurses; they hear a call for more investment and education overhaul, special-needs servicing in schools. They see a wide range of needs that they correctly perceive are not being met. So when they hear about the sorts of spending that went on at eHealth this past year—and I referred to this in my earlier commentary: a \$1.65 charge for tea at Tim Hortons, a charge being submitted by a consultant who was making thousands of dollars a day—they feel that they are being abused. They don't feel that in fact they are being treated with any sort of respect. You don't pay someone that much a day and then expect that they will have their tea and coffee expensed as well.

The speech that cost \$25,000—I have to say, you've got to wonder about that speech. Someone else said that at 25 hours that would be a thousand bucks an hour. I don't know how long the speech was. You know, an hour is generally considered a pretty long one. If you're Fidel Castro, four hours isn't bad. My guess is Fidel never paid 25,000 bucks for a speech. So probably 20 minutes, maybe an hour. That's an extraordinary expense for a speech; \$25,000 is a communications strategy, not a speech.

**1540**

That kind of spending talks about a contempt for the people of this province. That's why people get angry. They understand that you have to spend money. They don't begrudge the fact that money is spent for nurses, for schools, for police, for firefighters—all that makes sense to them. When you go beyond that, then you have to be able to justify the basis upon which the spending is made, and when we have this kind of experience, that justification, that legitimacy for public expense is undermined.

There are a number of other expenses that came up that should be mentioned in the context of this debate. There was a vice-president at OLG who spent \$3,700 on a meal. I understand it was with a group of people. That's still an awful lot of money for a meal. There was an executive at OLG who was reimbursed for the \$1,000 he put toward renting a Florida condominium after work requirements forced him to cancel. There were expenses on and on for small items that, as I had said earlier, always particularly grate with the public.

But those things, as grating as they are, pale in comparison to the value of untendered contracts that went

out. At eHealth, more than \$5 million worth of untendered contracts went out to very high-paid consultants. Now I have to say, having had an opportunity as a city councillor to work with a lot of consultants, work with the departments of the city, watching how things work, that there are smaller contracts that frankly aren't worth tendering because you will spend as much time tendering as you will actually getting the work out of them. But when you start getting into the hundreds of thousands, in fact, the tens of thousands, then it is not justifiable to have a single-source contract. There are a lot of capable consultants out there. You should be looking for best value. It would appear to me that that search for best value was not part of what this province was subjected to.

This bill will potentially have some small impact on that, but ultimately—I'll come back to the point I made at the beginning and that's been made by other members of the opposition—if this government doesn't change its thinking, doesn't change its approach to public expenditure, doesn't understand the basis for legitimacy and how one loses legitimacy, then even though this bill may be put in place, the fundamental problems and the explosions will continue to happen.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I agree with much of what the previous speaker has said. In fact, I believe that what this bill is doing is an end run on public trust. The public is expecting a meaningful change as a result of all these scandals, and the government is playing the game of avoid, avoid, avoid: "What can we do to not really stand up to our responsibility?"

This should not be a public relations exercise and a damage control exercise that we see happening here. The people really deserve more. They deserve real accountability, real transparency and a real, direct oversight by this government.

By passing this responsibility on to the Integrity Commissioner, I think this is a clear admission that this government and its ministers are not up to the job. They have to pass it on to somebody else. The public is not being fooled by this shell game of who is responsible for what, and by passing this responsibility off, this government is not able to manage. The proposed Bill 201 is clear evidence that this government is totally lost and has no idea, absolutely no idea, how to move forward except by delegating their authority: "Let somebody else do it. Let somebody else carry the can, so if something goes wrong, we can't get blamed, because it's all arm's-length." Bill 201 has very little substance. So the devil is in the details, and you know as well as I do that the details are the regs, the regulations that the staff will write that we have no input into.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments. The member from Welland.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Thank you kindly. I appreciate the contribution that my colleague Peter Tabuns has made to this debate. Yesterday, just yesterday, I was down at the Hungarian Presbyterian church, the Com-

munity Presbyterian Church, in Welland for their annual fall lunch.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** How was it?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Well, chicken soup with csiga, cabbage rolls that can't be beat, roasted chicken and a salad and these—I shouldn't have eaten one but I did; I haven't eaten one in a long time—pastries with the Bavarian cream between them. But you know, I went into the kitchen to say thank you to the ladies. I've known them for many years. Many of them have known me since I was a little kid. There's 70- and 80-year-old women making hundreds of cabbage rolls from 6 in the morning by hand, chopping up the lettuce, roasting the chicken in an old oven at the church house. And csiga—I don't know if you know what csiga is—is egg noodles wrapped around a knitting needle and then rolled on a grooved board. I'll bring you some—incredibly labour intensive. A whole lot of these Hungarians came here after the revolution; a whole lot came here around the 1920s. It rots those people's socks to see some fat cat on the public pad eating a \$3,000-plus meal. These people worked all of their lives, they worked hard and they continue to work hard in their retirement. By the way, the meal cost \$16. It's offensive, it's an insult to those kinds of hard-working people that fat-cat consultants will thumb their noses, ignore them through the blacked-out windows of their limousines, after those people have worked so hard.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments. The member from Haldimand-Norfolk.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** As we continue this afternoon's debate on this Public Sector Expenses Review Act, a piece of legislation that really should not be necessary when the responsibility lies with the Premier and responsibility lies with cabinet and members in this House, I might suggest to members, and in particular to members opposite, that when you exit the door to the chamber, if you turn right, there's a very large brass plaque. It's actually at the entrance to the lobby into which the government members come every day. It is a plaque to commemorate Robert Baldwin. He lived from 1804 to 1858. Robert Baldwin devoted his entire career as a parliamentarian to the principle of responsible government. On one occasion—and he resigned a number of times based on principle. That's the kind of person that Robert Baldwin was, as a member of the Legislature. At one point he did resign when the principle of responsible government was not implemented as he had wished. This was 160 years ago. If he were here today he would have, I would expect, a very strong expectation to see a cabinet minister resign over the scandal with respect to eHealth. I would expect that Mr. Baldwin, an honourable gentleman of high ethics, would expect the cabinet minister to resign with respect to the scandal around the gambling agency in this particular province. That's Robert Baldwin; that's someone perhaps we should look up to.

1550

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** As the discussion continues, we're focusing on the identification of concerns and issues that have been raised since I've been here in this place, and even before me, regarding the types of spending that's done with the taxpayers' dollars. For that, I have absolutely no concern, and I understand vividly why we need to get that wrestled and controlled. There have been previous pieces of legislation that have attempted to do that as our concern has evolved.

The member who gave the last 20 minutes, Danforth—help me out, Peter.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Toronto–Danforth.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** The member from Toronto–Danforth has indicated in a fair kind of way that it's previous governments and concern—which I think is a legitimate one that we need to debate and discuss even further, hopefully in committee—for future governments regarding how the application of the change of culture needs to take place. As we move towards that goal—it's a laudable goal to ensure that the cultures we work in complement the thoughts of the general public. To me, that represents exactly where we need to be headed, and that is to root out these unexpected, in some cases known, spending habits and stop them. Do we create that culture by simply saying, "Shame on you. Start fixing it," or do we put the legislation on the ground? You said that we're voting on a piece of legislation; we should be voting on the culture. We don't vote on the culture, and that's the problem: We vote on the pieces of legislation that get presented. Do we receive the challenge to do better? I think absolutely. I think previous governments have done so, I think this government should do so and that future governments should continue to look for ways in which we protect taxpayer dollars and make sure they're spent in a way that represents value for dollar.

So I will be supporting the bill. I know the member came close to saying he's going to support the bill, and I'm interested to see if he would like to—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. The member from Toronto–Danforth has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I thank my colleagues, the members from Burlington, Welland, Haldimand–Norfolk and Brant. I want to make it clear that I know you cannot vote on the culture of a government. The voters can do that; they accept or reject.

What we have before us is a bill. What I tried to make clear in my remarks was that the problem we have is much bigger than the bill itself. The bill may well be useful. We will see what comes out of committee, we will see what comes out of debate within our caucus as to whether or not we support this. But I am saying to this government that they have a bigger problem, and that's that people who come on board to work for this government on a contractual basis, on a consulting basis, don't understand the standards to which they have to operate. The people who run those agencies, those commissions, apparently don't understand either and are not passing down the instructions to those they hire, including the ones they hire on untendered contracts.

This government can pass this bill; it may be useful for the guidance of future governments. But this government is doing the people of Ontario and itself a disservice by acting in a way that undermines its legitimacy and undermines the legitimacy of government itself. That's a problem. We can't vote on it in here, but when we debate this, we can talk about what we see as the central issue. I don't expect government members to stand up and say, "Mea culpa. Yes, I have seen the light, and you are right." I will take bets that that will never happen, and I would win those bets. But the critical thing is that in your own discussions out of this room you should be thinking about the long-term legitimacy of government, period.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I'm pleased to speak to Bill 201 because for me it's no surprise; we expected some kind of bill so that we could deflect, manoeuvre and take away from all this shame with the scandals that are occurring. I just didn't know what format it would come in, and so here we are, debating hours and hours on Bill 201 to allow the government to try to tell us that this bill, if passed, is going to further strengthen accountability, transparency and oversight of expense claims. Well, you know what? That should be happening right now. All that should happen is a toughening of those rules within the ministry, not yet another bill and another big debate and a foofaraw to deflect from the public what is really happening.

There's a press release that says, "The government consulted with the commissioner"—that's the commissioner of integrity—"as the legislation was drafted and will continue to do so as the regulations are developed." Well, our critic John O'Toole addressed these Liberal communications with the Integrity Commissioner in the first round of debate. He said that our leader, Tim Hudak, Niagara West–Glanbrook, spoke to the office of the commissioner, and yes, there had been a conversation. And what did the acting commissioner say? She said that it is "up in the air just now."

So all we're doing is biding time until somebody figures out what to do. Clearly, the Liberals have not taken into consideration the amount of extra work that this will put on the commissioner's office. Again, here's an initiative that's not well thought through, but simply a knee-jerk to try to deflect.

The Integrity Commissioner has only eight staff. Within the office, they do a great job. They are assuring accountability within the five existing areas of responsibility that office currently has, and they have their hands full. Those responsibilities are, looking after members' integrity—once a year we all have to file all the kinds of businesses we're involved in and how many bank accounts we have and how much interest we have and the investments we have. The Integrity Commissioner looks after all of that and makes sure the 107 members are reporting correctly. They also have the responsibility of looking at lobbyist registration. They also have the responsibility of reviewing ministers' and



opposition leaders' expenses. Ministers' staff ethical conduct is one of their responsibilities—and the public service disclosure of wrongdoing. I'd say they have their hands full.

So I'm concerned that this little office of eight people plus the commissioner potentially will now have to conduct as many as, if you do the math, 80,000 additional employees' filing of expenses. That's a huge number of expenses to look at. We did the math, and if each one of these employees files just once a month, that's over one million additional pieces of paper that would be passing through the Integrity Commissioner's office. Has anybody thought of that? No, this is just a case of, "Let's get a bright idea. Let's get a headline to make it look like we're doing something." And what that all equals is, deflect and delegate. This is just another example of the Premier and his cabinet shuffling responsibility anywhere else other than to themselves.

The Integrity Commissioner would be responsible for looking at expenses within Ontario's 22 largest agencies. They've been read off, but we already know about some of them: the OLG; Ontario Power Generation; Hydro One, which had its issues; Independent Electricity System Operator; Cancer Care Ontario; Ontario Energy Board; Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario; Human Rights Commission; Metropolitan Toronto Convention Centre Corp. It goes on and on and on. The proposed legislation applies to the expenses as of September 1, 2009. That's about four weeks ago. As we have seen with both eHealth and the Ontario lottery corporation, the spending scandal goes back much further than September 1, 2009. What the Liberals are basically doing with this bill is giving these 22 agencies that I've just talked about a clean bill or slate as of September 1, 2009.

**1600**

Well, I'm sure they've all been given a heads-up and told to tighten their belts and watch what they're doing. What could possibly be happening in any one of those agencies as of September 1, 2009? What about the thousands of dollars that have already been spent? Surely these 22 agencies were given this heads-up, and they needed to put a clamp on their spending as of September 1, 2009. But that does nothing to address the disrespect of taxpayers' dollars that may have been spent prior to that date.

Perhaps this government should consider making this bill retroactive for a year, or more perhaps, so that we can get a real look at transparency, especially for agencies, boards and commissions that are not FOI-able—that is, the Freedom of Information Act—like Cancer Care Ontario, like Metrolinx, like TVO and TFO and the Ontario public service and pension board. What happens in those cases?

If this bill is passed, it will address spending at the 22 of this government's largest agencies, boards and commissions. Do you know what? There are 630 of these agencies, boards and commissions in total—630. That means, if you look at it in percentage terms, 3.5% of all of these agencies will be looked at. What happens to the

other 96.5%? They can continue to operate in an unaccountable and untransparent manner, and have really hit the jackpot—because nobody's looking at them. They can spend, they can spend, and they can spend.

We have seen that the current ministers are not scrutinizing these agencies, boards and commissions that fall within their respective ministerial portfolios. The Integrity Commissioner's office will not be responsible for the remaining of the 630 agencies. So who's going to be overseeing these boards and commissions? Who's going to be accountable for their tax dollars? The bill will do very little to prevent further spending scandals because it does nothing to monitor the remaining 96.5% of these agencies.

Take, for example, eHealth Ontario. I mean, how much paper have we seen on this lately? This was the first agency that highlighted this government's summer of scandal. So let's be clear: It was the Progressive Conservative Party that held this Liberal government to account for the mishandling of tax dollars that has occurred in eHealth. Without the PC Party's FOIs, eHealth Ontario would be continuing their non-transparent, non-accountable and unmonitored expense claims.

I will mention that since we exposed eHealth Ontario, the FOIs have been trickling in at a snail's pace as this government attempts to conduct damage control. We questioned them on the \$16 million worth of untendered contracts to Liberal-friendly firms like Courtyard and Anzen. We highlighted the thousands of dollars that eHealth consultants and executives spent on lavish apartments, flights, limos, fancy meals—and also not-so-fancy meals like muffins and cocoa bits and tea. All this paid for by the taxpayer—it's really shameful.

Allow me to refresh your memory: The number of contracts, as I said, to Liberal-friendly organizations—from \$5 million, which is what we originally talked about in May of this year, it is now at a point of \$16 million and counting—\$16 million worth of untendered contracts. This is a really complicated web that has been woven here.

Sarah Kramer, the former CEO of eHealth, received a salary, annually, of \$380,000. Three months on the job, she decides to give herself a bonus—a bonus, after three months on the job, of one third of her annual salary—a \$114,000 bonus after three months. What could she possibly have done to have deserved that? Nearly \$2,300 worth of cab and limo rides in the first six months, and \$51,000 for office furniture.

We have other corporate executives averaging \$60,000 a month, charging \$2,750 a day as a cost to taxpayers for doing their work, enjoying a six-night stay at the Royal York to the tune of \$2,100, plus an evening drink every day that cost \$15; flying between Toronto and Edmonton 31 times over a five-month period at \$24,000. Where was the work being done, for goodness' sake?

I could go on and on. Donna Strating earned \$2,700 a day. She billed taxpayers \$1.65 for a Tim Hortons tea and \$3.19 for a dessert square at Second Cup. Earning

\$2,700 a day and she's going to nickel and dime the taxpayer for a cup of tea.

Courtyard Group received three untendered contracts amounting to almost \$2 million, and an additional contract worth \$8.5 million. Courtyard's Michael Guerriere charges \$393.10—and 10 cents—an hour, or \$3,145 for an eight-hour day. What could somebody possibly be doing for that amount of money? Courtyard employee Karli Farrow charged \$327. She charged a total of \$10,646 for 32½ hours in January.

This just goes on and on. Anzen Consulting is owned by Miyo Yamashita and her husband Michael Guerriere, whom I've already mentioned. He's the head of the Courtyard Group. Anzen received \$268,000 in untendered contracts plus a \$75,000 contract for only two months' work. These people billed \$300 an hour for reading the New York Times, \$300 an hour for listening to their own voice mail and \$300 an hour for talking to people on the subway. We were horrified when we heard these things. Who was looking at these contracts? Who was understanding the detail of what these people were expected to do?

We were looking for eHealth records. That's what Ontarians were promised, and that's what we wanted. I can't imagine that any of these billing items would result in better eHealth records.

On June 18, Mr. McGuinty announced that the government and all its agencies would no longer allow sole-source contracts for consulting services. Well, the horse is out of the barn, the gate is closed and now we're not going to allow any sole-source contracting. Mr. McGuinty also announced that, under the new rules, consultants will not be allowed to bill for extra hospitality, incidentals and food expenses, so I guess they're going to go hungry. I guess they're just going to go hungry. The announcement came alongside eHealth board chair Alan Hudson's resignation—Rita Burak will replace Mr. Hudson as board chair.

This isn't brain surgery. This stuff should have floated to the top and had neon signs glaring through the pages as they got to the minister's office for approval. Who was watching? Who was in charge of the store? Why do we need the Integrity Commissioner to pick up these blatant misconducts in expenses by consultants? Why the Integrity Commissioner? This is logic. People don't understand why this government is doing what it's doing.

Now we're waiting for publication of the chapter containing the Auditor General's results, coming this fall. Well, fall can run right to Christmas.

#### 1610

Then we come to the third party review. PricewaterhouseCoopers received \$26,250 in an untendered contract earlier this year to conduct a review on internal controls. On June 1, Minister Caplan told the Legislature that he had "directed the eHealth board to undertake a third party review to ensure that best management practices are being followed." It was later announced that PricewaterhouseCoopers would conduct the review. At the end of July, however, it was announced that the

minister had put a stop to this review and that he would wait for the auditor's report.

On Monday, September 14, a complaint was filed with the Speaker about misleading statements made by the Premier and his Minister of Health, David Caplan, about eHealth and a promised review of the agency. The letter was signed by the House leader, Bob Runciman, and the NDP House leader, Peter Kormos. That review was something we were all looking forward to. It's not forthcoming. Why not?

On June 18, the Premier said, "The buck stops with me." The Premier said, "I take responsibility for this. We should have had tougher rules in place. We owe it to Ontarians to get it right." So over a few short months it's clear: The buck does not stop with the Premier. This bill is shuffling around the accountability to the Integrity Commissioner's office and away from the Premier and his ministers.

We started talking about the spending scandal at eHealth on May 28. To date, the former board chair, Alan Hudson, the CEO, Sarah Kramer, and senior executives—they've all gone; they've resigned. They left by choice, or maybe they were shown the door. But the Minister of Health? Well, he still sits in his chair. Isn't the minister essentially the CEO of the Ministry of Health, a \$42-billion ministry, and isn't he responsible to ensure that agencies that fall under his purview are being accountable to taxpayers? It's their hard-earned money that he's spending. I guess that's not so, because nobody seems to be scrutinizing what the Premier and the ministers are doing. We don't know what further scandals we may still see.

On September 1, the Liberals released two years' worth of expenses that were filed by OLG board members. Like eHealth, it was our party's freedom-of-information requests that promoted this. However, unlike eHealth, the Liberals released the information for the media hours prior to actually allowing us to have copies. It just goes to show you that power is power.

Now we have a lawsuit. Kelly McDougald has launched an \$8.4-million wrongful dismissal suit against OLG, the crown and the finance minister, Dwight Duncan, so the plot thickens. It just goes on and on and on. The Premier and his Minister of Finance took a different approach to this spending scandal: Instead telling a room full of reporters that the buck stops with him, like the Premier did with eHealth, they just fired the CEO. That was their solution to the problem.

The abuse of hard-earned taxpayers' money is a very serious issue. This proposed piece of legislation addresses only 22 of the agencies and does nothing to address wasteful spending that has been happening for years. If this government were serious about accountability, they would be looking for more than just what's happening in those 22 agencies. Since that is not going to happen, the government should, at a minimum, release the expenses over the past few years for all of these agencies so that we have something to compare once the Integrity Commissioner starts auditing these expenses.

We have nothing to compare to. How else would we identify whether in fact this proposed piece of legislation is actually working?

So I'd encourage this government to take a second sober thought, take the spending scandals at eHealth and OLG just as an example and, rather than use this legislation as a band-aid, use it as a step forward in holding all government agencies accountable.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** The member from Burlington once again makes a very important contribution to the debate. It's always a delight.

We're going to be hearing from Howard Hampton from Kenora–Rainy River in just a few minutes. Folks who are watching should keep on watching.

But you know, I told you before I was down at the Wainfleet fair on Saturday morning, and Jack Layton had been there just an hour before with Malcolm Allen, our federal member. Wainfleet is a small community, just a few thousand people. A lot of long-time families have been there for two, three, four, five generations—farming people. You shake their hand and it's not soft and puffy. They haven't got Bob Rae hands. They've got farmers' hands. Under the fingernails there's this stuff that after 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 years of farming is just never going to go away, and I say that with no disrespect whatsoever.

They had the tractor displays and they had the chickens on display and the geese and the ducks and the cattle. I've got to tell you, those people, it rots their socks, because they pay their taxes. They don't do tax avoidance schemes, they don't hire fancy accountants to try to avoid taxes; they pay their taxes and they know they're going to pay even more with this Dalton McGuinty HST.

But it drives them crazy, it rots their socks that some high-priced, multi-thousand-dollar-a-day consultant is paying yet another consultant \$25,000 to write what was probably a 30-minute speech. Nobody writes their speeches, because they know what to say. Those folks down in Wainfleet, those farmers, they say it from the heart and from experience.

It rots their socks, it drives them crazy, rightly so, those farmers who were down there at the Wainfleet fair on Saturday morning, when they find out that a vice-president at OLG—six-digit income, easy—spent \$3,713.77 on one meal. Shame on the Liberals.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Brant.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** The member from Burlington does what she's supposed to do, read from her notes that say certain things that they're directed to say: Cut up the government, make sure that you chastise, and do the second thing that is often done by the opposition, and that is to be the rooster taking credit for the sun rising: "Everything we've done is perfect; everything they've done is wrong. We're the best; they're the worst."

Quite frankly, she leaves us with a little bit of choice again whether they're going to be supporting the bill or

they're going to be against the bill. All of the members of the opposition have said clearly that this is nothing more than a smokescreen. That's the favourite line that they're using right now. They haven't actually said yes or no to the legislation.

What I'm interested to find out is whether the member from Burlington will just stand in her place and say, "Because it is a smokescreen and we believe wrong has been done, this legislation is not of any value whatsoever. Let's vote against it." On the other hand, if they're in favour of it, let's find out exactly what they're trying to do when they're making their speeches from their notes that simply say, "Repeat over and over again the things that have been uncovered, the things that have been done wrong."

When things go wrong, in previous governments and this government and future governments, the idea would be—and I've been trying to say that since I've been responding—that you continue the evolution of putting legislation in that makes things better and better each time through, to ensure that we get the best possible bang for the buck of the taxpayers' dollars. If there has been some extraordinary spending that's been going on, we should be reeling it in; there's no question about it. I've said that from the very beginning and I continue to support anyone who wants to do that. This piece of legislation, I would respectfully suggest, is attempting to do that. It's making sure that we set a little light into an area that we've not put a light in before. I'm hoping that we get some support from everybody.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I'm very pleased to comment on the words of my colleague, the member from Burlington. But I must really comment on something the member from Brant was saying, because he was talking about, I guess, whipping and speeches, which is rather strange, because if that member or any other member there stood up and was against one of the government bills, they wouldn't be sitting in this House. Their seat would be somewhere out in the hallway, on their way out. It's as simple as that. That's the way it works. That's the way whipping works. It worked in our case and it works now.

The fact is, you end up being trained seals. You know it; I know it. I was one. I can speak from real conviction and experience. But for him to stand up and talk about the freedom and the responsibilities in this House when he's reading from a script, that begs—I just can't understand why he would even raise that.

**1620**

Rather than talking about the bill, you'll to have note that the government immediately talks about, "Well, how are you going to vote?" They are always trying to shift the responsibility. They take no responsibility. Day after day they come forth with what I would call chocolate-covered bills. You know, at Easter time when I was a kid, you used to get that big Easter Bunny, and you'd stick your finger in it and it was empty. It was just hollow.

Well, that's what their bills are. They take no responsibility. They have a fancy title up at the top, and then there's nothing underneath but a hollow chocolate bunny. What a shame.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I have listened all afternoon to comments that have been made, and I want to commend the member for getting at some of the root of the issue here.

The members of the government caucus want you to believe that this legislation that they brought forth after the horse got out of barn, and after a few hundred million dollars was wasted, is going to be the be-all and the end-all. And opposition members keep pointing out that it's not going to be the be-all and end-all; in fact, it's not even going to get anywhere near close to addressing the real problems.

The members of the McGuinty government want to turn this issue into, "Well, it's a matter of expenses." Expenses are a part of this, but they are one small category compared to several categories where this government has been blowing money out the door—not their money but the money of the people of Ontario—and getting next to nothing for it.

That's the problem. This legislation will deal with one little category. Meanwhile, we continue to see, day after day, this government blowing hundreds of millions of dollars out the door, getting nothing for it, and too much of it, far too much of it, is getting into the hands of Liberal-friendly consulting firms and Liberal-friendly public relations firms who didn't have to go for a tendered contract, who got the contract handed out the side door. "Here's a few million bucks, and you don't have to produce anything worthwhile." That's the real problem, and this legislation doesn't deal with that in any way, shape or form.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member for Burlington has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** You know, I always see it as a point of striking a nerve when the government begins to trivialize comments and make personal remarks, and that happened true to form just now with the member from Brant.

I would like to thank the member from Welland, the member from Brant, the member from Cambridge, and—where are you from?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Rainy River.

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** Rainy River—the member from Rainy River for their comments.

You know, trivializing comments on such an important issue really is unbecoming, and it shows the lack of ability to lead. My comments have been trivialized, and all I'm doing is representing my constituents, who are mad as hornets about what this government has done—and you can sit there and laugh. Go right ahead. But you know what? Just like in the Emperor's New Clothes story, this government has bared itself and shown its inability to lead. This is what all these scandals have

proven. They have trivialized the issue and they have trivialized the reaction from the people of Ontario, and you will have to stand up to that at some point.

This government has become irrelevant because they passed on so much, they're not doing anything anymore. They've delegated everything. It's not their responsibility.

You know, when a minister misbehaves, when something happens within a ministry that casts doubt on the ministry, the minister usually steps down. That's what historically has happened. But with this government, that doesn't seem to happen. The ministers just keep ticking. This government is oblivious to how to lead, it's oblivious to the public's reaction to this, and you will stand to account for it in two years, when we are at the polls.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I'm pleased to be able to take part in this debate and I will attempt, in the 10 minutes I have, to shed some light on what I think are the real issues here, real issues that this government does not want to discuss. I said a few minutes ago that this government wants to pretend that this is just a matter of expense claims by people who may be working in the government. Well, it is far more than that, far, far more than that.

I want to take us back to just a few years ago, when it was discovered that the minister who was, I believe, in charge of citizenship—it was discovered that in fact money had been going out the door; hundreds of thousands of dollars had been going out the door to organizations that didn't seem to represent anybody. If you looked at the organization, you'd find that the head of the organization was the president of the local Liberal riding association, and the organization was getting \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000 grants. Another organization too, that you couldn't find where they'd ever existed before, what they'd ever done, but they claimed to represent a community organization, got some \$30,000, \$40,000, and the list went on. What emerged from it was that many of these organizations seem to be very friendly with the Liberal Party. They were either part and parcel of the Liberal Party or very friendly to the Liberal Party. Here they were, just before the election, getting large grants of money.

I think any reasonable person in Ontario would say, "This is wrong." In fact, when it was looked into more fully, that was the conclusion. I think the report that was issued said something to the effect that, "Never in the field of public finance had there been something that was so completely outside the rules and so completely improper." Members of the McGuinty government want you to believe that this rather slender piece of legislation is going to get at that kind of impropriety, but I want people to know that this legislation isn't going to do anything about that kind of impropriety. In fact this kind of legislation—I'm not allowed the use the word "cover-up," but no, I think I will use it. It's an attempt to cover up that kind of stuff.

I want to give another example. Before the 2003 election, an advertising company came on board with the Liberal Party and said that they would handle the major portion of the Ontario Liberal Party's campaign advertising and campaign communications and wanted next to nothing in remuneration. They didn't ask for the going rate in terms of pay. I think most people would have said, "Gee, is that ever generous," except that months following the 2003 election, this company gets essentially an untendered contract to redraw the symbol of Ontario, the trillium. So the trillium, something that had been in place I think for 20 or 30 years, changes into this new trillium, and lo and behold, the company gets paid a substantial amount of money for doing it. I would think it's improper that hundreds of thousands of dollars go out the door just for redrawing the trillium. But if you check back, the same company had handled the Liberal Party's advertising and communications pre-election and during the election. I would think there would be something wrong with that. The members of the Liberal government want you to believe that this legislation is going to get at that stuff. No, it isn't.

Another example: eHealth. The history of eHealth goes something like this. It wasn't always called eHealth; it was called Smart Systems. Then, in 2003, Smart Systems got down to work. They were supposed to build electronic records for Ontario's health care system. There's a report done which indicates that literally hundreds of millions of dollars had been poured into this with nothing to show for it. Now, I think a reasonable person would say, "Where was the Minister of Health while this was happening?" Where was the Minister of Health? The response that we essentially got from the McGuinty government is, "The Minister of Health saw nothing, he heard nothing, he knew nothing, and he wasn't smart enough to ask any questions."

**1630**

The McGuinty government wants you to believe that this legislation is going to get at that kind of irresponsibility as well. I have to tell you, this legislation is not going to do a thing about that, not one thing about the hundreds of millions of dollars that went out the door with no accountability, and a Minister of Health who can only say for himself, "I saw nothing, I heard nothing, I knew nothing, and I wasn't smart enough to ask any questions."

But it didn't end there. After this was publicly disclosed—and it wasn't disclosed by the government; it was disclosed by a lot of questions being asked both in this Legislature and outside this Legislature—the government comes out and announces, "We're going to put some new people in charge, and it's going to be called eHealth." Wouldn't you know it, the people who were put in charge are people who are all closely connected to the Ontario Liberal Party. These people got some wonderful contracts—untendered, but some wonderful contracts—for example, Sarah Kramer, who was hired. Officials in the Ministry of Health actually raised some questions about hiring this person, but that was overruled

by the Premier's office. The Premier's office overrules, and Sarah Kramer gets an untendered contract in the range of about some \$300,000, \$51,500 spent on office renovations, a \$114,000 bonus, and—after 10 months on the job, by the way, when they discover that this person's not up to the job—a \$317,000 golden handshake for 10 months of work that didn't amount to much. You work it out: That's close to \$1 million to this person who was very close to the Ontario Liberal Party. And what did this person produce? Zero, nada, nothing.

Members of the McGuinty government want you to believe that this legislation is going to do something about this. No, it isn't. The legislation that the McGuinty government has presented isn't going to do a damn thing about these kinds of insider, untendered contracts that go to people who are cozy with the Liberal Party.

But it doesn't end there; it goes on. There's another organization, the Courtyard Group. I think if you look, you'll find that some of the people who were at Courtyard Group were actually co-chairs of the Liberals' 2007 election campaign. Election campaign—they act as co-chairs; after the election—oh, let's see, a \$915,000 untendered contract for help with strategy, executive assistance and transition support. I don't think anything was produced, or not much was produced from that. A \$519,000 untendered contract to manage something called the diabetes project; and then, a \$562,296 extension of the first contract. These are, again, people who were cozy with the Liberal Party getting untendered contracts in excess of millions of dollars. And members of the McGuinty government want you to believe that their legislation is going to do something about this. It doesn't come close to it. It doesn't do a damn thing about it.

I expect that over the next few months, we're going to have other disclosures from people who are insiders from the Ontario Liberal Party, cozy to the Ontario Liberal Party, who got equally nice, big, fat, multi-million dollar untendered contracts. The legislation we have here today is not going to do a damn thing about any of that, and that's what the government is worried about.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Unfortunately, the Liberals' standing orders have reduced the opposition parties' opportunity to engage in debate to a mere 10-minute time slot when there's so much to be said.

Last week, I was down at the Welland Farmers' Market—very active this time of year. The fall crops are coming in. You've got flower growers from Wainfleet, and you've got John Kukoly, the apple grower down from Ridgeville way. I've known John Kukoly for years; he taught me in elementary school. These are hard-working people. You've got women and men who make stuff at home. They make jams, they make jellies and they make pies. We've got butchers—guys like Joe Ujfalusy from down in Port Colborne, who's being hammered by this government's regulations as a small butcher, a small meat processor. It drives these people just right out of their minds that they work so hard, pay

taxes, only to see some high-priced government crony already getting a six-digit income, with all sorts of golden handshake provisions and golden parachutes, blowing \$3,713.77—don't forget the 77 cents—on one meal. Do you know how hard the vegetable grower from Wainfleet has to work to make \$3,713.77? I couldn't work that hard, I simply couldn't, I confess to you. But he and his family are out there working the dirt, taking risks with bad crops, like the cherry farmers down there who lost over 50% of the crop this year. This is just plain wrong, it's obscene, and the fact that this government hasn't stood up and been responsible is shameful.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I enjoyed the comments of the member for Rainy River, who thundered in this House this afternoon with the views that he has brought forward in the past. He did a superb job, in my view, and I would want to associate myself with his comments. I thought that he had some very important points.

Certainly, in the six years that we've seen the McGuinty government in office, there have been many examples where Liberal-friendly organizations and contacts have benefited in ways that most people would view as inappropriate, certainly with respect to some of the consulting contracts that we've seen that the member for Rainy River talked about in his comments this afternoon, contracts in the hundreds of thousands of dollars going to Liberal-friendly consulting firms, in situations where there should have been competitive tender. In fact, in many cases some of the projects were very highly questionable.

Let's remember that this is taxpayers' money we're talking about. These aren't dollars that the Liberal Party has control over except for the privilege that they have of serving in government. I think it's important that we bring these examples forward so that hopefully the people of Ontario will become informed of what is happening here, which is, in my view, a disgrace.

No question, in every election campaign, there are people involved who support us, whether they be our campaign managers or campaign people who help us in election campaigns—help the central parties, help the local candidates. But that doesn't give those people the right to have an unacceptable claim on the public purse after the election in this way. Certainly, if they want to participate in support of the government, perhaps they could apply for jobs working within the ministers' offices and working within some of the other ministry positions that might become available. But these consulting contracts, where hundreds of thousands of dollars of the taxpayers' money are expended and absolutely nothing, or nothing meaningful, is done in response, is a disgrace, and it is something that we need to call the government upon.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I listened with interest to the member from Kenora–Rainy River, and there are a couple of

questions I'd like to ask him. Can you go through the review historically, since you've been here a little longer—almost to dean status, but we know that there are a couple of others that are there. I would ask if you had recalled any light being shone under the bushel of the \$600 million that the previous Conservative government spent on consultants, when we couldn't even get some information on who they were and what that money was for. And were there any others that you can enlighten us to?

**1640**

I would suggest respectfully that what I'm getting at, and I've been getting at since I've been engaged in the discussion, is yes, there's a cultural shift that's necessary. As we introduce these types of legislation, are we not putting a little bit of a light under a basket that wasn't there by simply saying that people are now going to be required to submit those bills and those expenses to somebody, when they were not doing it before? To trivialize it as simply not dealing with anything—I'm curious to see whether or not you believe that it is going to attempt to get to part of a cultural expectation that we now have and we always have had.

But historically, I'm a little bit concerned. That's what I was getting at in my last comments to the member from Burlington, who took offence to it, by simply saying there seems to be a common theme with the opposition, particularly the members of the loyal opposition, who are basically saying, "Bad you; good us." That's just the same old same old. It's very easy for them to start throwing stones from a glass house. What I'm asking about is whether or not we're ready to take this piece of legislation and turn it into something that sheds a light underneath a bushel. That's never been done before. I think that's a step. I'm not saying it's the be-all and end-all. I have not said it is, but you've characterized it as it is, and I'm saying to you, it is not the be-all and end-all. This place continually evolves legislation with a foundation that needs to be improved upon.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments? Being none, the member from Kenora–Rainy River has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I want to thank my colleagues for their remarks, but since one of my colleagues has asked some pointed questions, I think I owe him an answer.

I also think this legislation is wrong-headed in another way because what you're trying to do here is—and the effect of this will be to create even more scenarios where ministers will be able to say, "I didn't see anything, I didn't hear anything, I didn't know anything, and I didn't ask any questions." You are in effect doing away with ministerial responsibility.

I think I know why you're doing this in the short term; you're doing it in the short term for political damage control. But let me say this: I believe firmly that you're doing real damage to this institution when you do that. When you have situations—and let's roll back the clock to the Ontario Lottery Corp.—where it's in the media

that people are coming forward and they're saying, "Something's wrong here. I thought I had the winning ticket, but somehow I was told I didn't have the winning ticket and somebody else got the money," when you've got report after report after report going on for months and the minister of the day's response is, "I didn't see anything, I didn't hear anything, I didn't know anything, and obviously I'm not smart enough to ask any questions," that person shouldn't be a minister. But what you're really trying to do here is very much reduce that whole aspect of ministerial responsibility. I think one of the things you're going to end up with is even more public cynicism. Ministers should not be able to say, "I didn't hear anything, I didn't know anything, I didn't see anything and I'm not smart enough to ask"—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I rise today to also speak on Bill 201, the public expense review act. Let me begin with some context on why we're debating Bill 201 this fall. Regardless of the economic circumstances, all taxpayers really want, in fact expect, is accountability from the officials they elect to represent them. They want to know that their hard-earned tax dollars are being put to good use in our hospitals, our schools and in our communities. They want to know that the programs that are put in motion now will benefit them and their families for years to come. They want responsible government. So we in opposition file a number of FOI requests to hold the government to account.

What we found this spring was disturbing. Our freedom-of-information requests unearthed many problems at a number of government agencies. Ontario taxpayers have been made aware of scandalous government spending, particularly from eHealth and Ontario Lottery and Gaming employees and contractors. Untendered contracts to Liberal-connected friends, lavish apartments, expensive travel, and a cup of tea and a cookie made up just a few of the expenses of eHealth consultants already being paid thousands of dollars per day by the taxpayers of Ontario. At the OLG, taxpayers paid for gym memberships and nannies, to name a few. At a time when families struggle to keep a roof over their heads, clothes on their backs and food on the table, this is unacceptable.

The announcement of this piece of legislation by the minister and the Premier has pre-empted the Auditor General's report on what went wrong at eHealth. Are the Premier and his cabinet really interested in accountability and integrity, or is this another knee-jerk reaction that is attempting to distract from their summer of scandal?

While I agree that something needs to be done to ensure that unscrupulous spending in government is eliminated, I do not believe that dumping the responsibility in the hands of the Integrity Commissioner is the way to go. The Office of the Integrity Commissioner already has a lot on its plate. They are responsible for vetting ministers' and opposition leaders' expenses, ministers' staff ethical conduct and members' integrity, to name a few.

To place this added responsibility on the backs of nine staff members is unreasonable. If you think about this realistically, if the employees of all government agencies were to submit their month-by-month expenses yearly to the Integrity Commissioner, then there would be over one million expense reports to vet. What makes it harder is that the Office of the Integrity Commissioner, as I said, is an office of nine staff. How is an office of under 10 people expected to do all of this work? Does the government intend to hire more employees to work in the integrity office? Again, this will be the burden of the Ontario taxpayer. Does McGuinty plan on hiring people to deflect the attention off himself and his cabinet ministers?

Taxpayers should be able to trust that the ministers who oversee these government agencies are ensuring that taxpayers' money is being spent in the best and most productive way possible. Under the proposed Bill 201, the ministers will have another layer of deflection. Instead of being responsible to Ontario taxpayers, they are lumping the responsibility on to the Office of the Integrity Commissioner. With this piece of proposed legislation, Premier McGuinty is delegating responsibility to another commission when in reality the buck should stop with his ministers and ultimately with him.

Premier McGuinty has not taken responsibility for the actions of his cabinet ministers. How many more scandals have to be uncovered before action is taken? How many more freedom-of-information requests have to be filed? Why does Premier McGuinty continue to cover up for his cabinet ministers? The Premier insists on continually deflecting responsibility elsewhere. First it was the cancelled third party review by PricewaterhouseCoopers—a review that was never started in the first place, as we found out this summer—then it was handed off to the Auditor General, and now the Premier wants to shift responsibility to the Integrity Commissioner. Is the Premier just creating this new bureaucracy to deflect responsibility and avoid the all-party committee review of the spending scandals at the OLG and eHealth?

This makes me wonder, is this just an attempt to distract Ontario families from the summer of scandalous spending that we read about? Instead of accepting direct responsibility for himself and his cabinet ministers, yet another bureaucracy is being created. This smokescreen that the McGuinty government is creating is a case of closing the barn doors after the horses have run away. The runaway scandals at eHealth and OLG have been exposed. That money will never be returned to the taxpayers of Ontario because the Premier and his ministers have done nothing to get the money back.

This legislation detracts from the bigger picture. The bigger picture is that the money is spent and Ontario families are no further ahead. While McGuinty passes the buck, Ontarians fall behind. This legislation suggests that Premier McGuinty cannot control the carefree spending of his ministers. This legislation suggests that the Premier cannot trust his ministers to oversee the ministries they are entrusted to review.

If the Premier really wanted to be accountable and stand up and take responsibility for what he and his cabinet ministers have done, they could have followed through with the third party audit from Pricewaterhouse-Coopers that they promised Ontarians they would do in June. They could have supported opposition calls for an all-party review into the spending at eHealth. The Progressive Conservatives continue to insist that an all-party committee be formed in the House to review the eHealth and OLG scandals.

**1650**

Premier McGuinty's cabinet ministers are appointed because he believes they're up to the challenge of leading their individual ministries. The Premier appoints heads of the agencies, boards and commissions to be responsible for these major groups. Why can these so-called trusted people not be responsible for their own spending? By not directing responsibility to the people Ontarians elect to give this responsibility to, you are letting down the voters. You are sending the message that it's okay to spend out of control. But instead of making these people accept responsibility for taxpayers' dollars, you are saying, "It's all right. No big deal. Just try not to do it again."

The Premier does not think his ministers and senior appointees are up to the job. Then why do they still have those jobs? Under the McGuinty Liberals, billions and billions of taxpayers' dollars have been wasted. How come there have been no consequences to the McGuinty cabinet ministers? Why does the Premier insist on shrouding the ministers behind this piece of legislation? Is there more to hide?

The Progressive Conservative Party believes that Ontarians should see how their tax dollars are spent. That is why we created the sunshine list, which lists every government employee in the province who earns more than \$100,000 per year. This is a transparent way for taxpayers to see their tax dollars and how they're being spent, every year on April 1.

At eHealth, almost \$7 million was spent on outside consultants over the last two years, even though they had over 160 staffers already making at least \$100,000 a year. If there was so much work to be done with eHealth that they needed to bring in all of these additional outside consultants, where is the progress on eHealth? Again, we are lagging far behind in comparison to other provinces that already have electronic health records. With all those funds being spent on salaries, where is the work to show for it? Where are the results?

Premier McGuinty is showing that his ministers do not have to accept responsibility. It is distressing to Ontario families, when jobs are hard to keep and harder to find, that the government they elected would be so wasteful with their hard-earned dollars. Now they have to work harder than ever while their executives use public dollars to pay for their nannies, gym memberships, apartments, afternoon snacks and their wining and dining. Why do we even need a separate review board to vet the expenses of these board officials? Shouldn't their responsibility to

the public be enough to encourage them to be ethical with public dollars?

Only 22 agencies, boards and commissions under the Ontario government have been listed as targets for the Integrity Commissioner. What about the other agencies, boards and commissions? Are these 22 considered problem agencies by the Premier, or is there something else going on with the other almost 600?

The bottom line is that responsibility should not have to lie in the office of the Integrity Commissioner; it should lie with the people Ontarians elected to represent them here in the Legislature. Responsibility needs to start at the top and work its way down. If the Premier is not up to the task of accepting responsibility for the scandals created by this government, then why would Ontario taxpayers feel that their tax dollars in every other program are being well spent by the McGuinty Liberals?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It's a pleasure to add some comments to the member from Dufferin-Caledon, her speech on Bill 201, which is An Act to provide for review of expenses in the public sector.

She talked about why this bill is being debated. The question I would have to ask is, what would have happened had the PC Party not made freedom-of-information requests back in January, of OLG and eHealth? Would we be debating this bill at all today? Because it was only through a lot of persistence on the part of the PC Party doing the freedom-of-information request—the government doing their best to delay giving out any information at all—that the excessive out-of-control spending at eHealth, things like the \$2,700 a day on untendered contracts; \$16 million in untendered contracts for consultants, many with ties to the Liberal Party; a \$25,000 speech for the CEO of eHealth, Sarah Kramer—I don't know how anybody can defend that; I hope it was a good speech. The expenses at the OLG like \$3,800 for a meal that included a lot of alcohol—you'd think this government, after six years, would have a rule that there's no alcohol to be paid for unless it happens to be the Queen coming on a royal visit and we buy wine for her, something like that. Why has it taken so long?

My question is, what would have happened had we not done those freedom-of-information requests? I don't think we'd be debating this bill, which is a pretty thin bill; it's all of a couple of pages. It basically shifts the responsibility over to the Integrity Commissioner, an office that has nine employees and is really, I think, going to be overwhelmed having to look after 80,000 employees' expenses at the 22 larger boards and agencies.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm pleased to respond to the comments from the member from Dufferin-Caledon. I'll begin by referencing that there seems to be a bit of an inherent contradiction in a couple of comments that the member has made, not only by her but, I would suggest, other members of the official opposition. In her remarks she first listed as a cause of concern the fact that there



would be an expense associated or a difficulty within the Office of the Integrity Commissioner with the ability or financial capacity with which they could address the requirements that would be upon them should this legislation pass, in terms of managing these claims that would have to be filed by the 22 largest agencies and the senior management people within those agencies.

Then they go on to say, and not only the member from Dufferin–Caledon but others in the opposition party, “What about the other 630 or so agencies that are out there that are not subject to the legislation?” I guess my question to the member is, are you suggesting you want all 630 to be subject to this particular piece of legislation or just the 22? If you do want the 630, are you willing to commit the resources that in the first part of your comments you didn’t seem like you wanted to see committed? I’m not sure where we are on that one.

I have to say that the legislation continues to be positioned by the opposition parties as a first and only step by our government since we’ve come into power in 2003. That, of course, is not the case. There have been significant and frequent pieces of legislation that we brought forward to enhance transparency and accountability in the province of Ontario for the people of Ontario and the taxpayers. Freedom of information has been significantly enhanced in terms of the agencies that are now subject to it.

Value-for-money audits: I continue to talk about this one because I was stunned when I found out about it. For the first time in the history of the province of Ontario, value-for-money audits, as a result of an initiative by our government, are now going on in hospitals in the province of Ontario—that’s never happened before—and the expansion of this same function to Ontario Hydro, OPG, Hydro One and other agencies and sectors that never before had FOI or transparency and accountability measures attached—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Question and comments?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I still remain unconvinced of the need for this piece of legislation, the Public Sector Expenses Review Act. I don’t know whether this is somewhat of a red herring or an attempt to change the channel coming hard on the heels of the summer of scandal, as it is now known, with respect to not only OLG, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp., but also the misallocation of funding with respect to eHealth.

It’s clear that the shuffling and the firing of administrative staff and CEOs in the wake of each scandal is not going to fix the lack of leadership that we see within this particular Ontario government. It is time, it’s well past time, for a cabinet minister—at least one cabinet minister—to show some accountability. I think it’s time to really call the government on this charade, this knee-jerk legislation and this kind of lacklustre—almost slack-jawed—attempt to quell voter anger with respect to what has gone on this summer.

I think I have time to quote opposition leader Tim Hudak, again, following the sentiments of Robert Baldwin—

**Mr. Dave Levac:** What year?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Well, we can go back 160 years with Robert Baldwin. As far as Tim Hudak’s quote, that is this year: “I actually believe in ministerial accountability. The buck stops at the minister’s desk. If the minister can’t set the tone how the lunch money is spent, how do we expect them to oversee hospitals, highways or schools in our province?”

1700

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I’m pleased to have a chance to respond to the member for Dufferin–Caledon, who spoke very eloquently and well in her presentation this afternoon on Bill 201. I’ve known the member for almost 15 years, I would think, going back. She has played an important role within our organization for a long time, but I think it’s next week she will observe the second anniversary of her election to the Legislature, coming in in 2007, and I would want to pay tribute to the excellent work that she does on behalf of her constituents, day in and day out, and on behalf of the people of Ontario. The speech that she gave today was a good example of the outstanding contribution that she makes in this place.

I want to ask her a question about the bill. When I review the bill—and I’m hoping to have a chance to speak to the bill in further detail this afternoon—reading through the bill, as it was pointed out, it’s only five pages long. The government has indicated that these new responsibilities that would be given to the Integrity Commissioner if Bill 201 passes would allow the Integrity Commissioner to review the expenses of 22 of the government’s biggest agencies, but interestingly, there’s absolutely no reference to any of the 22 agencies in the bill. I don’t know if members are aware of that, but there’s absolutely no reference to any of the government agencies in the bill. So, once again, we’re asked to take this government on faith, we’re asked to trust this government to say that the public statements that have been made by the government are going to happen. Of course, we know that there are nine staff at the Office of the Integrity Commissioner, and for 22 agencies to have all of their expenses reviewed by nine staff—we’re talking tens of thousands of expense claims—we know that it can’t be done.

So again we come back to our basic premise that the opposition has put forward this afternoon. This bill is more about smoke and mirrors and public relations than anything else, and I would ask the member for Dufferin–Caledon, does she agree and would she care to comment on that aspect of the debate?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member for Dufferin–Caledon has up to two minutes to respond.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you for the comments from the members from Parry Sound–Muskoka, Thunder Bay–Atikokan, Haldimand–Norfolk and Wellington–Halton Hills.

First I'd like to deal with the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan. For me, Bill 201 is about responsibility. If we are not willing to accept responsibility for our budgets, whether we are MPPs, or parliamentary assistants, or ministers, or heads of agencies, boards and commissions, then we shouldn't be in those positions. So come right back to, "Why are we here, what are we attempting to accomplish, and whose money is it anyway?" because it's not ours. We are the keepers of the taxpayers' purse; it is not ours.

In terms of the question from Wellington—Halton Hills, I've actually known you for 17 years, so there we can do the math. But it comes back to many of the issues that I have with the government legislation that's coming forward since I've been here for the last number of years, and that is so much of the detail is left to regulation which, of course, is not open for debate and not open for that wonderful public scrutiny and transparency that, while the Liberals talk about it, I'm not sure they actually implement as well as they say they do.

I would like to see ministers of the crown be responsible for the agencies and the boards under them. That, to me, is a basic tenet of the responsibilities that you take on when you accept that ministerial role. If you are not up to that job, then get out of the way and let someone else do it, because it is my opinion that the taxpayers expect us to be very judicious in how we spend the money and that it is being effectively used for the benefit of all Ontarians.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I just want to welcome the citizens and the taxpayers to this political forum. We are on live, and it's 5:05, and it's Monday.

It's good to have this opportunity to speak to Bill 201. I want to say from the outset, I didn't get to hear too many speeches, but I have to admit that I agree with some of the comments made by the member from Dufferin—Caledon, comments made by my friend from Toronto—Danforth as well, in terms of, who is ultimately responsible for all these boards, agencies and commissions in the first place? It's got to be the ministers. If the ministers of the crown were doing their job, we wouldn't have Bill 201. The fact that we have Bill 201 to debate is an indication of failure of the government to do its job. That's really what it is. They can't say it. They don't want to say that they have failed in their ability to oversee all these boards, agencies and commissions adequately. They can't say it, so their way of saying it is, "We're introducing Bill 201."

You've got my colleague from Thunder Bay—Atikokan giving us the reductionist argument or the reductionist proposition, are you in favour or are you against? For him and the members of the Liberal government it's that simple: Are you in favour or against? They will not admit that they have failed in their oversight responsibilities. They can't admit that. Would that they could, because that would be the thing to do. But if you did that, you would be accepting responsibilities for a problem that you don't want to accept, and if you did that, you might

say, "Gee, we might have to fire a couple of ministers." But you couldn't do that, because if you did that, you would be admitting failure, and failure of oversight. So you can't do those things, and it's sad.

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** A rock and a hard place.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** It shouldn't be between a rock and a hard place. It should be, do the job.

If you look at all the ministers, and having been one I remember how many staff; we've got lots of staff—sometimes more than we need, I have to admit—that work for the minister. There are many staff, yes, with a multitude of responsibilities, but one of those responsibilities ought to be, who is watching the boards, agencies and commissions? Who's doing that? The answer is, nobody.

Part of what we have witnessed, over the longest while, in terms of what we have seen over the spring and summer, with all those indiscretions with so many workers, so many people working for our government and those consultants working for our government—stupid little things: the Choco Bites, the \$30 car wash and the Tim Hortons for \$1.65, but that's what people get riled about. They get riled about the little things. Would that they get riled over the huge economic fiasco that has been unleashed upon the world, upon Canadians and Americans, those who control the levers of power, the economic power, in a way that affects our daily lives, in the way that it affects and destroys those meagre pensions some people got. Would that they have the same anger directed toward those who invest our money in a wilfully wrong way, and that we could put them to justice so that we could feel good about making sure that those who perpetrate such crimes against so many common folks who just earn a basic living, just working hard, day in and day out, put aside a few dollars—and overnight their pensions get wiped. Would that they had the power, the will, the desire to go after them in the same way that we go after the tidbits, the doughnuts, the coffee, please.

There is bigger stuff. There are untendered contracts here that our party has been after. We know that at the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. there have been many contracts that simply have been given out on the basis of whom you know. They were not tendered. That's egregious in my mind. That is egregious. That's bigger than the tea and the coffee and the tidbits—not as big as the economic scandal waged against all of us across the globe, not as big, but I've got to tell you, untendered contracts are big enough for me to worry about. It shouldn't be happening. A simple directive from a minister saying, "This cannot happen, will not ever happen again," would do it, would have done it. But none of the ministers do this sort of thing. You don't do that simplest of things. Why?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** How do you know?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** How do we know? We've asked for them? We haven't been able to get them. We haven't been able to get all the untendered contracts that were given out throughout all of these years. We haven't

been able to get them. We've asked for them. And I suspect that the minister knows, but he don't tell. He don't want to tell, he don't want to say, because if he did, it would be to admit that we've got a serious problem in government. So what you have done, as a political expediency measure, is allowed an act that enables the Integrity Commissioner to review the expense claims of senior employees and appointees of the selected public bodies, and then you hope that it will go away.

**1710**

I'm not sure how many people the Integrity Commissioner is going to be able to hire; I don't know what budget you've given him. But if the Ombudsman is any measure of what you're giving him, it's not going to be a whole lot. Would that you had given more power to the Ombudsman to scurry about, to lift the carpet every now and then in these boards, agencies and commissions and find real abuse. That would be good; that would be nice. Would that you gave the Ombudsman that kind of power to clean up the act in so many places that you as ministers and you as a government are responsible for, but you won't do that. You don't want to do that. You don't want to give the Ombudsman the power, because every time he releases a report, you quiver with fear. Rather than accepting a report from the Ombudsman as an opportunity to say, "We are clearing the way. We're finding the right way to deal with things. We're letting him, as an unleashed dog, go out there and find every dirty little secret that's going on in every ministry, and in every board, agency and commission"—rather than saying, "We're happy to do that," you don't want to give him that power. You're afraid. You're all afraid.

In fact, we're all afraid; all governments are afraid. The Tories were afraid, and I've got to admit that we were afraid too. I remember telling one minister friend of mine about things that I heard in the Ministry of Housing: "That should be looked after," and she said, "Do you have any proof?" I said "No." "Well, that means we can't do anything." And rather than saying, as a minister, to the civil servants, "I hear there is something going on in the ministry that is unacceptable, that there's somebody getting a whole lot of jobs to build that public housing who shouldn't be getting those jobs, and I hear there's manipulation of numbers in this ministry, and if I catch anyone with that problemo, you'll all be fired"—that's all the minister has to do. You send a message to those that you administer, that you govern, for which you have oversight, that this is unacceptable and it will not go on, and if you find it out, you will fire them. That's all you need to do, and the job would be done because fear would be engendered, fear would be inserted in the bureaucracy, wherever it is, and such a fear would force people to clean up their act. That's all you have to do as a minister.

Do we need another big bureaucracy to do it? Because I've got to tell you, you're going to have to give the Integrity Commissioner a whole lot of people to do this job, a job that you ministers should be doing. You do not admit, you will not say what that number will be, but

unless you give them the numbers, this is not going to go anywhere. They're not going to be able to do the job well—a job that you, the government, should be doing on your own, a job that ministers have a responsibility to do. That's all you have to do. That's all you really need to do.

If you don't want to give the Ombudsman that power, I understand. I made the argument that you should. But if you're going to give the Integrity Commissioner this job—and I know that it's political expediency; I understand it, I really do—I hope you give him some workers to do the job adequately, otherwise it's going to look bad on you. You know that, right?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the member from Trinity–Spadina. As always, his usual passionate self presents, in a 10-minute speech, a strong picture of the direction he believes that the government has gone and that previous governments have gone. And some of the concerns that he laid out—which is what I've been asking for: an acknowledgement that this is not a singular problem. This is a problem that actually has historic ties, and some people who have been standing up and beating their chests and gnashing their teeth have not remembered very much of their past history. So I'm glad that you are at least able to acknowledge that this is an ongoing issue.

The second thing: Your seatmate, the member from Kenora–Rainy River, believes that this legislation is going to actually make it even worse. I don't necessarily subscribe to that, but I wanted to be on record to explain to him that what I believe we're trying to do is to shine a light under a bushel basket that hasn't been shone before, in terms of an expectation for that particular group of people named in the bill who are now going to be responsible for answering that concern that's being raised.

As for political expediency, I don't necessarily subscribe to the idea that everybody responds, on an ongoing basis, to politics. The politics part to this, as I've pointed out, from both sides, has been that we're hearing the speaking notes from Her Majesty's loyal opposition, which keeps repeating over and over again the same line that has nothing to do with—the same points.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Dave Levac:** You'll see how every time you say something like that, they're just doing what they're supposed to do, but conveniently forgetting their history. So I'm glad that the member stayed focused on exactly why we're trying to attempt to get this done.

This is a cultural change; I'm not going to deny that. I'm also not going to deny the fact that there are some things that are ridiculous that shouldn't have been done. We're going to get to the bottom of it, but we're going to offer a piece of legislation that I honestly believe is one more step in that evolutionary chain that gets us to better spending of taxpayers' dollars.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to take a moment to comment on the remarks of the minister—or the member from Trinity–Spadina; a former minister, I guess, in another government. He touched on a lot of issues that we on this side of the House have as well, talking about whether there should be accountability in the ministers themselves, that if they and their staff were doing their jobs like they were supposed to do, then we wouldn't have to burden the Integrity Commissioner with this additional work. They're going to have to provide staff and money for staffing and things like that, and the Integrity Commissioner has work that he has to do already. He's responsible for a number of different issues: members' integrity, lobbyist registration, review of ministers' and opposition leaders' expenses, the ministers' staff and ethical conduct, and the public disclosure of wrongdoing. So that office, the Integrity Commissioner's job, already has a burden that they have to do.

Again, to touch on a number of other remarks that were raised by the member from Trinity–Spadina, plus other members of the House: If the cabinet and the Premier would do their jobs, these people should be accountable to the cabinet and to their ministers. I worked in industry before I joined here, and I know that my boss—in that case, I had expense accounts that I was accountable for. I knew what I could expense. I had people who worked for me and we knew what our roles were, what our responsibilities were, and if you got out of line, you could be expected to be called to account for that. So to foist this off on another individual, another branch of government, another agency of government, is just a way to be able to say, “Well, we're doing something in this regard, and if somebody missteps, they're looking into it. We don't know anything about it.”

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I think it's incredibly important to make a distinction between legal accountability and political accountability. Here in this chamber we're concerned with political accountability and the absence of it. There may not have been any crimes committed—although there are crimes and then there are crimes, and down where I come from, people say it's a crime that some high-priced OLG vice-president can bill the taxpayer for \$3,700 worth of high-end steak and martinis.

I go to the seniors' centre in Welland, the Rose City seniors' centre, for lunch and activities they have afterwards, and I see those people. Some of them are former Atlas Steel workers who got ripped off for their pensions. You see, the government of the day didn't give a tinker's damn about Atlas Steel as it was shutting down, or about their pension plan. So they're stuck with the \$1,000 cap that Dalton McGuinty persists in terms of the pension benefit guarantee fund—steelmakers, steelworkers. Did you ever walk around one of those catwalks on an arc furnace, the bubbling molten steel leaping up at you, burning holes in your coveralls? Pretty scary stuff; pretty demanding work. They're in there stoking it and ladling it.

**1720**

These men and women—and I've known so many of them since I was this big—have worked so damned hard and now are surviving on \$1,000 a month—because that's the cap under Dalton McGuinty for a bankrupt pension plan—plus a few bucks of CPP and old age security, and they just shake their heads at this government's failure to give effect to political responsibility.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Let me pick up on a comment that my always eloquent colleague from Welland made. He said, “There may not have been any crimes committed,” and that's true, so why are we here? We are here because in our first term of government, we looked at these agencies and said no one has ever shone a light in here. No one has ever said, “You can go in and you can have a look at it,” and we think that that's overdue.

To their credit, the opposition have done that. They've asked through freedom of information, “Show us what's going on. We're here to make Ontario better.” You're not going to hear anybody from any of the three parties saying that this legislation shouldn't be passed. It should.

We look at this and we say, “This is your money, and it bothers us. It bothers us that someone who, by virtue of their charter, being in an agency, a board or a commission, has what amounts to a monopoly on some aspect of our life. We do this because in a small jurisdiction like Ontario we need the service, the thing, the function, that these agencies, boards and commissions do. But they have to recognize that this is the taxpayers' money and they can't go out and say, “Well, we're going to behave like investment bankers”—because you're not investment bankers. You have a nice little niche and it's protected by the government of Ontario, and we expect that you're going to take the province's money and behave with it responsibly; behave with it the way each and every one of us would expect to handle money within our companies, or within our budgets, the money that we spend.

That's what this legislation is aiming to do. This legislation is aiming to say to those people within our agencies, boards, and commissions, “For however many hours this Legislature beats up on you, you cannot do this. If you're going to spend the public's money, you're going to have to spend it cautiously, carefully, prudently, and wisely.” That's what this legislation will do. This legislation gives the Office of the Integrity Commissioner, and whatever people that she in her wisdom choose to hire, the ability to shine a light and look at expenses that have heretofore gone unexamined.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Trinity–Spadina has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I'm not sure that this bill is going to deal with the problem identified by the member for Welland, one of those speeches someone was paid \$25,000 to write. That hurts people like me and it hurts the unemployed, and it hurts the part-time workers. It

even hurts people who have to work for a whole year to earn \$25,000. No speech is worth \$25,000. There's not one speech that is written in this place for anyone—minister or Premier—that is worth that kind of money. It's just crazy. This bill is not going to correct that.

When I think about the poor taxpayers, particularly those women and men working real hard, those women and men struggling to get back into the workforce and the only thing they can find is part-time or no job at all except welfare and unemployment insurance while it lasts—when you think about them and then you think about what Bill 201 does, is it going to help them? No. It's going to burden them some more. This bill is going to have to provide more and more workers to the Integrity Commissioner in order to be able to do the oversight, all these expenses and the like, that the government should be doing. It will become an additional burden on men and women who are working and not working, all to protect the image of the government in its failure to do its job—its failure for political accountability, because that's what it is. They're going to shrug it off to a body that they will say is going to do the job. "You can all go home and feel comfortable. This job will be done now. Go home, you, the unemployed. Go home, you the hard-working folks because everything is okay now."

And those speeches that cost \$25,000 and those untended contracts—who knows whether that will ever be solved. This bill will not solve that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I'm pleased to have this chance this afternoon—almost 5:30 in the afternoon—to debate Bill 201. Our caucus has had many, many things to say about this bill today. I'm rather surprised; perhaps the government members weren't aware that there was a rotation and they perhaps would have had the chance to speak to the bill. It went around the House and came back to the opposition, so I am glad to have this chance—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** —although I would have appreciated hearing from one of the government members who would have wanted to stand up, I'm sure, and defend this bill and defend the government's policy in this respect.

The member for Trinity–Spadina talked about the \$25,000 that was expended by the taxpayers of Ontario, courtesy of the Liberal government, to pay for a speech that someone at eHealth gave. I want to assure all members of this House that \$25,000 was not spent on this speech or any other speech that's coming from the opposition side this afternoon.

I'm sure that some of my constituents may be tuning in this afternoon to follow the debate that's taking place in the Ontario Legislature—I hope some are—and I know that many would wonder why I'm not talking about the need for a new Groves Memorial Community Hospital in Fergus, something that I continue to advocate, wanting to know why the Ministry of Health is refusing to allow us to move forward with our planning. They

would want to know why I'm not talking about the CT scanner that's needed in the Georgetown Hospital. They would want to know why I'm not raising the issue of the Highway 6 bypass that has been talked about for about 30 years around the community of Morriston in the township of Puslinch. And they would want to know perhaps why I'm not talking about the need for the extension of the GO trains from Georgetown to Kitchener–Waterloo, through Guelph and the community of Acton in Wellington–Halton Hills.

These are issues that I would want to talk about extensively and that I'm going to continue to talk about over the next two years of my mandate here, but the rules of the House compel me to talk about Bill 201, the Public Sector Expenses Review Act, which was presented in the Legislature for first reading on September 16. This bill was called for second reading the very next day, so it didn't give us an opportunity to consult very widely with people in the province of Ontario, but our party was—I know the member for Kitchener–Waterloo was the first one up to talk about the issues around this bill.

Of course, when I knew I was going to have the chance to speak to this bill this afternoon, I had a chance to review it and look at some of the comments that had already been made. I was struck by the fact that even though the government claims that 22 of its most significant and biggest government agencies are going to be subject to this bill, there is actually no reference to any of the 22 agencies in the bill. So we're expected to take this on faith, that the government is going to proceed in this regard. The government claims that the new rules regarding expenses and the review by the Integrity Commissioner will apply to the Ontario lottery and gaming organization; Ontario Power Generation; Hydro One; Independent Electricity System Operator; Ontario Power Authority; WSIB; LCBO; eHealth; Cancer Care Ontario; Ontario Infrastructure Projects Corp., which is otherwise known as Infrastructure Ontario; Ontario Energy Board; Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario; Ontario Financing Authority; Ontario Realty Corp.; Ontario public service pension board; GO Transit; Metrolinx; Toronto Area Transit Operating Authority; Ontario Human Rights Commission; Metropolitan Toronto Convention Centre Corp.; Ontario Educational Communications Authority—TVO/TFO; Ontario Racing Commission; Ontario Clean Water Agency—22 commissions.

We know that the Integrity Commissioner, who, if this bill passes, is going to be empowered to review the expense claims of these 22 commissions, has nine staff. All of us, as MPPs, have a chance to visit the Integrity Commissioner once a year. My meeting's coming up soon; I look forward to it. It's an opportunity to discuss with the Integrity Commissioner our financial disclosures that we have to give the Integrity Commissioner, by law, under the Members' Integrity Act, to disclose all of our assets and all of our liabilities. So there is a review of that. But to add this responsibility to the Integrity Commissioner now will necessitate and compel, if indeed the government really does what they're going to be em-

powered to do if this bill pass, which I question—if they in fact do this, it will require a massive expansion of the Integrity Commissioner's office, a massive expansion of staff. We know that. Hundreds of thousands of expense claims are going to have to be reviewed and nine people, who already have significant responsibilities in terms of members' financial statements and follow-up meetings and so forth and other responsibilities, will not be able to do this in any meaningful way. So we have to question the government's sincerity in terms of the statements that they've made surrounding this bill.

1730

I know that the member for Brant is getting somewhat tired of the comments that are coming from our side in terms of the statements we've made, but just to make sure that he's heard the position of our party, I'll restate it: Our party respects and supports the work of the Integrity Commissioner. We are confident that the commissioner will have a role to play in ensuring accountability. We also continue to insist that an all-party committee should be reviewing the eHealth and the OLG spending scandals. With this accountability legislation, we believe that the Premier is trying to delegate integrity to somebody else, and we feel that integrity should be demonstrated from the top; in other words, from the Premier.

The Premier's announcement in this respect, in this bill, just before the House resumed sitting, was an attempt to pre-empt the Auditor General's report on what went wrong at the eHealth agency. We would question whether the Premier and his cabinet are really interested in accountability and integrity or if this is just another knee-jerk reaction that is attempting to distract from what we have called, and what the media are now calling, their summer of scandal.

We believe that the job of the Premier is to ensure that there is accountability to the people of Ontario and that his cabinet and his government must be accountable. Unfortunately, what the Premier is doing with this bill is shifting responsibility elsewhere, to a third party review, which was cancelled, to the Auditor General and now to the Integrity Commissioner. We would question—is he saying that his ministers are not capable of overseeing aspects of their ministries or agencies that report to their ministries, which they in fact should accept responsibility for because they are the ministers? That's our system of responsible government.

We would question the cost of this bill. The government should really table a cost analysis, and of course we haven't had one of those. How can nine staff from the Integrity Commissioner's office oversee expense accounts of 22 agencies representing hundreds of thousands in expense claims? We would question, again, is Premier McGuinty creating a new bureaucracy to avoid an all-party committee having direct responsibility for reviewing the eHealth and OLG scandals? I think we've made the case that in fact that is what is happening here.

We would question whether this added challenge detracts from the work of the Integrity Commissioner in

the five existing areas of responsibility, those being members' integrity, lobbyist registration, review of ministers' and opposition leaders' expenses, ministers' staff ethical conduct and the public service disclosure of wrongdoing.

Finally, our caucus would ask, how do we know that this government will follow through on its promise? It already promised the House an investigation by PricewaterhouseCoopers into eHealth, and we were led to believe, of course, that that was happening, that PricewaterhouseCoopers had been engaged to do this investigation, when in fact that was not the case.

Again, our caucus has raised the concern about the fact that the Minister of Government Services has introduced this bill. I would say again—and I know it annoys the government members to hear this, but they need to be reminded, apparently—that in 2006 the Integrity Commissioner of the day criticized and condemned the Minister of Government Services, and of course you would expect that the minister would have resigned or that there would have been some sort of consequence because it was a highly unusual thing. There had been a number of complaints to the Integrity Commissioner about members' conduct through the past number of years, and in some cases members have been investigated by the Integrity Commissioner and then exonerated. Certainly in the time that I've been here there have been many ministers who had to resign their cabinet positions because of a transgression of some sort, or the allegation of a transgression, until it was investigated. That has happened over the last number of years that I've been here. But certainly in the case of the current Minister of Government Services, even though he was condemned by the Integrity Commissioner, nothing happened.

I think it's important to point out that Bill 201 most likely would not have been introduced were it not for the fact that our party some months ago, when John Tory was the leader of our party and when Elizabeth Witmer was the health critic for our party, initiated a significant number of freedom-of-information requests to try to shed, to use the terminology the government members are using, the light of day under the basket of what was going on in some of those agencies. Certainly the government would not have wanted to divulge this information. In fact, they delayed the release of these freedom-of-information requests as long as they possibly could. But in the information that we received when those freedom-of-information requests came back were many examples of questionable expenses at OLG, including some of the ones that have been brought out this afternoon—the gym memberships and so forth—and the contracts that were let without competitive tender at eHealth, leading to the summer of scandal.

Again, I take no pleasure in having to put all of these comments on the record, but we have a job to do in opposition: It's to hold this government to account. Their behaviour and their performance in this regard have been lacking and we must continue to draw the public's attention to it.

I look forward to the continued debate on this issue and hope that we can be persuasive—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** A good speech, of course, from the member. Now, there, he took the express route. He got right to the point without any embellishment. There's nothing wrong with that, but really, it loses some of the colour.

Now, I had occasion earlier today in all sincerity to thank, commend and congratulate the parliamentary assistant for performing his job, which is a custom, a convention here. If the minister isn't available, that's why he or she has PAs. The parliamentary assistant, who is stewarding a bill through the process, remains in the chamber while it's being debated. To not do so shows scorn for the process, indifference for the views of honourable members like Mr. Arnott. For the life of me, maybe the world's just changed; maybe Mr. Martiniuk and I are just two grey-haired old fellows who are out of touch. But for the life of me, I wish people would talk to the government PAs—some are very good at it, and I commended him earlier today. And I was sincere; I wasn't being trivial, I wasn't being facetious, I wasn't trying to mock him. I mean, it's been a long afternoon. My ADD has kicked in, too; I understand. But for the PA to walk away from the debate is shameful performance—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I just ask the member not to refer to a member who's not in the chamber. Thank you.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Not to refer to the PA's absence? Of course, I don't want to refer to the PA's absence; I want to point out that I commended him for being here a little while ago, and I can no longer commend him—shameful.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** It's the second time in a row I have followed my friend from Welland. I just wanted to put a rhetorical question to him with regard to his reference of parliamentary assistants: Has the member come to praise Caesar or to bury him?

To come back to the point, many of the members opposite, when they had the privilege of forming government, we felt didn't do this particular job. The voters have passed their judgment on them. Those who are left we consider to be our friends and our colleagues in this Legislature, and we have no problem with the opposition doing the job that our government made it possible for them to do. They're there to use freedom of information and to dig around in agencies that had hitherto not been subject to freedom-of-information requests. We say, good for you, and now we're going to fix those problems.

The agencies, the boards and the commissions were set up to be at arm's length from the ministers. Being at arm's length, as I said in my previous remarks, doesn't mean that such a body can say, "Well, we can operate as if we were a free-wheeling private sector corporation." You can't. If what you are is an entity charged by the

taxpayers to perform a function or to do a thing, then you're subject to the same constraints that all of us are here in the House, and we on the government side say, "Having shone this light on practices that frankly disturb us in government, we, too, are going to use the powers provided in this legislation to fix the issues that have been brought forward through the actions of the opposition." That's pretty much all this bill is about.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** The member from Wellington-Halton Hills made reference to a sorry trail of expenses, expenses that shouldn't have been expensed through the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. We really wonder. I think it was just within the past month that the entire board of governors of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. resigned, but not one elected member has taken any responsibility for what I consider quite a sorry state of affairs.

**1740**

It's a state of affairs that goes back at least four years. We recall the independent probe. It was launched by the Ontario Ombudsman, André Marin, and revealed at that time, four years ago, millions of dollars had been paid out and had been acquired and secured by unscrupulous retailers.

The fallout at that time: 23 reforms were recommended, and the chief executive of OLG, Duncan Brown, left with two years' salary as severance, as I recall. He left his post just before that report became public. He was replaced as CEO by Kelly McDougald, the same Kelly McDougald who was just fired by OLG this month. Yet again, not one government minister is without a government job today.

Since that report from André Marin, we now have evidence that the lottery payouts to the insiders, just in the four subsequent years, totalled something like \$198 million. In recent news, a scandal in both Ajax and Brantford with respect to casino projects: about \$30 million there that's in question.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** The member from Wellington-Halton, I think it's now called—

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Wellington-Halton Hills.

**Mr. Dave Levac:**—Wellington-Halton Hills has kind of done as predicted over the last few times that I've been speaking. Yes, he did come back very vividly and acknowledged the fact that I would probably be listening and hearing the same thing over again and, yes, I am.

So the bottom line here is that they're doing what they're supposed to do in this place, and that is to oppose and to mark up and to try to paint a picture of scandal, and to continue to say, "Bad government; good opposition. Let us be government." That's what you're supposed to do.

Except to say I thought it was rather interesting how he was able to slip in some of the other stuff on a constituent level, which I know that he is known for, to

bring to the attention of this House his projects. That was a pretty good deal, too; I thought that was pretty good.

One of the things I like to point out is that there's another trend on the other side too, and that is, "Too much spending on the government side, but get my project passed." That happens and maybe that's good politics too, so that your local constituency knows that you're asking for that money, but it's going to take an awful lot out of the coffers.

There's probably a tie-in to that, because I think he knows that when his government was over on this side or when they were the government on this side, there was a comment from the opposition, which happened to be us at the time, Her Majesty's loyal opposition, that basically pointed out a \$600-million consultant spending spree that we started to bring to the attention of the government of the day, in the same spots, in some cases—I think one of the members was sitting in the very same seat that he is sitting in—bringing to the attention of the government of the day that spending problem that they had in terms of hiring \$600 million worth of consultants. One of the twists was that they were retiring public staff and then hiring the very same staff back at consulting fees.

We need to get an end to this, and I think that this bill gets us in that position.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments? The member from Wellington–Halton Hills.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I want to thank my colleagues the member for Welland, the member for Mississauga–Streetsville, the member for Haldimand–Norfolk and the member for Brant for their comments.

I would say to the member for Welland, I wasn't particularly surprised or disappointed that the PA left before I spoke. I suppose I didn't really anticipate that or concern myself too much about it.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Again, I would caution the member not to talk about people not present.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm referring to the McGee Parliamentary Practice in New Zealand, page 189: "It is a convention of the House that members do not refer to the absence of other members from the chamber ... This is not an absolute rule and can be overridden if the fact of absence is of sufficient importance to warrant reference to it. This can occur if there is something intrinsic to the absence that makes it necessary to refer to it."

It is a convention that the minister or parliamentary assistants attend the course of their bill at its debate, so it's entirely appropriate, with all due respect—I use this Parliamentary Practice in New Zealand as an authority—to refer to the failure of the parliamentary assistant to remain in the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you for that insight from the member for Welland. I'll take it under advisement, but I refer again—the Speaker's call is the Speaker's call. My call, as I just made very clear to the member from Wellington–Halton Hills, is

that we shouldn't refer to those who are not in the chamber. That's been the practice of this chamber. Thank you.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I wouldn't have wanted to do that, Madam Chair. I was just responding to the member for Welland, and I stand corrected. I should have been upset that the parliamentary assistant apparently may or may not have left the chamber, I gather, based on the New Zealand precedent, so I appreciate his drawing that to my attention.

But I would quickly say to the member for Brant, who criticized the former government, and I would suggest to him that our government wasn't perfect and the people rendered their judgment and their verdict, and the people will render their judgment and verdict again in 2011. The fact is that your government, upon taking office—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Further debate? The member from Sarnia–Lambton.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** —almost immediately after—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. I'd ask the member to be seated. The member from Sarnia–Lambton.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's been an interesting afternoon here. I'm pleased to rise and participate in today's debate as well on Bill 201, the Public Sector Expenses Review Act, 2009. I too, to paraphrase the immortal Bard, come here not to praise this bill but rather to expose its weaknesses and shortcomings. I will attempt to point out some of the rather large areas of concern that I have with this bill and that I know many members on this side of the House share. I think, as debate has progressed, we have seen some very glaring inconsistencies in this bill.

First of all, the stated goal of the bill is "to enable the Integrity Commissioner to review the expense claims of certain persons who are employed in or appointed to public entities." On the face of it, that seems like a very noble goal, but I can't help but think that this will in practice turn out to be an unmitigated disaster. The Office of the Integrity Commissioner, as some others have pointed out, has about nine employees. If this bill passes, they will now be responsible for approving possibly up to 80,000 expenses a year. The only way that they are going to be able to do this is if the government decides to throw a lot of money at the Integrity Commissioner's office so that they can staff up to meet this need. Has the Integrity Commissioner even been asked if he knows how much staff he will require for this newfound mandate from the government? If they don't staff up, and with qualified people, the system will very quickly grind to a halt. Just think about it: If each employee put in one expense claim a month, that would just about mean a million expense claims a year in that nine-person office.

I think what we will find once this process starts is that most employees know what can and can't be expensed but will still have delays in getting their expenses processed. I know that everyone in this House has the highest regard for the Integrity Commissioner's work and the work that they do in that office. I would imagine



almost everyone here has consulted with them in the past, and they handle our requests professionally and expeditiously. I just believe we are asking them to do the impossible.

Of course, as the member for Durham pointed out last week, I'm also unclear as to why they need an arm's-length agency to review and approve expenses in the first place. There's a long tradition in this House, and other parliamentary governments, of ministerial responsibility that is being overlooked here. It should be the minister's responsibility to make sure his or her department and the agencies that report to their department are following the rules for expenses. If the ministers are now not responsible for how their departments spend money, I'm not sure why we have ministers. Doesn't the management board have the ability to make sure that expense policies are being followed? A rhetorical question. The message the government is sending with this bill is that they don't even trust themselves to manage the public finances, so how can taxpayers be expected to trust them to manage the public finances? I just don't believe that you can rely on this government, especially when it comes to integrity.

I worked for a large corporation. We knew the rules for expenses and we followed them. There was nothing unclear about what we could expense and what we couldn't. We followed those rules, and if you tried to expense something that wasn't appropriate, you weren't reimbursed for it. This government shouldn't need an arm's-length agency to make sure that they are following the rules. As we have said time and time again in here, this government has such a culture of entitlement that it feels it needs outside supervision—daycare, in other words.

Of course, maybe their plan is the same as their plan to have that outside auditor review the eHealth scandal. Members of this House will remember, and I hope the television audience watching today and tonight will remember, that the Premier announced with great gusto and fanfare in this House that PricewaterhouseCoopers was going to do an investigation. Unfortunately, and after the House rose a few weeks later, the Premier had to announce that PricewaterhouseCoopers's investigation wasn't going to proceed after all because it wasn't really needed. Maybe that's the plan for this bill.

**1750**

I would be curious to know if the government has sought the opinion of the Integrity Commissioner—to get the plan from them on how they are going to manage these new responsibilities. I can understand why the government wants to move quickly on this bill. If I had had a summer of scandal like they had, I would want to turn the page quickly, too.

I think it's worth reminding people just how we got here in this place. First it was the eHealth scandal; everyone will remember eHealth. At eHealth it seemed to have been the norm to issue single-source, untendered contracts; contracts that, as luck would have it, seemed to go to their Liberal friends. Literally millions of tax-

payers' dollars went out the door in this fashion. Once the consultants were hired, they started billing—and did they know how to bill. They took Billing 101. After getting paid \$2,700 a day, they were also expensing coffee and muffins. Billing for expenses seemed to be their *raison d'être*. I would like to ask anyone out there if they would please contact my office if they're receiving \$2,700 a day or if they know anybody in their circle of friends who is. Well, the government stepped in and let a group of people go and thought the issue had gone away. Now I understand that some individuals are suing the government for wrongful dismissal.

We also can't forget the case of the \$25,000 speech. At least that's what it cost when it started. That was before the consultants reviewed it and offered their opinions on it. I would agree with the member for Durham and other members in this House when they stated that the CEO was earning over \$400,000 a year, so why couldn't that individual write their own speech? You would think for that kind of money they might have had something to write about.

Of course following the eHealth scandal, there was the OLG scandal. This is just further proof that you can't trust some people when it comes to managing these types of institutions. At OLG, we found out that the government acted to fire people, mainly, it seems, because they didn't agree to fire other people below them. Allegedly, the former CEO maintains that she was asked to find a scapegoat, and when she wouldn't do that, then the minister threw her under the bus. I can only imagine how interesting that lawsuit pending against the government for their actions at the OLG will be to watch. I wonder how much that is going to cost and what other issues will come out at that time.

Last week, the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka said that this government's only plan for job creation is to hire more integrity officers to investigate Liberal scandals. I guess we should be thankful that they at least have a plan to increase employment. It would be reassuring if it weren't just written on the back of a napkin, though.

Ultimately, we support the intent of the bill. No one is against accountability, but we believe they don't need another layer of bureaucracy just to know whether or not employees of the government are following the rules. We do have concerns that even with this bill nothing will stop the government from not following the rules. Bill 201 doesn't actually say that the government has to follow the advice of the Integrity Commissioner. I would hope that if you go to the trouble of asking someone to review your expense claims, that you would at that point then follow their advice. But that's not altogether clear.

This is a government that has a hard time following an Integrity Commissioner's advice. As a matter of fact, the same minister who introduced this bill was himself found to be contravening the Members' Integrity Act a number of years ago and was censured by the commissioner at that time. I believe, and I stand to be corrected, that he was the first minister in the history of Ontario to be found in contravention of this act, and he still sits here today as

a minister of this government, heralding a new era of accountability in government. That's why members of this House, and I'm sure the public at large, are a little suspicious of this act and the accountability that they have praised.

A number of agencies will be added to this. The new rules will apply to the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp., the OPG, Hydro One, the Independent Electricity System Operator, the Ontario Power Authority, the WSIB, the LCBO, eHealth, Cancer Care Ontario, the Ontario Infrastructure Projects Corp. and the Ontario Energy Board, to name a myriad of boards and commissions. One of the members on the government side said that when they were elected to government they noticed that the agencies, boards and commissions needed some changing. Well, I remind the individual that those people that have failed them and have come under scrutiny are

their own appointees. Maybe they should have left the members of the commissions that were there formerly because they seemed to be doing their job at the time.

I see I have less than a few seconds. In closing, I don't understand why the Premier doesn't just follow the old adage of Harry S. Truman: The buck stops here. Apparently with this Premier and government, the buck stops somewhere else. From the stories so far, it seems to be in a lot of lobbyists' pockets. I'll close my remarks with that.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** It being almost 6 o'clock, I declare that this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1755.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
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Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
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<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
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Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<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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Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
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Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	

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<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b> Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts  Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
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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) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
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Mauro, Bill (LIB) <b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan 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
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Mitchell, Carol (LIB) Moridi, Reza (LIB) <b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	Huron–Bruce Richmond Hill York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
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Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O’Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
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 Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
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<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L’hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
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Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
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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 Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
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Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
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<b>Takhar, Hon. / L’hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
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Carol Mitchell, Shafiq Qaadri  
Elizabeth Witmer  
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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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