



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 40th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 40^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 23 November 2011

Mercredi 23 novembre 2011

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Wednesday 23 November 2011

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mercredi 23 novembre 2011

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please join me in our prayers.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Consideration of the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Mr. Michael Coteau: I move, seconded by Mrs. Sandals, that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Don Valley East has moved that we, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

The member from Don Valley East.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to also congratulate the member from Brant on his recent appointment as Speaker.

I would also like to share my time with the member from Guelph.

Interjection: What a combination. Oh, wow.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Thank you.

It's a great honour to respond to the throne speech and to serve in the 40th parliamentary session of the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It is a privilege to gain the confidence of the people of my riding of Don Valley East and to represent my constituents' interests and to be their voice in this House. I am committed to working on behalf of my constituents and with my colleagues in this Legislature to strengthen the province of Ontario.

Don Valley East is a diverse riding. Over 60% of the residents are immigrants to Canada from areas all around the globe. This diversity enriches the cultural fabric of Don Valley East. The unemployment rate in our riding, however, is higher than the national average. This leaves

many residents from all walks of life struggling to find work. My constituents believe that education, job creation and skill training must be given a high priority. They know that this government is committed to this imperative.

This riding also contains a large population of senior citizens. The increasing number of seniors over the next decade will require us to focus on initiatives such as home health care, an aging strategy and making home life more accessible, all of which will allow our seniors to remain engaged in their communities and to enjoy a better quality of life.

Like everyone here today, I owe much to this province. We are indebted to those who have served in this House during its long history and to those who have dedicated their time to help shape this province. I feel privileged to continue this undertaking, one that plays such an important role in the quality of life in Ontario and the key services which we rely on.

I'd like to thank my family for giving me the support to seek this office: my wife, Lori, who is the foundation of our family and who provides me with the love and stability to dedicate my life to helping others. To my beautiful daughters, Myla and Maren, who are the light of my life, thank you so much.

I would also like to thank my predecessor, David Caplan. David has been a public servant for 20 years, and he has represented Don Valley East as a school board trustee and as a member of provincial Parliament. He leaves behind a strong legacy in the community, built on effectively serving the residents of Don Valley East. So, on behalf of the residents of my community, thank you, David, for your long dedication to public service.

My family came to Canada in the mid-1970s, from England. My mother, Sandra Hawley, the daughter of a coal miner from Barnsley, Yorkshire, and my father, Joseph Coteau, the son of a farmer from a small island off the coast of Grenada, called Carriacou, arrived in this country with dreams and hopes of a better life for themselves and their children. My family settled in North York and our Canadian journey began.

I was fortunate enough to grow up in an area with many Ontarians who shared my family's story of a recent arrival. I lived in an apartment building full of families from all parts of the world with whom I could relate. I also met Canadians who could trace their family roots throughout many generations in the history in this country. These are the early experiences of living among people from many different cultural backgrounds that

helped lay my foundation to my personal philosophy of what makes this province so special.

This province has a beautiful heritage, full of tradition and culture, and has become globally admired for taking the best from many cultures and adopting it as its own. My mother and father instilled in my brothers and I the value of hard work. My father, a washing machine repairman, and my mother, a superintendent of a building, worked tirelessly to ensure that we were provided with an opportunity to find successful and productive lives.

My parents, with the help of a strong public education built on generations of hard-working Ontarians, provided me with the skills necessary to take on the challenge of the world around me. I've always considered myself lucky and fortunate to have the support of my family, and we were grateful to have food on the table and parents who earned enough to live comfortably.

In my high school days, I witnessed friends in school who were often left to fend for themselves, attending school hungry—young men who were living on the streets by the age of 14 and some who are no longer with us, victims of violent crime. It's their stories that inspired me to do more for my community, to be involved and to stand up for those who are sometimes not able to do so because regular life carries so much weight.

I'm thankful for a public education that did not give up on me. This is one of the reasons I'm standing before you here today. I have had teachers who have gone the extra mile because they recognized that I was worth the effort. Our public education system enables families, regardless of socio-economic status, to give their children the opportunity to realize their full potential. Our education system is the envy of the world, a vehicle through which our children and our grandchildren will achieve their hopes and dreams. It is a cornerstone of democracy in our great province, and something I will work hard every day to strengthen and protect.

It was in high school where I first became interested in politics. One day, outside of my apartment window, I noticed a group of children playing on the ice that formed in the community swimming pool. It was early spring and the ice was beginning to melt. I yelled down to them, warning them that the ice could break at any time—without success. I went to the superintendent of the building and explained my situation. I asked him if he could have someone fix it, because I was scared something might happen to those children.

0910

The next day there were more kids playing on the ice, so I went down to see the superintendent again, and he told me there was nothing he could do; he already had informed the rental company. After waiting a couple of days—nothing changed—I decided to contact the rental company myself. They advised me that it soon would be fixed.

At that point, I decided to call for help. I opened up my white pages and found the number of my local politician. I had very limited knowledge of what elected officials did, but I decided to call. Within an hour of

making the call, there was a person fixing a hole in that fence. The next day I got a follow-up call to see if the work had been done, and I couldn't believe what happened.

I was surprised, I was in awe, I was shocked, but I was hooked: A 17-year-old boy had a voice. At that point in my life, I didn't know the difference between political parties, ideologies, what issues were making headlines, but I knew one thing: An effective politician could really make a difference in his or her community.

Over the next decade, I went to university, studied politics, worked for a federal cabinet minister and volunteered with organizations that aimed to help people. After finishing school, I had the opportunity to work overseas in South Korea for a couple of years. The transition was understandably difficult. Because of the language barrier, I couldn't enjoy the morning paper or relax in the evening while watching television, and I found it difficult to communicate with people. It was a real eye-opener for me. I was illiterate, lonely, isolated and cut off from the world I was used to. I understood what it was like to be a newcomer who could not speak, write or read the local language.

It was because of the kindness of others that I began to learn how to speak Korean and read and write the language. This serves as a constant reminder to me that as Canadians, we should always reach out to people who are newcomers to this country to lend a helping hand, and that a little bit of kindness can make a world of difference with a newcomer.

When I arrived back in Canada, I decided to run for public office, and I put my name forward as trustee for Don Valley East. My motivation came from my personal experience, but also from my disapproval of policy decisions implemented by the provincial government at that time: Schools were being shut down because of political friction and labour unrest, the dropout rate in Toronto was too high, there was rising poverty and despair among marginalized communities, young people were being suspended from school at an alarming rate, teachers and educational workers were demoralized, and there were many communities in Toronto that just felt left out. I wanted to do my part to help young people in our city reach their full potential. I knew first-hand that education could open doors for those who often felt locked in.

We know that a good education changes lives. It provides people with an opportunity to make their dreams come true and allows them to fully participate in the world around them. When I'm invited into schools to speak to young people, I often talk about the power of education. The fact is that those who learn more tend to live longer, happier lives. Those who learn more are less likely to end up on the wrong side of the law and are more likely to become contributing members of their community. There's simply no doubt that the more one learns, the more one ends up earning throughout their life. They're usually healthier and less likely to adopt bad habits or addictive behaviour.

On December 1, 2003, I took the oath of a school board trustee and, over an eight-year period, I had the opportunity and privilege to represent my community at the Toronto District School Board. As a trustee, I had a first-hand experience of this government in action. With restricted funding, this government has continued to invest in education, making it one of its top priorities. This government has done many great things, and I've seen first-hand how it's benefited our public school system across this province. We have increased test scores, reduced the dropout rate, lowered class sizes, increased educational funding, decreased suspension and expulsion rates, and created full-day kindergarten classes.

But along with this great list of accomplishments, there are some less well-known initiatives that have taken place; projects initiated because it was the right thing to do, projects like Focus on Youth. This project was developed in Toronto, and now it's in many urban cities across the province. This program provides young people summer opportunities by offering free school space to organized, community-based programs and providing employment opportunities and leadership activities for young people.

Or the School Food and Beverage Policy: This new moratorium singlehandedly removed the use of lard and trans fats in our schools. It removed high fat and sodium content from top-selling items like hamburgers, pizza, patties and poutine. These are the kinds of initiatives that this government has invested its time and energy into to ensure that children are set up for success and are given the opportunity to live healthier lives, which is a benefit not only to them, but also eases the burden on our health care system.

In addition to my work at the school board, I have been working in social services and the literacy sector for the last several years. As a community organizer, and more recently as the executive director of a national literacy organization, literacy has become a strong passion of mine. According to Statistics Canada and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, in 2005 four out of 10 adult Canadians aged 16 to 65, representing nine million Canadians, struggled with low literacy. We know that literacy impacts lives. People with low literacy are more likely to be unemployed and they tend to work in occupations with lower skill requirements. About 80% of those with high literacy levels are employed, in comparison to 57% of those with low literacy levels.

As our economy shifts and nations around the world become more competitive, we need to make sure that our workforce has the skills necessary to take on the challenges of the new global economy, the new digital economy. It is important to note that adult learners with low levels of literacy are often being left behind and often trail young learners when it comes to digital literacy. There's much more we can do to ensure that adult learners gain the comprehensive digital literacy skills they need to fully participate in our society, so that they too can compete in a world where economic and digital

literacy are increasingly becoming linked. We live in a time of constant technological advancements, and as these innovations improve, so should digital education. It is a crucial element in the way Ontarians, both young and old, will be able to compete in this global economy.

From the time of my youth to the present day, I have viewed the political arena as a place where we can work to improve the lives of our fellow citizens. My purpose is informed by the historical legacy of others who have built what we cherish in this province. It is this sense of purpose and direction that will guide me here today.

I want to thank, again, the residents of my riding of Don Valley East for allowing me to serve as their member and for providing me with the mandate to help others in need and to fight for their causes, representing their interests.

Though we live in the greatest province in the greatest country in the world, we can do better. We can do more to enrich the lives of Ontarians, and we've seen in other governments that simple solutions to complex problems have never worked. Many of our challenges are significant, and it will take a great deal of intellectual capital and personal resolve to meet and find those solutions.

The author and activist Fredrick Douglass once wrote: "If there is no struggle, there is no progress." These words give me hope that together, we can make a difference to our fellow Ontarians and build a stronger, more equitable province for our children and grandchildren.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Guelph.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Let me begin, first of all, Madam Speaker, by congratulating you on your re-election. It's nice to see you back in the chair, and we look forward to continuing to work with you.

And my sincere congratulations to the member from Don Valley East. Congratulations on your election victory, and congratulations on your maiden speech. I'm not sure why speeches are female, that they're maiden, but—I'm not sure how that happened.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: You don't want to go there.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I won't go there, as to women talk a lot. I just won't go there.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Rosie knows, though.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm not asking Rosie.

But the tradition of the maiden speech around here is really very important, because it allows us to get to know the new members in a way where we learn something about the new members and why they're here. I'm very much looking forward, because there's lots of new members, to hearing all of your maiden speeches so that we can all get to know each other. But, Michael, it was interesting that while our family backgrounds are very different, what got us here was distress over what was happening in education and a passion to fix it.

0920

The motion at hand has to do with the throne speech. Considering what His Honour had to say yesterday when

he spoke to us from the throne about looking forward, it was interesting that the Lieutenant Governor spoke to us and emphasized that we are dealing with very difficult times. But while there was a recognition of those difficult times, there was also a sense of optimism that, in fact, we can make progress. There was a sense of optimism that Ontario can meet the global challenges and build on our advantages and that we can, in fact, work together to build a stronger economy in Ontario. We can work together to create more jobs in Ontario so that all our Ontario families can survive this recession, these difficult economic times, and come out in a position to move forward. While there was that recognition of difficulty, I was very pleased that there was also that sense of optimism, that we can move forward.

The Lieutenant Governor explained the serious times we face in respect to the debt crisis in Europe. It's interesting that the world economy, because of the debt crisis in Europe, has actually deteriorated since the time when we tabled our budget last March. But even since the end of the campaign period, we've seen a further deterioration in the world economic situation, driven by Europe.

It's interesting: My husband and I actually managed to get a bit of a holiday after the election was over, and we happened to be in France when the Greek crisis was at its height. We were getting media from the perspective not just of the sort of North American spectator sport of looking at the EU and what's happening there, but we were getting the media reports from the perspective of the British and the French, who, while they weren't directly involved in Greek politics, were obviously going to be much more dramatically and immediately affected. It certainly gave you a sense of the fragility of the whole European economy and the fact that when one country doesn't deal with its debt, it can have that cascading effect, that domino effect, of dragging everybody else down with them.

We also, obviously, are quite aware of the situation that we have with our American neighbour and the understanding that the US seems to have this chronic inability to pull itself out of recession, to pull itself into actually dealing with its debt and its debt crisis.

So with all of this, the world economists, as we know, have downgraded their expectations of growth not just here in Ontario, and I'm sure that the Minister of Finance will have more to say about that this afternoon in his fall economic update. But world economists are telling us that the entire world can expect slower growth than was originally projected when we were looking at budgets, platforms, all of these things.

That's something that members of all parties share. It's simply the reality that we face, and we must work together to figure out how we can resolve that in Ontario or at least manage it in Ontario. But the reality is that Ontario is facing a period of slow growth, just like the rest of the world, and that's the challenge that we all face.

Now, the flip side of that—and there is a flip side—is that in Ontario we've already done some of the hard

lifting. We've already done some of the hard work. So, if you look at some of the things that we've already done—as everybody knows, we've quite dramatically altered our tax system, and in particular by decreasing the taxes on business investment. They've been cut in half since 2009. Because we started to make that move back at the beginning of the recession and started to cut the taxes back then on business investments, what has happened is that Ontario has become more competitive and more welcoming to business growth. So in fact, if you look at Ontario's recent record—we don't have the 2011 results, but we do know what happened in 2010. We know that in 2010 the Financial Times of London named Ontario a top destination for foreign investment in North America. In other words, Ontario, amongst all the North American subnational jurisdictions, has become a magnet for people who want to invest and grow new business. That's a good thing.

Ontario also now has the highest rate of post-secondary educational attainment among the 34 OECD countries—that's the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The member from Don Valley East, in his maiden speech, gave a very eloquent explanation of why it is so important that we invest in education, both for our littlest folks but also particularly at the post-secondary level, so that we can have that economic competitiveness. We know, in fact, that Ontario is never going to win a battle with other jurisdictions on low wage costs. Quite frankly, we don't want to win a battle with other jurisdictions on low wage costs. That's not our market niche. Our market niche is high-skilled workers. Our market niche is attracting investment that takes advantage of a highly skilled workforce. The data simply says that we are there in terms of post-secondary education. If we continue to address that and make that even stronger in terms of the education and skills of our workforce, we have an opportunity to attract even more investment to Ontario.

If I think about my own riding, I'm very proud of some of the programs that are offered by the community college in the Waterloo-Wellington area. Conestoga College has a very interesting degree program in applied engineering where the students are learning not just the academic and theoretical side of engineering but very practical skills. The graduates from that program are snapped up by business as pure gold because they not only have the theoretical knowledge; they know, in a very practical way, how to apply that theoretical knowledge. That's an example of a program where Ontario's graduates can compete very much with the rest of the world, with the rest of North America.

Because we are talking about the speech from the throne, some of you may be interested to know that if any of you have associations with Guelph, what was the old biology building has just been totally retrofitted as a result of the federal-provincial infrastructure investments in post-secondary education. That building has been totally retrofitted and is now a hub for environmental sciences at the University of Guelph. The reason I men-

tion this in the context of the speech from the throne is that a former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Lincoln Alexander, is the chancellor emeritus, a long-serving chancellor at the University of Guelph. That new environmental sciences building, or the retrofitted building, was just last week named after Lincoln Alexander and is now Alexander Hall. So we can be very proud of our former Lieutenant Governor, Lincoln Alexander, but that's another example of educational programs in Ontario which are educating graduates to be able to turn themselves out and have the skills in environmental sciences that business is looking for.

0930

We're not alone in government-generated education. We also have a very strong business sector focusing on innovative new technologies and bringing research ideas into actual practical applications. So again, when I look at some of the things that are happening in my own riding of Guelph, obviously clean energy technologies is something where Ontario has been very successful in developing innovative new technologies. Guelph is a hub, really, for solar energy.

What's probably less known is that Ontario is also becoming a hub for clean water technologies and also clean air technologies. I have a couple of companies in Guelph that are doing extraordinarily innovative work. One, ENPAR, has got some water technologies, in terms of cleansing waste water, that are attracting attention the world over. Another company, Biorem, has technologies that can be used for odour control and for air quality which are being used both in the municipal sewage waste management sector and also in the industrial air quality control sector. So we're doing some really exciting things in Ontario and we have—

Interruption.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Sorry, I'm laughing here. I should explain to the viewers that one of the rules is that while we all have BlackBerrys hidden away here, you're not supposed to let them ring, and one of the new members just got caught by the Sergeant-at-Arms for the first time with her ringing phone. But we'll all learn the rules. It's okay. And a lot of the veteran members still haven't figured out how to turn their phones off either.

Anyway, we actually have a lot of opportunities here in Ontario. So between the challenges and the opportunities, that's exactly what the throne speech recognized, Speaker—and it's great to see you in the chair there. Congratulations. We're having revolving Speakers this morning.

When we look at the throne speech, it outlines a serious plan on how Ontario can move forward, both recognizing the serious times that we're in, the challenging times, but also recognizing the opportunities that we have to move forward, to grow the economy, to create jobs and to have Ontario emerge from this mandate stronger than ever. We are, and I make no apology for this, focused on implementing our campaign plan because we believe that our campaign plan is a good plan. We campaigned on it. It has some very important

initiatives in it and we are going to focus on those very important initiatives.

The initiatives that are pulled out as a focus are initiatives that I think have a common theme, and the common theme of those initiatives is that they have two strengths. In each case, they help individuals and individual families. We recognize that families are struggling and that we need to support Ontario families, so the initiatives that we're going to focus on moving forward help individual families. But while helping individual families, each of those initiatives also helps to grow the Ontario economy; they also support economic development. So if I was going to say there's a common theme in the initiatives that we're focusing on, it's that they have the advantage of both helping families and helping the economy at the same time. I think that's a very valuable approach that we're taking, and that was recognized in the speech from the throne yesterday.

Let me talk about some of those specific initiatives that were mentioned as highlights in the speech yesterday. First of all, let's talk about my first love: education. Of course, we recognized that we need to move forward with the implementation of full-day kindergarten, because it is important that while we're dealing with an immediate crisis, a short-term crisis, we take the long view in how we respond to that crisis so that we're not just responding to the crisis, but we're also setting up the conditions for future economic success while we address the immediate challenges. Certainly, full-day kindergarten is one of those programs that we're very proud of, where we are addressing not just the immediate need to make sure that little folks have a good start, but the long-term educational needs. So we will carry on with full-day kindergarten.

We're also going to pursue the 30% tuition cut for college and university students, for undergraduate post-secondary students. It's interesting: I come from a university town, so it's sort of fairly obvious that the students in my university town were very, very pleased to hear about a 30% tuition cut for middle-income families. That was obviously very well received by the students, and you would expect that.

But what was interesting was that before we announced our platform—and I started going door to door back in June and went all summer. Before we announced our platform, as I was going door to door in average, everyday neighbourhoods in Guelph, I was often hearing from families—and not just the parents of post-secondary students but also the grandparents of post-secondary students—who talked about how they recognize the importance of making sure that their sons and daughters got a post-secondary education, be it at college or university or in the apprenticeship area. But they talked about how difficult they were finding it to be able to afford the tuition, particularly if they happened to have two or three young people in university or college at the same time. I heard the same thing from grandparents, not just parents: grandparents who were concerned about whether their grandchildren would be able to afford to go to post-

secondary education, because the grandparents too recognize the importance of post-secondary education for their grandchildren.

This was an issue that the community was raising to me before the platform came: the challenge of getting their post-secondary-age offspring into college and university. So I was obviously absolutely thrilled, when our platform was announced, that there will be a 30% tuition cut, and that's something that we will be pursuing.

Just to give people a little bit more detail about how that works, it will apply to families with a family income of less than \$160,000. The 30% tuition cut is calculated based on the average undergraduate tuition. As you do the calculation this year, if a student is in university, 30% of the average annual tuition this year is \$1,600 per year, per student. College tuitions are cheaper, so if you were to do 30% of the average college tuition this year, that would be a \$730 increase.

0940

Now, I want to say that I know the Conservative caucus campaigned against this, so I want to speak to the NDP caucus, because what I found at all-candidates meetings was that you too were interested in how to manage tuition costs for post-secondary. What I was finding was that there was a misconception, I think, in the NDP speaking notes, because my NDP candidate, who was a very good candidate, had this discussion sometimes at debates. Because of the way the tuition cut is calculated—that is, 30% of the average—if tuition goes up, then 30% of the average will go up. So the way we are calculating the tuition cut means that it's automatically indexed. I know the NDP was more interested in a freeze on tuition, but what we're doing—cutting tuition this way—means it's actually automatically indexed. So the 30% level will continue to be there. As I said, that's going to help individual families manage their costs.

But because we also know that 70% of the jobs in the new economy are going to require a post-secondary education, we're also going to ensure that our workers of the future are well educated and able to take those jobs, particularly the jobs that we want to attract to Ontario as we move forward. So, again, there's this combination of helping families and supporting economic development.

We also want to be sure that, as we help families afford post-secondary education, there will be space for every student at college and university. In our first two terms, we added 200,000 spaces at college and university. We will plan, during this mandate, to add 60,000 additional spaces at college and university, and one of the ways in which we are proposing to do that is to set up three new undergraduate campuses in Ontario to make sure that that capacity is there to deal with all the qualified students in Ontario. To me, that's very exciting news, indeed: that we're going to be moving forward on the education portfolio.

Another thing that we hear about, of course, constantly—and you hear about it when you knock on the doors of families—is the concern about seniors. We all know that it's a matter of demographic fact that the proportion

of the population who are seniors is going to grow. There are going to be more seniors in Ontario; that's one of the realities with which we need to plan for the future in Ontario.

What we also know is that seniors prefer, if possible, to live at home. Who wouldn't prefer to live at home? They want to have a comfortable home, a home where they feel connected to the community. To quote Joanne Young Evans, who is the president of Guelph Independent Living, "Seniors will tell you, and have told those who will listen, how ... the Aging at Home program has kept many from moving into long-term care."

Aging at Home tends to focus on health and social supports, and that's a big and important part of the story on Aging at Home, but the other piece of the story on Aging at Home is that sometimes home just physically doesn't work. There are physical impediments to staying at home that have to do with the structure of the home itself. So what we are proposing is to create a healthy home renovation tax credit. This would be a tax credit where the person renovating the home for the senior—and it might be a situation where the senior mom lives with the daughter and her family, so it isn't even necessarily mom's original home. It might be the family home where mom is now living. But if there is a problem with accessibility in that home, for example, the tax credit would apply to that, and it would be up to \$1,500 annually on a home renovation.

These would be things like: What happens if you want to have a ramp so you can get in and out of the front door? Obviously, if you're living at home, you want to be able to come and go into the community. So it might be building a ramp. Lots of us have two-storey houses; what if you can't get up the steps to the bedroom? Well, you could have a chair lift installed on the steps. What about tubs? Tubs are often difficult. You might need to change the tub in the family bathroom into a bathroom with a walk-in shower instead. There are all sorts of physical impediments that we can help seniors to address.

Again, that supports the senior in staying in their home. It supports the family in helping their mom or dad to stay in a home. It also supports the economy, because we have the experience of knowing from previous tax credits which are related to home renovations that when there's a tax credit related to home renovation, the home renovation part of the construction industry picks up. This is going to stimulate the home renovation sector within the construction industry and create jobs in home renovation, so we're not only helping families, but we're also supporting economic development and economic growth and creating jobs here in Ontario.

Now, as I mentioned before, one of the things that is the companion piece to the physical reno to the home is making sure that the community supports are there to support that. We know that as seniors age there is a high demand for home care services, so what we are also committed to doing is providing the personal support necessary for seniors to stay in their homes. So we will be providing more support for home care for seniors.

Again, this helps the individual, but it also helps us as taxpayers because if somebody can stay in their own home or in a family home rather than requiring long-term care or hospitalization, that's actually good for us as taxpayers, because it's much more cost-effective to support people staying in their own homes than it is to have to institutionalize people in some way through long-term-care homes or hospitalization. So again, there's this dual approach of helping families and supporting economic growth and job creation.

Now, one of the other things that we're going to do—and this is one that only obliquely applies to my riding but I think is very, very important—is the fact that we have committed to public transit. That is important in my riding, that we're committing to public transit. In particular, we are committed to making sure that we're going to start introducing all-day two-way GO train service.

0950

Again, that's good for the economy. We're helping people get to work. We're helping the environment by getting more people on transit, cutting down on the demand for new highways, or at least making sure trucks can get through a little bit more quickly. So there are some economic aspects to that, but it absolutely helps the individual commuters, who need to get back and forth to work in a way which is much more efficient than sitting in a car.

The reason I say that this obliquely affects my riding, and also the member for Kitchener Centre's, is that in that philosophic commitment to public transit, we are also extending the Georgetown GO line out to Guelph and Kitchener. More on that soon—but again, great initiatives that will help individual families and help us grow the economy.

Okay, so you say, "But you are ignoring the problem that you started off with, which is debt and deficit and economic challenge. You can't ignore that." You're absolutely right. We can't; we don't intend to. We know that we've got some tough challenges there, and we know that we're going to have to manage the deficit. That is part of our plan.

Even though we understand that we are facing a period of quite slow growth, we remain committed to balancing the budget by the 2017-18 fiscal year. Interestingly, that was the commitment which was made by all parties and is now actually the commitment that's being made by the federal government: The target for balancing the budget is 2017-18. I think that in this House we have agreement on that. I certainly know that when we were debating during the campaign, all or almost all of the candidates agreed on that. The Conservative candidate, the NDP candidate, the Green Party candidate and, obviously, the Liberal candidate all agreed that the target was to get the budget balanced by 2017.

Now, I must admit that the Communist candidate and the independent anarchist candidate had a viewpoint that we should ignore the deficit. And the Libertarian thought we should have the budget balanced—and more—tomorrow because he was just going to cut all public services.

But in terms of anybody who's actually represented in this House, 2017-18 is the target we all set and which I presume we all remain committed to. Certainly, the government remains committed to that target.

We know that we're going to have to look very carefully at some strategies on how we rein in government spending. To that end, Don Drummond has been appointed to have a look at our expenditures and make some proposals on how we can deliver services to the people of Ontario more efficiently and more effectively. That report will be coming out after Christmas sometime, and I think we will all look with great interest at the suggestions that Mr. Drummond makes.

But this is not an exclusive opportunity for Mr. Drummond to make suggestions. We welcome suggestions from both of the parties as to how we can deliver government services more effectively and more efficiently, and of course we welcome suggestions from all sorts of stakeholders and the public as well. This is going to be a very difficult discussion, and the more of us who put our constructive suggestions on how we can use tax dollars more effectively, the more ideas we have, the better the chance of finding the really good ideas there and figuring out how we're going to work through this.

The speech did outline some principles. As we look at, "How do we spend taxpayer dollars more effectively?" it did set out a number of principles that we are committed to following. I'd just like to review the principles that were laid out in the speech from the throne.

First off, health care and education are the most important public services for Ontario families, so any reforms must not compromise the quality of health care or education services. We reject across-the-board cuts, the sort of thing where you go in and say, "Okay, we're just going to cut everything in every ministry by X%." We don't think that works very well. We've seen that approach with the previous government, and that's too blunt an instrument. If we're going to find the places where we can be more effective and more efficient, we don't just come in and do the across-the-board slash and burn. We do reject that approach.

That approach would inevitably mean deep cuts to health and education, because when you look at where we spend the most money in this province, we spend the most money in health care and education. So as soon as you start to talk about across-the-board cuts, you are by definition saying, "We're going after health care and education," in a very blunt way. We're rejecting that.

Any reforms must help the province get better value for money through improved efficiencies and greater productivity. A great example of that—because I think sometimes people wonder what we're talking about when we talk about value for money—is what we already did: the good work of Minister Matthews, the Minister of Health, on controlling the cost of generic drugs, where we were able to come in and say, "Ontarians are spending too much for generic drugs." We were able to bring in changes to the way we pay for generic drugs and to bring down the cost of generic drugs, and with the sav-

ings we were able to add new drugs to the formulary. That's value for money. We're getting a bigger bang for the buck and better access to new drugs, and Ontarians are paying generic drug prices that are now similar to what was already happening in the US and Europe.

That's a great example of the sort of projects that we're looking for, in terms of value for money. We think we can find more of those and continue to deliver great services, but in a more cost-effective way. Those would be some of the principles that we've already set out.

In addition to that sort of, "We have to have a discussion," there are some very specific things we're already doing. We're on target to cut the size of the public service by 5% by March 2012. We've been actually working on that for several years, and we had set the target of 5% by March 2012. We are on target to achieve that, and we are going to set a target of a further 2% decrease in the size of the public service by 2014. That will produce some significant savings for Ontario taxpayers.

We're also going to look at major agencies and identify savings in some of the major agencies: \$200 million is the target by 2014. Many people are totally unaware that one of the things that we actually did last spring was we identified about a dozen agencies that had outlived their usefulness and simply got rid of the agencies. That's something that we're hoping to continue to do: Where an agency can either be combined with other agencies so that we're not duplicating, or just simply has outlived its usefulness, we need to look at, do we need those agencies?

And then the other commitment we have made is that, in cases where new spending isn't part of the plan that we have laid out in the speech from the throne—and inevitably, ministers do come to the treasury board and say, "Oh, this wasn't in the plan but I need X million dollars to do whatever." The minister will be told, "If you really need to do that, find the savings within your budget. If it isn't in the plan, we're not doing a whole bunch of other new stuff."

So we do have a very detailed and sound plan here for dealing with the deficit. It's interesting: When I was going door to door, it's the first time people have ever really said, "What about the deficit? What are you going to do about that?" And when I said to people, "You know, we promised less than any other party. Our campaign platform makes less promises than anybody else's," people said, "Great. I'm glad to hear that." Because what voters said was, "We don't believe you anymore. If a politician comes to my door and says, 'I'm going to cut your taxes and give you more,' I don't believe you." Well, we don't believe it either, so that's why we told voters, "We're not going to cut your taxes, we're not going to increase your taxes, and we're not going to promise you the world." But we do believe that we can manage the deficit and continue to make some key investments in the Ontario economy that will help Ontario families and allow us to continue to grow the Ontario economy and create jobs.

I want to heartily endorse the speech from the throne which His Honour read to us yesterday, and encourage

our colleagues across the floor to also give very serious consideration to endorsing the speech from the throne, because we do need a plan for Ontario to collectively move forward, to meet the challenges but also to seize the opportunities. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Yakabuski has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Orders of the day?

Hon. John Milloy: No further business, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): There being no further business, I declare the House recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1003 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Okay, off we go. Introduction of visitors, our guests to Queen's Park. Are there any introductions? Yes, member.

Mr. John O'Toole: The member from Durham. I'd like to introduce some of my guests.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): From Durham? I wouldn't have known. The member from Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your new duties. Warren McCarthy, Cindy Taub, Joy Tavener, Sierra Tavener and Brenda Tavener are visiting from my riding of Durham.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from—I wouldn't have known either—Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Speaker. I'm sure you'll get to know that riding name well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's the longest in the House.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'd like to welcome and introduce a good friend and chief financial officer from my riding association, Shawn Morrison from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins-James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm ecstatic that you know my riding name; this is a good thing.

I'd like to introduce Fred LeBlanc and Mark McKinnon from the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that Mr. Hudak, the member from the electoral

district of Niagara West–Glanbrook, is recognized as the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. I'm told to rejuvenate a tradition to introduce Her Majesty's loyal opposition, and I decided that was a good idea.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN THE LEGISLATURE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do beg the indulgence of the House to make members aware of certain new developments with respect to technology and the distribution of information at the Legislative Assembly.

Members may have noticed by now that at the entrance point of each of the chamber lobbies, we have installed an electronic bulletin board. This will display information on upcoming events in the building, committee meetings, schedules, construction alerts and other announcements. The intent is to provide members with an update and easy means of finding out the dates, times and locations of various activities at Queen's Park.

In addition, the live broadcast of the House proceedings on the Legislative Assembly's website has recently been upgraded. Aside from some behind-the-scenes technological improvements, the service is now available on most smart phones and tablets. Members and citizens of Ontario can access the webcast on their mobile devices through the link on the Legislative Assembly's website.

Finally, members will be delighted to know and learn that the Legislative Assembly is proceeding through the 21st century at lightning speed and is currently engaged in the installation of WiFi access points throughout the building.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All right, I'm not taking a vote on this.

As you might imagine, the age of and construction of the building have caused some challenges in this regard. While some access points currently exist, the thick walls do require a more extensive installation appliance for other areas. Notwithstanding those difficulties, we anticipate that full wireless capacity will not be too far off in the future.

I might add that this in no way alters the current rules against the use of electronic devices in this chamber. Thank you.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I just wanted to take this opportunity on behalf of all members of the government to congratulate you on your election as Speaker, to assure you of our wholehearted support and to say very much that we look forward to working with you in the interest of all Ontarians.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I'll hold you to that.

It is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Tim Hudak: Before I begin, Speaker, let me also say, on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, congratulations. I look forward to working with you. And, my goodness, in 24 hours, all those announcements. You sure move fast.

I also want to say, through you, Speaker, to the 31 new members of the assembly, of all three parties: I remember my first day here, back in 1995. It's a thrill to serve in this place and to be one of the 107 members who have the honour, of all the millions of Ontarians, to take their seat here. I want to say congratulations to all the new members, and welcome here to the assembly.

My question is to the Premier. Premier, the province of Ontario faces an extraordinary spending crisis. One option that we have brought forward that you have failed to deliver on is a public sector wage freeze to rein in runaway costs in the public service. Premier, do you agree that a public sector wage freeze is an important tool to rein in runaway government spending?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Thank you, Speaker; it is good to be back. It's especially good to be sitting on your right-hand side, I must say.

I want to, first of all, begin by extending to my honourable colleague my congratulations, to him and each and every member of his party, on their election and to again assure them of our desire to work with them in the interest of Ontarians.

I want to begin as well to say to the people of Ontario that they will recognize, of course, that we find ourselves living in turbulent times when it comes to the status of the global economy. There are yet more ill winds blowing out of Europe today. The US economy remains very much stagnant, and of course that's having a consequence on our economy here.

But we have a solid plan. We have a responsible plan. We will continue to invest in the skills and education of our people. We will invest in infrastructure. We will move ahead with our tax reforms. And we look forward to all the good ideas that might be offered by the opposition, including the leader of the official opposition himself, when it comes to measures we should put in place at the time of our upcoming budget.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, Speaker, maybe the Premier's opening the door, then. I asked him very directly if he supports a public sector wage freeze to rein in runaway costs. He seemed to indicate that his door is open to such. I'll ask him again.

Premier, as you know, about 60%, 60 cents on every dollar that the government spends, is on wages and benefits: compensation. If you truly want to rein in the cost of government spending, you have to do something about runaway wages and benefits. Let me ask you directly, because it sounds like you're now opening the

door: Do you support a public sector wage freeze in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to encourage my honourable colleague to take a look at, more specifically, what we have done to date. We have not funded wage increases for the public sector. My honourable colleague will know that when it comes to negotiated settlements by broader public sector employers, we have made it clear to them that should they negotiate something beyond zero, we will not in fact be funding that. They'll have to find those monies from within. So we have, in fact, stood up for taxpayers in that regard.

But where we think we need to move now is by way of introduction of new reforms into the way that we deliver services so that we can introduce more efficiencies and increase productivity inside government.

1040

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, that's what I was worried about, Speaker: The Premier has gone back to his old ways. He does not seem to be open to new ideas; he is simply saying that he hopes those in the broader public sector may get a wage freeze, and if they don't, well, then, they don't get any new money. But, Premier, you know that means they have to cut back on services.

What we need to do is to rein in the size and cost of government, and part of that should be, in our view, a mandatory public sector wage freeze across the public service. Premier, this will save you up to \$2 billion for a two-year wage freeze. It is a reasonable proposal. And at a time when those in the private sector have had to cut back, at a time when we've seen 75,000 private sector jobs leave this province since the election, Premier, isn't it reasonable to ask our public servants to take a pay freeze in the two years ahead?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I want to encourage my honourable colleague to take a look at last year's budget. If you take a look at page 53, and for the following 28 pages, there's a section there called "Managing Responsibly" that talks about saving \$1.5 billion. One of those measures involves reducing the size of the OPS by 7%. We'll have reduced it by 5% by the end of March of this coming year, and then 2% over the course of the next two years beyond that. That alone will save us \$500 million in permanent fashion. We think that's a thoughtful, measured, responsible way.

Again I say to my honourable colleague: We are particularly interested in the kinds of measures that will introduce new reforms so that we have permanent efficiencies that don't lead to catch-up costs coming down the road.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier. Well, you know, Premier, we did look at last year's budget, and your deficit has actually gone up to \$16 billion. While other provinces are seeing their deficits go down—seeing

the federal government's go down—you're actually increasing the deficit in the province of Ontario, and you had not one single new idea in yesterday's empty throne speech to take on the serious challenges we face.

Premier, we have a spending crisis in the province of Ontario, and all we get from you is warmed-up, old ideas—nothing new. It is not a serious plan, so we're going to help you out. Later today, we'll table an amendment to the throne speech to bring in a mandatory public sector wage freeze to help get spending under control.

Premier, it's the right thing to do. Will you support our initiative?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm hoping at some point in time that my honourable colleague will reference our shared responsibility to protect health care and education in Ontario.

I'll remind my honourable colleague as well that when we put in place those 400 new schools and those 18 new hospitals, and hired those 12,000 new nurses, those 10,000 more teachers and those water inspectors and meat inspectors, not once did any member of the opposition say, "I don't want any new schools in my riding. I don't want any new hospitals in my riding. I don't want any new meat inspectors and water inspectors in my riding."

The fact of the matter is, we did play some serious catch-up in improving the quality of our public services, and now, just as it was right to make those investments, it's our shared responsibility to ensure we put them on a sustainable footing, and we'll do that in a way that protects health care and protects education.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: You know, Premier, Ontario families sent us to Queen's Park with a very clear message: to stand up for taxpayers, to get spending under control, to actually reduce the size and cost of government, because we can't afford your runaway deficits anymore.

Premier, a very simple initiative, one that has taken place in British Columbia, one that Quebec did, one that we should do here in the province of Ontario—you brought in a voluntary public sector wage freeze that has been an utter failure over the last two years. It is time, Premier, to show leadership. It is time to have courage and take the next step. Premier, will you do the right thing, which other provinces have embraced in a fiscal crisis? Will you bring in a mandatory—not voluntary—public sector wage freeze in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to restate, for the benefit of my honourable colleague: We are not funding wage increases.

And I want to differ from him in terms of his interpretation of the mandate that we have all received here. Yes, Ontarians want us to be very careful with their money, but they also want us to protect their health care and their education. They also want us to bring our very best creative thinking to bear on introducing new reforms and efficiencies into the way that we deliver their public services.

So I think our mandate is a bit more complex than my honourable colleague might acknowledge. It's about a lot more than just getting the cost of government down. It's also about protecting health care and education. It's about introducing exciting new reforms and innovations into the way that we deliver government services so that they are on a sustainable footing, Speaker. That's how I see our mandate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, it is time for bold action. It is time to have some courage to rein in runaway government spending in the province. All we got from you in yesterday's throne speech was a bunch of fluff: old, warmed-over promises.

Premier, governments often like to brag about their first 100 days in office, but in your first 48, there has not been one new idea. It has been nothing but one 48-day slumber, and I'm not optimistic that in the next 52 days you'll bring in anything new.

Here is a good idea that has been adopted by other provinces, that President Obama has brought in in the States, that Prime Minister Cameron has brought in in Great Britain: If we want to actually be serious about runaway government spending, it is time for a mandatory public sector wage freeze here in Ontario.

We'll bring it forward. Will you allow your Liberal members to vote for the right thing, to finally take bold action here to rein in public spending?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, Speaker, I differ somewhat from my honourable colleague in terms of the interpretation of the mandate that we have together received.

I think Ontarians are looking for some stability; I think they're looking for some certainty. They want something that runs counter to what is unfolding in the global economy. They see the news pouring into their homes nightly about the challenges associated with the European economy, the world's biggest trading bloc, and about the challenges associated with the US economy, the world's biggest economy. They want to know what we can do here in Ontario to not only ensure that we are getting better value for their dollars, but do it in a way that protects health care, protects education, and introduces reforms and innovations into our public services.

That's the mandate that we see and that's the one that we intend to deliver on.

POWER PLANTS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The leader of the third party.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. Of course, on behalf of the New Democrats, I'd like to congratulate you on your position as the Speaker of the assembly and say that we will do our best to behave ourselves and help you with the dignity of the House.

I also want to say that it's really refreshing to see so many new faces in the Legislature. I'm sure that all of us

will be committed to working hard for the people of Ontario, because that's who put us here and that's who we need to respect.

Earlier this week, the Minister of Energy announced that there was going to be a cancellation of a nearly-built energy plant in Mississauga. My question is a simple one to the Premier: When is he going to disclose to us the cost of that cancellation?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, first, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the leader of the third party and each and every member of her caucus on their election to this Legislature, and assure her of our genuine desire to work together in the interests of the people of Ontario.

We're very pleased that we have been able to stop work at this particular site and that we have been able to honour a commitment made to the people living in that community. Right now, I can assure you that discussions are under way in earnest between the OPA and the builder involved, the company involved. Those discussions are complicated and they will take some time, but we will succeed in the end at protecting the interests of the people in that community, at relocating that plant and at ensuring as well that we do this for the lowest possible cost.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Gee, Speaker, I hope the Premier wasn't telling us that he has no idea how much this is going to cost.

Earlier this year, the Premier announced the cancellation of a similar plant in Oakville. Now media have reported that that cancellation is likely going to cost upwards of about \$1 billion. When is the Premier going to tell us exactly how much it's costing to cancel these plants?

1050

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: First of all, I want to take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank the leader of the third party for her support for the positions that we've taken with respect to both of these plants—not an uncontroversial decision in both cases, but it has been very good to have her support in both instances with respect to the decisions that we made.

Again, Speaker, I want to assure you, and Ontario taxpayers and electricity ratepayers, that there are discussions under way. We are doing everything we can to conclude those at the earliest possible opportunity, but they are necessarily complicated. At the same time, I want to assure you that the Minister of Energy is now looking at new standards to put in place when it comes to locating these plants in the first place.

We've already sited and have running seven others, Speaker. The last two, numbers 8 and 9, have proven to be more challenging, and we intend to ensure that we have the right kinds of standards that reflect Ontarians' values today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, maybe the Premier should take our advice far before he gets into these

deals. We wouldn't have to cancel them and cost the public a heck of a lot of money.

I think that we have asked very clearly for the Auditor General to have a look at these contracts and disclose to the public exactly what it's costing us, and I think that's what we need to do. Will the Premier agree to do that?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: You know, Speaker, it's up to the leader of the third party to ask whatever she might deem appropriate of the Auditor General.

What I can say is that we're going to work as hard as we can to move our electricity plan forward. We're not only rebuilding new generation of the more traditional variety like gas plants, we're not only expanding hydro-electric capacity, we're not only cleaning up our air, but we are seizing exciting new opportunities in the clean energy sector.

Last year was the first year that the world spent more on renewable technologies than they did on oil and gas. We know where the world is going; we're going to be there first. We're the strongest contender in North America today. We've created 20,000 jobs so far. Our intention is to create 50,000 by the end of the coming year.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the government's throne speech emphasized the fiscal challenges that are facing our province, yet the Premier keeps making decisions that erode this province's fiscal capacity. How can he explain this?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I'm sure I didn't hear the last bit of my honourable colleague's question.

What I can say is that we are seized with a number of challenges. One of those, of course, is to ensure that we find ways to grow this economy and to create more jobs, and our clean energy plan is a great example of Ontario seizing new opportunities. The other day, Speaker, I learned that when it comes to the gross revenues for the province of Alberta, for example, 40% of those revenues come from oil and gas royalties. We don't have that opportunity here in Ontario, so we've got to go out there and seize new opportunities as we are doing in clean, renewable technologies. We think clean water technology presents some wonderful opportunities here as well. We have a strong foundation of expertise in entrepreneurs and researchers here in Ontario and there is a growing global demand for what we have to offer, both in terms of technologies and services as well.

So, yes, we've got to ensure that we get our government spending in control, but at the same time, Speaker, we've got to make sure that we grow the economy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, since 2009, Ontario's largest corporations have received a 20% tax cut worth over \$1 billion. Meanwhile, people have seen their income erode. Why is the Premier spending scarce dollars on further corporate tax giveaways?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, my honourable colleague will know that we have, in fact, a balanced plan. If

you take a look at the 2010 budget, over the ensuing three years we're reducing the tax burden on individuals by \$12 billion and on our businesses by close to \$5 billion. Again: \$12 billion for our families; \$5 billion for our businesses.

It's easy to dislike corporations and businesses in the abstract, but they employ our people. I'm proud of the fact that foreign direct investment—for example, a publication in the UK has recently said that when you look at all of North America, the second-best place to invest, after California, is Ontario, Canada.

More recently, Forbes magazine in the US has said that Canada is now the best place in the world to invest, and that's because Ontario made its tax changes, including those my honourable colleague would have me now change back.

The foundation of a strong economy, in part, is a competitive tax system. That's what we're working hard to put in place, both for families and for businesses.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier talks about balance. I certainly don't know what balance looks like from his perspective, but here's the reality: Families were knocked for a loop during the recession, and their government didn't help them. Their ERs have been closed, and they got hit with the unfair HST. And often the very companies that laid them off benefited from the HST.

Why is the Premier planning once again to hit families when he's prepared to throw billions and billions of dollars out the door in corporate tax cuts, payoffs to private power companies and that kind of direction, when it's families that need a break in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I could go into a long list of what we've done for families, but why don't we talk about the future for a moment? I would ask my honourable colleague to consider supporting these measures that we want to put in place.

We will soon introduce in this House a provision to put in place a healthy homes renovation tax credit. That helps families in their homes; it also strengthens our economy, creates jobs and reduces pressure on the health care budget. We also want to introduce a new tuition grant that helps families in their homes. It also builds a stronger workforce, which means a more competitive economy in a highly competitive era of globalization. Those are practical, pragmatic, sensible ideas, and I would ask my honourable colleague to give some thought to supporting those because they, in fact, help families.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I wanted to make sure that the leaders had the opportunity to speak directly to the Premier. I want to make a point to the House: I've noticed a trend, and I am making a list—it's getting close to Christmas. I wanted to let you know that I've been hearing the back and forth, and I'm hoping that we can reverse that trend a little bit. Let's just keep it down and continue our questioning, please.

Member from Thornhill.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Peter Shurman: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, 20 months ago you promised the people of Ontario you'd get your house in order by implementing a public sector wage freeze. Given your track record, it's not surprising nobody here believed you would actually get the job done or keep your word. Sure enough, by every standard, you have failed. Your so-called wage freeze was anything but a wage freeze.

We have a plan to get your house in order: a legislated mandatory wage freeze for the public sector. Since your plan was an unmitigated disaster, will you now accept our plan?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Thank you for the question. We did lay out a plan where we did not fund compensation increases in the public and broader public sector. I note you haven't used the words "broader public sector," and you haven't addressed the issues around the ability of the government to do that legislatively. You haven't addressed the serious court issues that have been raised. I think we have a responsibility to look at all of those facts. I think we have a responsibility as a Legislature to look at those in the context of other difficult choices that will face us.

I concur that, as time goes on, we are going to have to take difficult choices. What I would ask my colleague opposite to do is to look at the challenges associated with a range of policy options so that we can get it right. I was actually quite pleased when your party adopted our budget numbers in your platform; that was a wise choice. Built into that was zero wage increase for both the public and the broader public sectors. You did torque up your revenue numbers, which the auditor likely would find kind of laughable, especially now.

We laid out a plan. That plan is working. It is creating jobs. We're in difficult times in the world. We will continue to respond in a balanced, reasonable and fair fashion to get Ontario back on to a strong footing for a better future.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Shurman: Minister, getting public sector salaries under control is not the only place that you have failed—far from it. You have presided over Ontario for 58 months, dragging down the rest of Canada in job creation. You have never balanced a budget, and you change your deficit numbers more often than the Leafs change goalies.

1100

You can't create jobs, you can't balance a budget—you can't even keep your word. It says a lot about what the Premier thinks of the group over there when the first thing he did was to reappoint you as finance minister.

Since you have failed so miserably to get public sector salaries under control, will you at least take our advice and legislate a mandatory wage freeze for the public sector?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Speaker, I think we should talk about some facts. In fact, this government balanced

three budgets. In fact, we eliminated a hidden deficit that that party left behind; that's number one.

Number two, in terms of jobs—and the members opposite may want to play gotcha politics and trade in personal insults. For our part, in these challenging times, we're going to take a serious look and really talk about the facts. There have been challenges on the jobs side, but let me just point out that during the first 10 months of this year, 45.7% of all new Canadian jobs were created here in Ontario. That's larger than our percentage of the economy, Mr. Speaker. The unemployment rate is far too high, but it is well below the levels it was found at during the recession.

There's no doubt, Mr. Speaker; we saw what happened to Germany and international markets today. The member opposite may want to trade in name-calling and other things which I think are really unfortunate, given the need for all of us to work together and given the need for this Legislature to address the problems. The people of Ontario reject any call that they make for having another election starting next week. We just had one seven weeks ago. We pledged to work with the opposition to make the right choices to build a better Ontario.

I did ask the opposition for their input into the budget. I got a press release back with a copy of Changebook—never even had a proper written response. I want to thank the New Democrats for sharing theirs with us.

I hope you'll take a more mature approach to the very difficult challenges facing our province.

LONG-TERM CARE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question—

M^{me} France Gélinas: Nickel Belt.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Merci, monsieur le Président, et félicitations. If you'll indulge me, I'd like to acknowledge that the mayor for the city of Greater Sudbury is here. Ms. Marianne Matichuk just joined us.

My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Last week, the Toronto Star reported on atrocious cases of abuse. We're talking rapes, bone fractures, traumatic brain injury and severe neglect in our long-term-care homes. It happened under this minister's watch, while she had a duty to protect them. In 2010 the Ombudsman warned the government about this, and the minister assured him that it would be addressed.

Those 77,000 people are precious to me and to many other Ontarians. They deserve our protection. Why has the minister failed them so badly?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you for the question. I can tell you that anyone who read those articles was as horrified and as appalled as I was. I don't think there is any question that all of us agree that when someone we love goes into long-term care, we should be able to expect that they will receive only the highest quality of care.

That is exactly why, Speaker, we have completely reformed our Long-Term Care Act. We have new legislation and new inspection procedures. Indeed, the reason that this information is publicly available is because we have chosen to make it publicly available. We believe that that transparency—which is painful, of course, but it is only through transparency that we will achieve real change.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Mr. Speaker, the transparency was there for everyone to see, but nothing was done while seniors were being raped and being victimized. They were being abused in every possible way and everybody could read it on the Internet, but nothing was done. It took a Toronto Star series to get the minister moving on the problem, a problem that her own ministry's inspector had put in black and white in front of her.

Ontarians expect better than this from their Ministry of Health. How can the minister explain how the serious abuses uncovered by her own inspector were never addressed?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I think the member opposite has done an extraordinary disservice to the people of this province and the people who work in our long-term-care homes, the people who have devoted their lives to caring for people in our long-term-care homes.

It is not perfect. It is significantly better than it was before, and it is getting even better. My deepest thanks go to people who work in long-term care, who are making things better, who are reducing falls, reducing pressure ulcers and improving medication errors. There is significant improvement.

We are not where we all want to be. I can tell you, Speaker, when I read the articles, I called an emergency meeting of people from long-term care. They are committed to continue and accelerate the progress.

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Ms. Soo Wong: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, with my experience as a former public school trustee, I know first-hand that Ontario kids excel academically. I know that test scores are up and dropout rates are down in Ontario schools, and I know that our education system is the best in the English-speaking world. But there are other very important things that we need to do better in our schools.

Bullying has become a serious issue with serious effects on our young people. Recently, there have been several devastating stories about children taking their own lives, in part because they couldn't bear the teasing, ridicule and bullying that they were subjected to at our schools. Minister, what are you going to do to make sure that our schools are a place where kids feel safe?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I want to thank the member for Scarborough–Agincourt for her first question and welcome her here to the Legislature. It's a privilege for

each of us to represent the interest of Ontarians here. I know that the member's constituents in Scarborough–Agincourt will benefit from her experience and dedication to her community.

Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly agree with the member from Scarborough–Agincourt that bullying is a very serious issue. That's why the Premier has asked me to look at what is being done and what more we can do, and to look at jurisdictions around the world. We are leading when it comes to ensuring that our schools are safe and inclusive, but it is incumbent on each and every one of us—government, community, teachers, parents—to find the pathway to ensure what more we can do and how we can ensure that every student is safe and included and welcome in Ontario's schools. That is our commitment to the people and the families of this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased that you acknowledge the serious threat that bullying presents to our young people, but this isn't a problem that just happens in our schools. New technology like social networking websites has opened up new arenas where bullying can happen. Mental health problems often first develop when kids are very young. I know that the government has programs and policies in place already aimed at making our schools a place where kids feel safe, welcome and respected. But this is a multifaceted problem, and it can't be solved in the school alone.

As a society we need to be more accepting of differences. Minister, what is your ministry doing to help kids who are struggling through issues of bullying and mental health?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: The member is absolutely right. The issue of mental health supports is so connected to the challenges that exist in so many communities. But I want to highlight that our work on this important issue has begun.

Many of you in this Legislature will recall the historic steps that were made as we invested some \$257 million as part of a children's first comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy, where ministries are coming together and making sure that services are available in schools for our kids. Those resources—programs and services—are rolling out across the province right now, and they will be there for students when they look to have that support.

1110

Every single one of us in this room is a parent, a grandparent, or has loved ones in our lives. I hope that on this file we will see the Legislature come together, because as a mom myself, I can't imagine the pain that parents are going through when they lose a child to this horrific situation. But this Legislature can come together, and we will make it better for kids in this province.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. This morn-

ing, I tabled a resolution that calls on you to reverse your decision on the closure of the Owen Sound, Walkerton and Sarnia jails. Your predecessor promised but then backtracked on his word to disclose the costing documents to justify the closure of the jails. He also backtracked on his promise to consult with the local communities before taking any action.

As the newly appointed minister and the one now in charge, will you do the right thing and stop the closures, pending a full public review of the decision, and begin consultations with local stakeholder groups that would be adversely affected by these closures?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, let me congratulate the member for his election. I want also to thank him for the interest that he brings forward today.

We are working to address, in the correctional services system, future capacity and infrastructure needs. We are consolidating and expanding the system, building modern, economical new jails while closing inefficient older facilities.

We recognize that change is difficult, and we have to make some tough decisions to make sure that our province remains on a strong financial footing, able to protect health care and education.

Our goal is to ensure that Ontario has an efficient and effective correctional infrastructure and the capacity to keep Ontario's communities safe, and to ensure that those in our custody are held in safe, secure and humane conditions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Huron–Bruce.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Minister, this is not just an issue of jail closures. It's about your government ignoring rural Ontario. It's an issue of increased job losses and economic instability in rural Ontario.

Your ministry has not consulted with a single local community stakeholder group regarding the pending closure. Further to that, the Auditor General in 2008 predicted that this year there would be a shortfall of 2,000 jail beds.

You know—your ministry knows—that the Walkerton jail has been over capacity for weeks and months on end. To follow up on the correspondence I sent to you prior to today, Minister, again I respectfully ask: Will you commit today to postponing the closure of Walkerton, Owen Sound and Sarnia jails until you have completed the promised community stakeholder consultations and released the cost-benefit analysis?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, let me congratulate the member for her election.

My answer will be short: No, I will not commit to it. You know what? I heard your leader asking for us to save money, and you and your colleague are standing up and asking us to spend more money.

These jails are inefficient. The jail in Walkerton was built prior to Confederation, in 1866. Not surprisingly, this facility is no longer capable of meeting the needs of Ontario's correctional system. We are building two new,

large jails—the one in Toronto and the one in Windsor—and we will add to the capacity of beds that we need.

No, we're not going to postpone the closure of these two jails. Thank you.

CHILD CARE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question, the member from—

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Toronto–Danforth.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Toronto–Danforth. It'll come.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I know it will come; I have no question about that. But I do have a question for the Minister of Education.

Hundreds of child care centres across Ontario are at risk of closing unless the government takes action. Ontario families need affordable and dependable child care so they can go to work each day. When will the government address the current child care crisis and ensure that families don't lose the child care that they need?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm very pleased to be responsible, yet again, for something as important as child care. Let me assure the member that we understand and have invested significantly in ensuring Ontario's youngest people get what they need.

Full-day kindergarten is the most significant transformation in our education system in a generation. We know that FDK is best for our kids and for our families, and as we invest in that historic transformation and move our all-day kindergarten students from the child care sector into kindergarten, we understand and know that we need to have transformation in the rest of the system. I have said on many occasions that I am very engaged in the conversation about what modern child care looks like in the face of all-day kindergarten.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I know and understand that we have made significant investments in child care.

Just in the city of Toronto, it's important to know, Ontario's investment in child care is up 50% since 2003, and when the federal government walked away from child care, we stepped in. So have we been at the table? Absolutely—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's very early in the session to stop giving answers. But I go back to the minister: We have day care centres, child care centres in Toronto and across Ontario that are going to close unless they get the support that you promised. They aren't seeing it. What we hear is a huge commitment to corporate tax cuts, not to families and to their children. When will this minister put children and their families first rather than corporations, and tell child care centres and families that their centres are not going to close?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: First of all, let me say that I look forward to working with all of our partners, including the city of Toronto, to continue to make Ontario's

education system, starting with our youngest learners, the very best in the world, and we have been making that progress since we have been elected.

We have provided \$12 million over five years to help non-profit child care centres renovate and better serve younger learners, and since 2003 child care funding has increased from \$532 million to \$869 million, a 63% increase across the province.

I have said this personally to the member opposite: I am willing and engaged in this conversation. I am looking for the best advice that exists, but the starting point is to recognize that we are on the pathway to investing some \$1.5 billion in full-day kindergarten, a historic transformation that will change the way our youngest learners in this province are engaged and learn in the future.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question: Ottawa–Orléans.

M. Phil McNeely: Merci, monsieur le Président. Félicitations sur votre élection comme Président de cette Assemblée.

Ma question s'adresse à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones. Ce mois-ci, nous célébrons le 25^e anniversaire de la Loi sur les services en français, adoptée à l'unanimité le 18 novembre 1986. Comme nous le savons, cette loi a été un moment charnière de l'histoire francophone de notre province. Mes commettants reconnaissent la contribution remarquable du gouvernement McGuinty à l'avancée des francophones en Ontario depuis 2003, mais, face au contexte économique incertain, ils sont inquiets face à l'avenir.

Quelles assurances pouvez-vous apporter que le gouvernement continuera de soutenir les services en français?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Merci, monsieur le Président, et félicitations pour votre élection. Je remercie le député d'Ottawa–Orléans pour sa question et sa vigilance envers les services en français.

Je suis heureuse que la première période de questions s'adresse ici aux services en français. De ce côté-ci de la Chambre, on prend cette question au sérieux. Pour notre gouvernement, la francophonie est l'une des composantes fondamentales de l'avancement et de la prospérité économique de la province dans un Canada bilingue.

Notre bilan parle de lui-même : la création du commissaire aux services en français, l'indépendance de TFO, la définition plus inclusive de « francophone », et la Journée de la francophonie.

Grâce au leadership de notre premier ministre, Dalton McGuinty, des pas de géant ont été faits depuis 2003 et nous continuerons sur cette voie. Merci.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M. Phil McNeely: Je vous remercie pour votre réponse et je suis heureux d'apprendre que le gouvernement continue de prendre au sérieux les services en français. Cependant, j'aimerais, au nom de mes commettants, approfondir la question et vous demander ce que nous réservent les prochaines années pour la mise en oeuvre de la Loi sur les services en français.

Quels sont les principaux défis à relever et qui toucheront mes commettants francophones?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: La réponse tient en deux mots : consolidation et promotion.

Tout d'abord, notre priorité est la mise en oeuvre du nouveau règlement sur la Prestation des services en français par un tiers pour le compte du gouvernement qui vient d'entrer en vigueur le 1^{er} juillet dernier.

Ensuite, en ce qui concerne la promotion, le gouvernement travaille déjà aux deux célébrations du 400^e anniversaire de la présence française en Ontario, qui sera souligné en 2015.

Il y aura aussi beaucoup d'occasions de mieux faire connaître la Loi sur les services en français dans les prochaines années.

And I invite all the members of this assembly to join me at 4:30 today for a reception in the dining room to mark the 25th anniversary of the French Language Services Act and to celebrate together Ontario's francophonie and its achievements.

POWER PLANT

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy.

Minister, you went ahead with the Mississauga power plant despite the community's strong objections. Then, with 12 days left in the election campaign, you announced you were cancelling the plant. But for 60 days construction has continued, costing Ontario families more and more with each passing day.

Minister, will you now come clean on the cost of your Mississauga power plant and table the letter sent by the OPA to Eastern Power?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Thank you, Speaker. Congratulations on your election. I congratulate my colleague on his election, and I look forward to working with the member from Nipissing on this and so many other issues.

We made a clear and specific commitment to the residents of Mississauga and Etobicoke that there would not be a gas generating facility on that site—a commitment that was repeated, I understand, by the Leader of the Opposition just the day after.

I am very pleased that the Ontario Power Authority and Greenfield South have reached an agreement that there will not be a gas generating facility on that site. Their discussions continue, and I look forward to further information about the location of the gas generating facility in the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, my supplementary to the minister is simple: Where will you move the gas plant, and will you listen to members of the public this time so we don't have another Oakville- or Mississauga-sized bill to add to our already bloated deficit?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: When we committed that there would be no gas plant on the site, we were listening to the residents of Mississauga and Etobicoke. We have also heard that the guidelines for siting gas generating facilities, which have been successful in siting seven already, may require some additional improvement and strengthening. We're going to take that information.

We're looking at what other jurisdictions do; we're getting the best advice so we can deliver the power residents need and businesses need where they need it, when they need it, and have sites that will meet with general approval.

I look forward to speaking with my colleague more about that in the future.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. The province doled out over \$30 million to Navistar to keep that truck factory in Ontario, but that company turned its back on its workers—and at one time, that company employed 2,000 workers—and shipped their jobs south.

Surely, by now, the province has finished its review of that contract. What I want to know from the Premier is, how much money does this province expect to recoup from Navistar for that contract?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations to you again on your accession to the Chair.

I'm pleased to respond to the leader of the third party's question. It is very, very important, Mr. Speaker, that we continue to work with businesses in all sectors across our economy, including the auto sector. I look to the leader of the third party for her support as we continue to make important investments in companies, innovative companies that are helping to ensure that Ontario's auto sector continues to lead North America.

This is critical to jobs across Ontario. This is a critical sector to our economy. We'll continue to ensure that, as we make these investments, we make them wisely. We'll continue to ensure, as we work with these companies, that we do it in a way to maximize job creation to ensure that we continue to build a strong economy.

That's what we're about on this side of the House. That's what we talked about—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, two years ago the government promised to review the contract with Navistar that left workers high and dry. A review was promised again in August of this year and, lo and behold, a review was yet again promised during the election cam-

paign. Again and again, they have promised to review this contract and tell the people how much we are going to be able to recoup from that contract.

I am asking the minister, why are we here today and he is still not able to give us an exact amount of how much we're going to be able to recoup from a contract that sent all the jobs somewhere else?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, our focus in the auto sector is going to continue to ensure that we build the best auto sector in all of North America. That's where we're at. We've just been through one of the toughest times that we've seen in this province when it comes to the economy, and still, our auto sector leads North America. That's where our focus is going to be.

Just recently, Toyota announced that they're going to be producing the RAV4 here, the new electric vehicle. That's where our investments are; that's where our focus is: building the jobs of the future, building the next generation of jobs, helping our auto sector here adjust to the new economy, making sure that we modernize, making sure that we increase productivity here in this province.

That's where our focus is. I invite the leader of the third party to join us in building up our economy rather than trying to tear it down day after day.

AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, my sincere congratulations on your election as well.

I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. A company named Highland Companies has acquired about 3,000 hectares of land in the Melancthon and Mulmur townships in Dufferin county, and it's for the purpose of building a very large limestone quarry. The project would be one of the largest in North America.

Now, in dealing with a project of this magnitude, Speaker, it's critical that we consult with both the municipality and constituents about impacts. I understand that many residents have voiced their concerns about the impacts to ground water and surface water, and the loss of agricultural land due to the large scale of this operation.

Speaker, through you, would the Minister of the Environment please share with the House what steps the ministry is taking to ensure that it addresses any and all potential impacts of this project?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Excellent question, I have to say, Mr. Speaker. First and foremost, this government feels that it's critical to manage the province's resources in a way that is protective of our water supplies, agricultural lands and the need for aggregate.

In reviewing the company's application for a quarry approval, it was concluded that more work needs to be done to demonstrate that the proposed project would be protective of the surrounding environment. In order to ensure environmental impacts of the proposed project are assessed in a comprehensive manner, in full consultation with the public, our government designated the project to be scrutinized under the requirements of the Environmental Assessment Act.

1130

The Highland quarry is currently being put through an individual environmental assessment that will make sure all impacts and concerns receive the highest level of scrutiny and study while providing full opportunities for public and stakeholder comments. We've listened to the many concerns that have been expressed by the public—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you, Speaker. Again, my supplementary is for the minister.

I'd like to thank the minister for that answer. I know that residents and people throughout Ontario will be pleased to know that a full environmental assessment is being undertaken for this particularly large project. Large-scale projects such as this quarry obviously garner a lot of public interest, and that interest is with respect to potential environmental and health impacts. I'm pleased to see we've got the planning tools in place, such as environmental assessments, to ensure sound environmental decision-making and public consultation.

Would the Minister of the Environment also explain to the House some recent changes to the act and some improvements to the environmental planning process that have taken place?

Hon. James J. Bradley: The member may know that our government is committed to protecting the environment by considering the benefits of projects alongside the possible impacts to our environment. Ontario's Environmental Assessment program promotes good environmental planning by determining the benefits and potential effects of projects before they're implemented.

Environmental assessment promotes an effective decision-making process that includes ensuring that public concerns are heard. When planning is well done—and it will be—it means that major infrastructure projects can be developed while still protecting the environment. To enable the development of infrastructure initiatives, renewable energy waste and transit sectors, the ministry has implemented more efficient approval processes while still ensuring that environmental health and safety matters are appropriately assessed.

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, when you brought in your College of Trades bill we told you it was a bad plan but you didn't listen. When you started packing the college with your Working Families cronies, we sounded the alarm bell but you didn't stop.

Now the coalition of Ontario construction employers, some of the largest trade associations in Ontario, has come out and said that your College of Trades will raise taxes and kill jobs. They said that the college "will advance an agenda of broad-based ... certification for Ontario's ... trades, which will stifle job creation at a time when our province needs more jobs, not less."

Minister, will you put the brakes on your College of Trades debacle before it cripples our construction employers in Ontario?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank the member, Mr. Speaker, for the question.

It's fascinating to me that in their time in power they couldn't even generate 15,000 apprenticeships in a year—not even 15,000. Before we've even launched the College of Trades, we have this year already achieved 28,000 of 120,000.

Now, if you do the math, we know that by 2025 we need 362,000 jobs. Their programs don't even get us halfway there. Our programs exceed that. Your record was an unmitigated disaster in government.

I met with the College of Trades and I saw business and labour and universities and colleges working together, which you divided when you were in government. We're very proud to have brought business and college together, because we think we can improve on a record that's already better than the opposition party's in power.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: He should be answering to the House here, not just these tweets that are coming out of the minister.

Minister, you can't really think that you know the construction industry better than the eight largest employer associations. They're telling you in black and white that what you're about to do is going to kill jobs with your poorly-thought-out College of Trades. Even the members of the college know that something is wrong when they've had to push back the appointment schedules three different times.

Ontario's economy is hanging by a thread and you're giving Pat Dillon and the College of Trades a pair of scissors.

Why won't you admit that the College of Trades is off the rails? Will you stop your politics of anger, envy and division?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, this is becoming laughable. The member was concerned about my tweets. He should have looked at some of the election literature—that I thought was pretty offensive—that was circulated and that made my tweets look like absolutely nothing. No one there has apologized for that. Maybe he would apologize at his next chance.

When you had a worse record, when you had a record in government that was half our current record—we're already producing twice as many apprenticeships, 120,000. Unlike you, who divide labour and business and wanted to create a culture war in society, we've got a group of business leaders, academics and labour leaders sitting down to improve a record that's already twice what your record is. Any time you want to debate that, my dear friend, I will debate that here, anywhere, any time.

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question. The member for Welland.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Kenora–Rainy River. To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs: Last week, we heard that another First Nation community, KI First Nation, walked away from talks with the province after the Minister of Northern Development and Mines couldn't reassure the community that it would hold back a gold mining company from exploring on their lands until full consultation had taken place. Once again, this points to the Ontario government's shortcoming to set clear guidelines for consultation with regard to exploration on traditional lands.

When will this government consult with First Nations as equal partners?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to congratulate the member on her election. I look forward to working with her. And to the Speaker, congratulations.

First of all, I want to say that we are the government that established a stand-alone Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. We are the government that has engaged in government-to-government conversations. We are the government that has established a working relationship with First Nations around the province. My general response to the member—and I will speak to the specifics—is that we remain committed to a respectful, ongoing discussion with the aboriginal people of this province, one that we began when we were elected in 2003, and we will continue to this day.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: For the record, it was the member from Kenora–Rainy River, not the member from Welland.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You stole my thunder because I had some corrections to make at the end of the wrap-up, so I will be making those. Thank you very much.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Mr. Peter Shurman: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: This is just to clarify the record. On my question earlier, I referred to balanced budgets and the record of the member from Windsor–Tecumseh as finance minister. The fact of the matter is, in his tenure as finance minister, he has never balanced a budget; that's four budgets.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There was half a point of order in that, in that the members are allowed to correct their record but not to restate something else. I appreciate your not doing that.

USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): At this time, I would like to thank you all for my very first question period. For the sake of transparency, I admit there were a couple of fumbles. Doing so, I do want to point out very clearly that when the moment comes for stopping the clock, I will do so at the benefit of the House. I did steal some time, and those kinds of things will happen from

time to time, so I beg your indulgence for a short time. After that, beat me up all you want.

I would also say that the trend I spoke of is one of heckling. I believe that if you were to provide each other with the amount of time to give the question and give the answer, there are other times in which you can make those poignant pieces of information available also in the House. Let's get through question period with as much dignity to each other as possible. And, please, one last comment: Let's not make it personal. Thank you.

This House stands recessed until 3 o'clock this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1139 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Jack MacLaren: It is my great pleasure today to introduce guests who are in our members' gallery. These people are raw milk producers and consumers from across Ontario who have had a public rally today in front of the main Legislative Building. They are also part of a nationwide rally that happened today in cities across Canada. Welcome, friends.

Their names are Ed and Martha Embury—would you stand, please?—Bob and Sue Clinton, Richard Chomko, Lisa Lundgard, Pam Killeen and Michael Schmidt.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: In the members' gallery east: the honourable Bill Wrye and his wife Gay. Bill served in the David Peterson government and gave me my first job at Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome to the former member.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

JAMIE HUBLEY

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: A sweet 16 is something every parent wants their child to celebrate. It's an important milestone: perhaps teaching them to drive or simply seeing them grow older. My friend Allan Hubley and his wife, Wendy, don't have that opportunity. Their beautiful boy Jamie would have turned 16 today.

Jamie had been bullied because he was a figure skater. He was bullied because of his sexuality. He was bullied because he was different. A gifted singer and skater, Jamie was tormented not only by his bullies but also by teenage mental illness. For those who have mental illness, coping with bullying sometimes means they can't see a better day, so it's up to us in this assembly to find a better way.

The member for Ottawa Centre and I are committed to finding the gaps in services in our community. We're going to highlight what our service providers do best, and we're going to ensure that Ottawa has a suicide prevention plan, because one teenage suicide—or one suicide—is one too many. Because kids in a dark place and parents with innumerable questions expect us to work together to

prevent suicide, whether we are right or left, gay or straight; regardless of our culture, our religion or our economic circumstances. Because kids, after all, are just that: They're kids, and they deserve, Mr. Speaker, a sweet 16.

Thank you very much, and happy birthday, Jamie.

ARTS RICHMOND HILL

Mr. Reza Moridi: In my role as the MPP for the riding of Richmond Hill, it's my privilege to have the opportunity to become familiar with Arts Richmond Hill, a not-for-profit registered charity and volunteer organization which is providing extraordinary services to my community. I was pleased this weekend to attend the 16th annual Arts Richmond Hill Music Festival. The festival brought together local young talents in piano, strings, woodwinds and vocals who all competed for scholarships. Winners will be featured at Arts Richmond Hill's winners' gala concert on January 15, 2012.

I'm proud and delighted to see our youth committed to fostering the arts and culture through participating in such festivals and competitions. These local festivals wouldn't be possible if not for the dedicated volunteers at Arts Richmond Hill.

Arts Richmond Hill is committed to enhancing arts and culture in the town of Richmond Hill through an entrepreneurial approach to programs, services and facilities provision. Founded in 1979, Arts Richmond Hill is a community-based arts council whose mandate is the advancement of arts and culture through promotion, awareness and education.

I commend Arts Richmond Hill, in particular its board of directors and President Dr. Emmanuel Abara, for their continued effort to promote the various arts and cultural opportunities available to the community in Richmond Hill.

ELECTIONS ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on your election as Speaker.

I rise to speak today about an issue that concerns all of us here in this Legislature. I'm referring to the most fundamental aspect of our democratic system: the right of people to cast their ballot.

I'm asking my fellow MPPs to join me in demanding that Elections Ontario clean up its disgraceful voters list. We were all disappointed with the historically low voter turnout on October 6, when fewer than half of Ontarians voted.

I believe that one of the main reasons is their frustration of being left off the voters' list entirely or the incorrect information they were given about where to vote. I'm sure everyone in this Legislature heard horror stories from people at the doorstep during the campaign.

I had people tell me they had lived at the same location for decades and dutifully voted in every election,

only to discover they had suddenly vanished from the list. Others were shocked to find several names listed on a home they'd lived in for generations—except their own. Many were so offended by this omission, which they took as a personal insult, that they refused to vote in protest.

I also recall a couple in Portland, in my own riding, who could literally throw a stone and hit the side of the polling station they'd voted at for years, yet their voters' card sent them to a polling station 30 minutes away. They took the time to get it fixed, but I'm sure many others said, "Why bother?"

I call on Elections Ontario to look into why the voters' list is such a mess and fix it before more Ontarians become disenfranchised.

ABORIGINAL HOUSING

LOGEMENT DES AUTOCHTONES

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Speaker, I rise in the House today not with any great rejoicing, because unfortunately we have yet another situation in a First Nations community; in this case, in Attawapiskat, where we have essentially a crisis going on. The community and Mushkegowuk Council have declared a state of emergency when it comes to the living conditions that people have to live in on that reserve.

It is 30 below zero in Attawapiskat, and there are currently five families living in tents—on wooden floors in a tent. We have 17 families living in sheds in backyards. I'm not talking about a house; I'm talking about your utility shed. We have 47 families living in what essentially is a contractor's trailer that has no fire suppression, that has no smoke detection, that has no fire detection, and they chain the doors at night. If anything were to happen as far as a fire, it would be a tragedy.

The community has declared a state of emergency, and Emergency Measures Ontario thankfully has agreed that there is a state of emergency. I have given to both the minister and the Premier today a letter from my office asking them to take action so that Emergency Measures Ontario can fly to the community in order to assess the situation so that we can make sure that Ontario's citizens are made safe.

Monsieur le Président, c'est important. On a besoin de s'assurer que tous les citoyens de cette province, incluant ceux des Premières Nations, sont sécurés quand ça vient à où ils demeurent. Je demande au gouvernement de travailler avec les néo-démocrates et la communauté pour s'assurer que tous les citoyens de l'Ontario, incluant les citoyens d'Attawapiskat, sont sécurés. Merci, monsieur le Président.

1510

FLU IMMUNIZATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: The mornings are colder, the sun sets earlier, the windows are closed, and germs and viruses come home and stay inside. Ontarians need a

reminder that the 2011 flu shot is available. The flu shot is effective, it's free, it works. It prevents the flu by stimulating your immune system to build antibodies against this year's flu viruses.

You can get the flu shot through your doctor, your local health unit and, in many cases, your pharmacy or employer, wherever you live in Ontario.

Western Mississauga residents of Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville can receive their free flu shot at the Meadowvale Town Centre on Wednesday, November 30, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. or at Streetsville Secondary School on Wednesday, December 7, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. For more dates and locations, Mississauga and Brampton residents can call Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700.

You need a flu shot this year and every year. Flu strains change every year. If you got a flu shot last year, you may not be fully protected against this year's flu virus. Don't forget to have the entire family get a free flu shot this year and every year.

And, Speaker, congratulations on your election. I take personal pride in your ascent to the throne as Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Ted Arnott: It is entirely possible that the McGuinty Liberals may think the GTA West Corridor study is a good idea. But for many of the residents of the town of Halton Hills, the study's alternative 4-3 is a road to nowhere.

For more than a year the council of the town of Halton Hills has been raising objections to alternative 4-3, which is a proposed new highway corridor connecting the 401 to the 400. The region of Halton council has expressed solidarity with town council, as have I.

Local residents maintain that this new highway, if it were to be built, would have a severe impact on our local environment, heritage and historical sites, good-quality farmland, and the larger sense of community in the town of Halton Hills, because it would cut off one portion of the town from the other. It would also have a severe impact on property values.

Considering the perilous state of the province's finances after eight years of uncontrolled spending, the affordability of proposed projects like this one must be questioned. The town has also suggested constructive alternatives, like widening of the 401, which would undoubtedly be less expensive and thus more practical in today's strained fiscal environment.

We have other more urgent transportation priorities in Wellington-Halton Hills, and in the spirit of co-operation in this minority Parliament, I'd be delighted to work with the Minister of Transportation on them, if he's willing to do so.

TRINITY UNITED CHURCH

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to be in the House today as the MPP repre-

senting the residents in my constituency of London-Fanshawe.

Today, I would like to talk about what is happening in my community. There's a church on Hale Street, Trinity United. Rev. Paul Browning has been the minister of Trinity United for seven years. Reverend Browning, along with the members, is committed to the community's development.

Some examples of the wonderful work they have done are: donate space for fundraising events with the proceeds going to the homeless; offer monthly free hospitality meals; hold trivia nights; and run a successful community environment youth program fondly known as the Green Team—more than 65 youths, parents and supporters are involved. Although it started out as a youth program, it has fast become a multi-generational program.

Just recently, I attended a dance in Trinity church's basement, with a live band playing 1950s and 1960s music. Volunteers donated delicious home-baked goods. A great time was had by all.

Trinity and its members are reaching out to all people in the community, and they are encouraging them to come out to meet their neighbours, socialize, enjoy the entertainment, watch a play or enjoy a great meal.

I want to thank Trinity, their volunteers, and the many other churches, community groups and organizations that continue to foster community involvement and make a difference in our neighbourhoods.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Mr. Speaker, congratulations on assuming the position of Speaker.

I rise today to share a few words about Remembrance Day. Every November 11, Canadians from coast to coast join together to commemorate the men and women who have sacrificed their lives for our country. We pay tribute to the selfless contributions of our veterans and recognize members of the Canadian Armed Forces who are currently putting their lives on the line. We honour those heroes, for it is because of them that we live in a freer, more secure and more prosperous Canada.

This past Remembrance Day, I had the honour of laying a wreath on behalf of the province of Ontario at the Scarborough cenotaph. The ceremony, hosted by the Scarborough zone of the Royal Canadian Legion, served as a sombre reminder and a proud reflection of the contributions that residents of Scarborough Southwest have made throughout Canadian history.

These efforts must be acknowledged. For example, brothers Sergeant Don Lee and Captain Ben Lee, who have both served in Afghanistan, have dedicated their lives to protecting our rights and freedoms. They've also helped to train our brave men and women, many of whom have come from Scarborough.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Don and Ben Lee for their service, and to the countless other brave Canadians who have faced danger

to ensure we live in a better world. Let us continue to remember their immense contributions, sacrifices, and the legacy of their efforts.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. John O'Toole: Small business in my riding of Durham, including farmers and home-based entrepreneurs, are challenged at every turn by higher costs and demands by the McGuinty government. The January 1 increase in WSIB premiums, development charges, rising property tax, the HST, and rising energy costs are just a few examples. There is no help for business from the Ontario government, and it was verified yesterday in the throne speech. Agriculture was not even mentioned in the recent throne speech, and business was all but ignored.

I can find no commitment to reducing red tape that costs the Ontario economy \$11 billion a year. There's no commitment to give Ontario's business community a guaranteed voice whenever government discusses taxes and spending that will impact Ontario's economy. Ontario businesses are not treated as respected partners but as the McGuinty government's personal ATM machines. How shameful.

Just one of the initiatives of the official opposition and our leader, Tim Hudak, is reform in the apprenticeship program that would create 200,000 jobs for young people.

I remain concerned about jobs and the economy in Ontario; it seems the Premier does not. I urge this House to support the real initiatives by Tim Hudak and the opposition to create an economy and welcome small business in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do have some business. Number one, as my learning curve continues during members' statements, I will inform the House that I will try to be lenient and understanding for very specific statements that are felt in a non-partisan way, to ensure that the message is loud and clear. I will also be very quick to stand when other statements are not of that nature.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), changes have been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Oraziotti assumes ballot item number 5, Mr. Balkissoon assumes ballot item number 77, Mr. Dickson assumes ballot item number 9, Mr. Bailey assumes ballot item number 4 and Mr. McNaughton assumes ballot item number 60.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I don't have a problem in switching orders of precedence, but I've not seen that in writing. It has not been given to me and I did not give consent. I want to see it first.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is not required to receive permission; the parties decide amongst them-

selves the changing of their ballots, and if that takes place, it is reported to the House that that has happened. Thank you.

1520

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HEALTHY HOMES RENOVATION TAX CREDIT ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LE CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU LOGEMENT AXÉ SUR LE BIEN-ÊTRE

Mr. Duncan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit / Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts en vue de mettre en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister for a short statement.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Ministerial statements.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Introduction of bills: the member for—

Mr. Peter Shurman: Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on your election as Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will do it properly again. The member from Thornhill.

YORK REGION TRANSIT LABOUR DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL AU SEIN DES SERVICES DE TRANSPORT EN COMMUN DE LA RÉGION DE YORK

Mr. Shurman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving companies that provide public transit services to The Regional Municipality of York / Projet de loi 3, Loi prévoyant le règlement des conflits de travail au sein des entreprises qui fournissent des services de transport en commun dans la municipalité régionale de York.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

First reading agreed to.

Mr. Peter Shurman: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I request respectfully that the House consider this bill for second reading and third reading concurrently, due to the onerous and grave nature of what's going on in York region. I'd like unanimous consent for that, should the bill pass second reading.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is there unanimous consent that the bill carry to a third?

I heard a no.

The member for a short statement.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Thank you very much, Speaker. The bill is entitled An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving companies that provide public transit services to The Regional Municipality of York. Because nobody else is acting, myself and my two colleagues the member from York–Simcoe and the member from Newmarket–Aurora decided that we'd better take it upon ourselves.

I hate to be using one year's worth of private members' time to debate a bill like this, but unfortunately it's called for.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. At this point, I would normally go on to other bills to be introduced, but I would also like to remind the members that when we do present a short statement about the bill, you're talking about the content of the bill, and it remains so.

RETAIL SALES TAX AMENDMENT ACT
(HST REBATE FOR HOME
HEATING), 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA TAXE DE VENTE AU DÉTAIL
(REMBOURSEMENT DE LA TVH
POUR LE CHAUFFAGE DOMESTIQUE)

Mr. Mantha moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act to amend the Retail Sales Tax Act to provide for a rebate of the Ontario portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax in respect of certain home heating costs / Projet de loi 4, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la taxe de vente au détail pour prévoir un remboursement de la composante ontarienne de la taxe de vente harmonisée à l'égard de certains frais de chauffage domestique.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, I'd like to congratulate you, on behalf of the residents of Algoma–Manitoulin, on your appointment to the Chair.

The bill amends the Retail Sales Tax Act to provide for a rebate in respect of the Ontario portion of the harmonized sales tax for the supply of energy sources used for home heating, equipment used for home heating and services related to home heating. The Lieutenant Governor in Council is given the authority to make regulations prescribing the energy sources, equipment and services in respect of which the rebate applies.

The bill provides that this bill is available only if the comprehensive integrated tax coordination agreement between Ontario and Canada is amended accordingly.

WIRELESS PHONE, SMART PHONE
AND DATA SERVICE
TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LA TRANSPARENCE
DES SERVICES DE TÉLÉPHONE MOBILE,
DE TÉLÉPHONE INTELLIGENT
ET DE TRANSMISSION DE DONNÉES

Mr. Oraziotti moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 5, An Act to provide transparency and protection for consumers of wireless telephone services, smart phone services and data services in Ontario / Projet de loi 5, Loi prévoyant la transparence des services de téléphone mobile, de téléphone intelligent et de transmission de données et la protection des consommateurs de ces services en Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. David Oraziotti: Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on your election.

The Wireless Phone, Smart Phone and Data Service Transparency Act, 2011, would reduce costs to consumers; put an end to unfair practices by wireless service providers by requiring thorough disclosure of all mandatory and optional services included in the performance agreement, including the disclosure of hidden fees; and would place limits on excessive contract termination fees. The legislation proposes the most far-reaching protection in Canada for consumers of wireless services.

IMITATION FIREARMS REGULATION
AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA RÉGLEMENTATION
DES FAUSSES ARMES À FEU

Mr. Dickson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000 with respect to the sale of imitation firearms / Projet de loi 6, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur la réglementation des fausses armes à feu relativement à la vente de fausses armes à feu.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

1530

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This bill is to highlight the dangers posed by imitation firearms to both youth and police officers. It is used as a means of intimidation by criminals and young offenders and used largely in armed robberies. And so be it.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. John Milloy: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it agreed? Agreed.

Hon. John Milloy: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(b), the following change be made to the order of precedence for private members' public business: Mr. Shurman and Mr. Miller, Parry Sound–Muskoka, exchange places such that Mr. Shurman assumes ballot item 2 and Mr. Miller, Parry Sound–Muskoka, assumes ballot item 20; and that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), the requirements for notice for ballot items 1 through 6, inclusive, be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The House is familiar with the motion. All in favour? Agreed? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Are there any further motions? No further motions.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND FISCAL REVIEW

PERSPECTIVES ÉCONOMIQUES ET REVUE FINANCIÈRE

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I rise to present the 2011 Ontario economic outlook and fiscal review.

I do so at a time when the global economy is uncertain.

In some cases, that uncertainty comes from real, pressing challenges facing our trading partners.

In Europe, the situation remains volatile, which, for Ontario's strong financial sector, remains a concern.

In Japan, the economic impacts of the tragic tsunami continue to be dire, which, for Ontario's manufacturing sector, has meant disruptions to the supply chain.

And slower growth in the United States, our largest trading partner, affects Ontario's growth as well.

Global economic uncertainty is exacerbated by market volatility that affects people's savings on a daily basis.

As a result, people are anxious. Our job as a Legislature is to speak to that anxiousness.

Voilà pourquoi, monsieur le Président, l'économie de l'Ontario et la création d'emplois seront la priorité de notre gouvernement.

Which is why, Mr. Speaker, our government's priority will be Ontario's economy and job creation.

We have made some great progress together with Ontarians in building the foundations of a strong economy.

We built better schools, together.

As a result, we have one of the best-educated workforces in the world.

Now we have to work together to make sure that more of those workers find the good, high-paying jobs that they have earned.

Sir, we have built a better health care system, together.

As a result, wait times are down and we have more doctors and nurses.

Now we need to use that health care advantage to attract more investment.

We have reformed our tax system, together.

As a result, Ontario is one of the most competitive places in the world for new business investment.

Now we are redoubling our efforts to leverage that advantage.

Mr. Speaker, the times require a serious plan, steady leadership and all of us here in this House and across the province working together.

Sir, over the last eight months, private sector economists have lowered their projections for Ontario's economic growth by about 25% for this year and for next year.

At the time of the 2011 budget, the average private sector forecast was real GDP growth of 2.6%, which has declined to 2.0%.

To put that in perspective, a 0.6% drop is equal to hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue for the province.

Our economy is still growing, but neither as quickly as earlier forecasts predicted nor as quickly as, I'm sure, anyone in the House would like.

Since our budget was based on those earlier predictions, we will be facing additional pressure as we protect the gains we have made in our schools and hospitals as we've been reducing the deficit.

Mr. Speaker, in spite of these lower forecasts, we remain committed to meeting the targets in our balanced budget plan.

And more recently, the Premier has laid out the principles our government will follow as we go back to a balanced budget.

We will protect health care and education as the most important public services.

Any reforms we undertake will not compromise those services. Any reforms will not compromise health or the education of our children.

We will reject across-the-board reductions because that would mean deep cuts to health and education.

Toute réforme adoptée doit accroître la valeur de chaque dollar dépensé grâce à des gains d'efficacité et de productivité.

Any reforms that we adopt must lead to better value for money through improved efficiencies and greater productivity.

We will not consider tax increases or privatized public health care.

Finally, we will not pursue austerity measures that harm the economy.

Mr. Speaker, by adhering to these principles, we will continue to provide Ontarians with the public services they depend upon, deliver the reforms necessary to meet our goals and remain on the path to a balanced budget, as we set out in our 2010 budget.

Our greatest opportunity for reform and renewal will be found in health care.

With health care consuming an ever-increasing part of the budget and with the growing pressures created by our aging population, many Ontarians fear for the future of their health care.

Our government will tackle this challenge. We will work to guarantee a strong health care system—not only for ourselves but for our children and our grandchildren.

Speaker, as we return Ontario's budget to balance and lead our province through this time of global uncertainty, we will do so with the same energy and fervour that characterized our previous efforts.

In 2008, the global economy fell into one of the deepest recessions in generations.

Our government, like many others, invested heavily in stimulus, building roads, bridges and other important infrastructure.

These investments reduced the impact of the recession on our families by protecting and creating jobs.

Nous faisons maintenant face à un nouveau défi, celui d'offrir des services publics de calibre mondial et de retrouver l'équilibre budgétaire lorsque l'économie ralentit.

Now we have a new challenge: We must provide world-class public services and return to a balanced budget in a time of slow global economic growth.

So we have taken action once again.

We have saved money through generic drug reforms and reduced the number of government agencies, and we are reducing the size of the public service.

In the 2011 budget, we announced the Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services, chaired by economist Don Drummond.

In a few weeks, we will receive the commission's recommendations on ways to reform those public services.

Mr. Drummond's report will help launch a thoughtful conversation and debate on the best ways to meet Ontario's goals of eliminating the deficit while protecting schools and hospitals.

A conversation about meaningful reform to the way government delivers services to taxpayers is a more meaningful debate than simply calling for deep, arbitrary, across-the-board cuts.

Such cuts do not deliver long-term results in lowering growth rates and spending.

They merely cause delays, passing on decisions and responsibilities to future governments and future generations.

1540

And they would unravel the progress Ontarians have made in improving our schools and hospitals.

A far more demanding—and far more rewarding—approach is to examine everything that government does, piece by piece, to find creative, efficient and effective ways to deliver public services.

A smarter, more strategic approach is to look at what sort of decisions we must make today to produce more value for taxpayers while still delivering the best results for Ontario families.

Facing lower forecasts for economic growth, Ontario will meet the challenge by building on its track record of reforming the way government works.

We know that Mr. Drummond's preliminary advice is to hold growth in program spending to 1% per year.

That is something we will be consulting Ontarians and the Legislature about when the commission's report is finalized.

We also know that any new spending or unforeseen expenditures must come from savings realized elsewhere.

Governments of all political stripes over the last generation in Ontario have accumulated debt.

As all Ontarians know, continuing to borrow without curbing spending is simply not sustainable.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this fall, all the political parties represented in this Legislature presented the same timeline to eliminate the deficit.

All three parties projected very low rates of growth in program spending.

So I'm pleased to announce that this past year, the rate of spending growth has been cut almost in half.

And, in keeping with the reduced deficit targets laid out in our 2010 budget, we are projecting a deficit of \$16 billion for this fiscal year.

In fact, this puts us ahead of the budget forecast despite the global economic uncertainty and volatility.

However, we all know there is more work ahead of us.

And our government will continue—unlike some governments—to meet its targets.

As we continue to move Ontario forward, Mr. Speaker, we'll give priority to the parts of our plan that both address the needs of Ontario families and strengthen our economy.

We will propose a healthy homes renovation tax credit.

The credit would help seniors stay in their homes longer, support over 10,000 jobs and about \$800 million in economic activity and benefit taxpayers by relieving pressures on long-term-care costs.

Given the need to balance new spending aimed at helping families with the need to lower spending growth, the cost of this program would be offset by savings in other areas which I will identify.

Mr. Speaker, this is our reality.

Les nouvelles politiques envisagées par le gouvernement et l'Assemblée législative ne doivent pas faire obstacle à l'élimination du déficit.

New policies considered by this government and by this Legislature must not stand in the way of eliminating the deficit.

Ontarians have always risen to the challenges that confront us.

When our government was confronted with failing public services and an electricity system unequal to the task of driving economic growth, we responded.

When the global economy tumbled into one of the worst recessions in generations, we responded.

When Ontario's tax system needed reform to increase investment and create jobs, we responded.

And while the challenges facing us today are new, how we choose to face them is not.

We will respond as Ontarians have always responded.

With determination.

With hard work.

And by working together.

Our government will be prudent in our planning and relentless in our reforms and put good ideas ahead of ideology.

We will work with this House, Mr. Speaker, and where there are ideas that are consistent with the principles we have laid out and that serve to strengthen Ontario's economy, we will gladly adopt them.

That is what Ontarians expect of us. They expect a mature debate, focusing on serious issues. We have the chance to do it together, working together, and we are committed to that; to move forward together and build on the tremendous accomplishments we have already achieved together.

We will stand with Ontarians.

We are inspired by Ontarians.

And our priorities are, and will remain, the priorities of all Ontarians: a great quality of life for our families, the security and confidence that comes with a good job, and a bright future for our children. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Response?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, it is baffling. Only the McGuinty Liberals would give a standing ovation to putting Ontario another \$16 billion in debt. What Ontario families expect is a serious plan for serious times, and all we got today in the economic statement, all we got in the throne speech, was an empty, vacuous plan devoid of new ideas, devoid of bold leadership. We will bring those new ideas, we will bring that bold leadership, and we will fight each and every day to restore fiscal sanity to the province of Ontario.

To hear the finance minister explain it, the ballooning deficit is not his government's fault. No, it's troubles in Europe. He'll blame it on the States; he'll blame it on Japan; he'll blame it on Ottawa. But they never look at themselves. And one thing I will say to the Premier and to his finance minister, one thing about your excuses: They certainly are well travelled. But you need to start looking at yourself in the mirror. While governments

across the globe are taking bold action to rein in spending, to reduce their debt, we have yet to see a single new idea from the McGuinty government to do so. They blame everyone else but themselves, and he still doesn't want to take responsibility for the bad decisions that got us here or even admit that he has no plan to get us out of the mess. But the proof is there in black and white.

Speaker, it was this McGuinty government that increased program spending by an unsustainable 7% a year, each and every year, miles ahead of economic growth. It was this McGuinty government's out-of-control spending that has single-handedly doubled Ontario's debt. And it was this McGuinty government that saw Ontario's credit rating downgraded not once but twice, and he confirms today that the deficit is on the rise in the province of Ontario again.

Last year, Ontario ran a \$14-billion deficit, and who knew that that would actually be good news by comparison, because this year, they announced that Ontario is running a \$16-billion deficit. Fourteen billion dollars last year, \$16 billion this year: If you ever needed a more obvious sign that this government is headed in the wrong direction, there it is right there, in black and white.

Speaker, unlike our colleagues across the aisle, the Ontario PCs are rooted in the understanding that there is a difference between "nice to have" and "must have"; that balanced budgets should be the goal of every government; and that governments can no longer continue to spend money that they don't have.

1550

The finance minister today chooses to put off those tough decisions to another day. He announces that a plan will come forward to consult and then maybe find some decisions to be made at some time down the road. Sir, that is no longer good enough. Families want action now. They want leadership today.

Mr. Speaker, the Ontario PCs are prepared to take action to address Ontario's growing debt crisis. We've called for solutions like fixing a broken arbitration system; taking \$5.5 billion out of spending by a full program review and ending one-time funding; and yes, later today, calling for a mandatory legislative pay freeze, unlike the Premier's voluntary wage freeze that has been a dismal failure, which will bring in \$2 billion in savings.

Ontario families sent us to Queen's Park with a very clear message: It's time to reduce the size and cost of government. The Premier may ignore that. He may ignore that message, but we cannot; we will not. We will be direct in our proposals, we will be resolute in our beliefs and we will be determined in our actions. And if this Premier and his cabinet are not up to completing the task, the Ontario PCs can and the Ontario PCs will.

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened intently to the Minister of Finance as he discussed and talked to us about one tough budget. And it is tough. It's tough on the people of this province.

We, in the New Democratic Party, believe that the people who live in this province should always come first. And when they have been polled, the people of this

province tell us—60% of them have said—that in this past year they have seen a deterioration in their living conditions. Sixty per cent of them tell us that they live paycheque to paycheque, and if they ever lost their jobs or if they ever lost the means of income for their family, they would find themselves in absolutely dire straits. They also tell us that they have the highest anxiety about the economy of any place in Canada. The highest anxiety is here in Ontario.

We know that household debt is rising, and we know that economic insecurity abounds in literally every household across all of Ontario. And we know that if those continue, we're not going to see prosperity; we're going to see stagnation. We know that when this happened in the United States, the result was stagnation. People were afraid; they were afraid of losing their jobs. They walked away from their mortgages, they walked away from their debts, and the country went into a tailspin. We are facing the same here.

We know that this government is prepared to give away \$600 million in tax cuts that will produce virtually nothing; \$600 million to the richest corporations. We've seen, over the last number of years, what's happened when that money was given to them. Layoffs actually increased. Jobs were not created; layoffs increased. Corporations took that money, just like they did in Hamilton, and they walked away and took the jobs south with them.

We also know, following this same prescription that the finance minister has laid out today—and with help, I think, from the Harper government—that two years from now, another \$1 billion will be given to corporations so that they can write off their expenses. Expenses like meals and hockey games and entertainment will become tax-free. Would that ordinary people losing their jobs could see such largesse from this government.

The government hired an expert, and I quote what their very own expert had to say: “What ... need(s) to unfold in Ontario is in many cases more severe than what governments did in the 1990s.” That's what this government is going to do.

For all that the Liberals on the other side talk about the bad days of the Harris government, you are going to do more. You are going to do it with the same force and effect as they did in those days, because although you are not going to cut health care and education, the cuts that come to every other government department are going to be more severe than what happened from 1995 through 2003—much more severe.

Today, we have the lowest corporate tax rates, one of the lowest in the entire world, but at the same time we also have record high household debts, we have record unemployment in many communities across this province and we have families who are falling further and further behind with every monthly paycheque.

On the one hand, we have a government that wants to continue these corporate tax cuts so that the very rich can have lavish parties and corporate largesse and have a tax write-off to do it. On the other side, we have families

who are going to see reduced services in almost every government department and who are going to see potential closing of child care centres, and we have municipalities that are going to see debts continue to mount. This is not a statement that the government should be proud of.

We should be looking at alternatives. One of the alternatives, clearly, is to raise the revenue, and that's what governments need to look at. If we are going to provide the services, we need to raise the revenue, not just cut the services.

I ask the government to look at what is right, not just for the corporations but literally for every single person and family who live here in Ontario.

PETITIONS

RURAL SCHOOLS

Mr. Jim Wilson: “Petition to Save Duntroon Central Public School and All Other Rural Schools in Clearview Township.

“Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is an important part of Clearview township and the surrounding area; and

“Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is widely recognized for its high educational standards and intimate learning experience; and

“Whereas the frameworks of rural schools are different from urban schools and therefore deserve to be governed by a separate rural school policy; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that, ‘Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them’; and

“Whereas” Premier “McGuinty found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to” help “keep rural schools open in Simcoe–Grey;

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

“That Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education support the citizens of Clearview township and suspend the Simcoe County District School Board ARC 2010:01 until the province develops a rural school policy that recognizes the value of schools in the rural communities of Ontario.”

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} France Gélinas: En l'honneur du 25^e anniversaire de la Loi sur les services en français, je vais la présenter en français :

« Attendu que la mission du commissaire aux services en français est de veiller à ce que la population reçoive en français des services de qualité du gouvernement de

l'Ontario et de surveiller l'application de la Loi sur les services en français;

« Attendu que le commissaire a le mandat de mener des enquêtes indépendantes selon la Loi sur les services en français;

« Attendu que contrairement au vérificateur général, à l'ombudsman, au commissaire à l'environnement et au commissaire à l'intégrité qui, eux, relèvent de l'Assemblée législative, le commissaire aux services en français relève de la ministre déléguée aux services en français;

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario de changer les pouvoirs du commissaire aux services en français afin qu'il relève directement de l'Assemblée législative. »

Je suis d'accord avec cette pétition et je vais demander à page Lila de l'amener à la table des greffiers.

AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin–Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on your election.

My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas we, the undersigned, are residents of Dufferin county and other adjacent counties and municipalities in Ontario;

1600

“We understand that the Highland Companies, if successful in their plans to initially develop a 2,300-acre mine to mine aggregates in Melancthon township, plan to haul aggregates from the proposed quarry in Melancthon township southward using County Road 124, Highway 89, Highway 10 and other Ontario roads and highways;

“We understand that there will be a minimum of 150 trucks loaded with aggregates per hour heading southward and a minimum of 150 empty trucks returning to the proposed quarry per hour. The initial number of trucks to be used, 300 per hour, is set out in the Highland's application.

“Regardless of which Ontario highways and roads such trucks use, there will be definite traffic problems, particularly during the winter months. Highland's initial proposal is unrealistic, inappropriate and will detrimentally impact highway safety and the operation of emergency vehicles.

“We are aware that there will be other vehicles other than trucks hauling aggregates travelling to and from the proposed quarry using Ontario roads and highways; for example, trucks carrying explosives—Highland proposes to use up to 52 tons of explosives daily—trucks carrying equipment to the proposed quarry and other vehicles travelling to and from the quarry, adding to the present volume of traffic and increasing greenhouse gas emissions.

“We respectfully submit that the consequences of improving the Highland proposal to construct a 2,300-acre mega quarry to mine aggregates in Melancthon

township will cause irreparable harm to Dufferin county and the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas our concerns include the following:

“As concerned, taxpaying citizens of Ontario, environmental issues are of paramount importance. Our concerns, including the impact on land, air, ground and surface water, plant and animal life and the effect the proposed quarry will have on the social, economic and cultural conditions affecting the lives of those in close proximity to the proposed quarry and many other citizens of Ontario in bordering counties and communities, such as Alliston, Caledon, Collingwood, Fergus, Guelph, Orangeville and Waterloo;

“As concerned, taxpaying citizens of Ontario, the proposed destruction of the finest agricultural land in Ontario is not acceptable;

“As concerned, taxpaying citizens of Ontario, our concerns are real and will not go away. Many other concerns related to the proposed quarry, such as ground- and surface-water issues, dust issues, greenhouse gas issues, blasting issues, agricultural issues, fishery issues and our environment will hopefully be dealt with by other concerned citizens of Dufferin county in Ontario, the province of Ontario, our federal government and all government agencies who will be dealing with our concerns.

“Now, therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition and request that the Ontario Ministry of the Environment order a full and complete environmental assessment of the proposed Highland mega quarry project and that its decision be submitted to both the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency until such a full and complete environmental assessment is completed.

“We strongly oppose the proposal of the Highland Companies to develop a 2,300-acre mega quarry to mine aggregates in Melancthon quarry.”

My apologies for the length, but I felt it was important to get it on the record. I support the application for an EA and sign my name.

SERVICES DIAGNOSTIQUES

Mr. Gilles Bisson: In anticipation of having an opportunity to read a petition, Mr. Speaker, I stand first, and I want to thank the member for Welland for lending me her glasses so I can actually read this petition.

« Attendu que l'Ontario fait de la tomographie par émission de positons »—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: They're nice glasses. They're very becoming.

« Attendu que l'Ontario fait de la tomographie par émission de positons (TEP), un service de santé assuré par le régime public pour les patients atteints du cancer et de maladies cardiaques, lorsque les données cliniques indiquent que cette technique est efficace dans leur cas; et

« Attendu que d'ici octobre 2009, des TEP assurées seront effectuées à Ottawa, à London, à Toronto, à Hamilton ainsi qu'à Thunder Bay; et

« Attendu que la ville du Grand Sudbury est une plaque tournante pour la santé dans le Nord-Est, qui compte l'Hôpital régional de Sudbury et son programme régional de cancer, de même que l'École de médecine du Nord de l'Ontario;

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario d'offrir de la TEP par le biais de l'Hôpital régional de Sudbury, donnant ainsi un accès équitable aux résidents du Nord-Est de l'Ontario. »

Comme membre de Timmins–Baie James, monsieur le Président, je supporte cette pétition.

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank the member for Sarnia–Lambton for his advocacy. I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by all corners of Leeds–Grenville. As well, I must say there are also members from Toronto, Ottawa, Mississauga, Brampton, Markham and Kingston who have signed this. It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diseases, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the US and Europe; and

“Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

“Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario health insurance plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process of establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives at 45% to 95% of the time;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to direct that the Ontario public health system and OHIP include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme disease in Ontario and to have everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians.”

I agree with the petition, will sign it and send it to the table with page Laibah.

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further petitions? The member from Kenora–Rainy River. No, sorry—

Interjection: Nickel Belt.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: You're getting better, Mr. Speaker.

“Whereas the Ontario Ombudsman, who is an officer of the Legislature, is not allowed to provide trusted, independent investigations of complaints in the areas of hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies and retirement homes; and

“Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not allowing their Ombudsman to investigate any of these areas; and

“Whereas people wronged by these institutions are left feeling helpless and most have nowhere else to turn for help to correct systemic issues;

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

“Grant the Ombudsman the power to investigate hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies and retirement homes.”

I fully agree with this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Samuel to bring it to the Clerk.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I have a petition in front of me for saving our jails.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario provincial government has unilaterally ordered the closing of the Owen Sound and Walkerton provincial jails” without “public input; and

“Whereas staff of both facilities will be forced to relocate from their home communities and the two rural municipalities will lose up to \$3 million each in wages spent; and

“Whereas the local aboriginal offenders will be forced away from their communities and local native resources. All offenders will be moved out of their localities, rehabilitative resources and family visitation. Intermittent sentenced offenders would have jobs placed in jeopardy as the travel to Penetanguishene would be great; and

“Whereas rural communities hard hit by recession and manufacturing job loss need these well-paying jobs in their community;

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

“That Premier McGuinty supports the Owen Sound and Walkerton jails remaining open until such time as a new regional corrections facility can be opened.”

I agree with this petition and I sign it.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I will continue what I have started in the last Parliament, which is to petition about PET scans.

“Whereas the Ontario government” has made PET scanning “a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

“Whereas,” since 2009, “insured PET scans” are 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 ... 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 ask page Mobarrat—I’m hoping I pronounced it right—to bring it to the Clerk.

1610

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your election.

This is a petition for, again, saving our jails.

“Whereas the Ontario provincial government has unilaterally ordered the closing of the Owen Sound and Walkerton provincial jails with no public input; and

“Whereas staff of both facilities will be forced to relocate from their home communities and the two rural municipalities will lose up to \$3 million each in wages spent there; and

“Whereas the local aboriginal offenders will be forced away from their communities and local native resources. All offenders will be moved out of their localities, rehabilitative resources and family visitation. Intermittent sentenced offenders will have jobs placed in jeopardy as the travel to Penetanguishene would be too great; and

“Whereas rural communities hard hit by recession and manufacturing job loss need these well-paying jobs in their community;

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

“That Premier McGuinty supports the Owen Sound and Walkerton jails remaining open until such time as a new regional corrections facility can be opened.”

HYDRO DAM

Mr. Norm Miller: Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to do with Bala Falls. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government permitted the release of crown lands to enable the development of a hydro dam in the heart of Bala without discussion or proper consultation with the municipality of the township of Muskoka Lakes, the district of Muskoka or the residents and businesses who would be directly affected; and

“Whereas the community is a tourism destination which is dependent on Bala Falls as an attraction; and

“Whereas residents and business people alike are deeply concerned about the economic and environmental impact that the construction and operation of the dam will have on the community;

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

“That the McGuinty government and in particular the Minister of Natural Resources reverse the decision to release crown lands for a hydro dam in Bala...”

Mr. Speaker, I support this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 23, 2011, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The leader of Her Majesty’s loyal opposition.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Thank you very much, Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues. I appreciate the opportunity to respond to yesterday’s throne speech. I do want to say, as I did in question period today, welcome to the new members of all three caucuses as we begin the new session.

I do want to say that I am particularly proud to stand here in front of an enlarged energetic Ontario PC caucus with 16 new MPPs. I’m proud of each one of them, 16 new PC MPPs. I know the other caucuses welcome new members as well.

Serving as a member of provincial Parliament is an honour. It’s exciting and incredibly rewarding, but also an extremely demanding job—particularly so given the very challenging times we find ourselves in here in the province of Ontario. It is a tremendous responsibility, and I want to wish each member here at the assembly success in their own ridings, but particularly in focusing on the two crises that hit our province, as I speak today.

Ontario is in a debt crisis, and Ontario is in a jobs crisis. These are two monumental challenges that require our immediate attention—not delayed, not kicked off down the road. They require immediate attention today to take our province on a new path, to make Ontario once again the leader in Confederation: the best place to find a good job, the kind of job you can raise a family and buy a home with; the kind of place you can depend on good-quality public services; and the kind of province that is secure in its financial footings, not plunging further and further into debt.

With yesterday’s speech from the throne, Speaker, the Premier had an opportunity to take Ontario down a new path, the right path, but sadly, he failed. He had a chance to take a bit of responsibility for the role that he has played in Ontario’s poor economic performance. He failed to do so. The Premier had the chance to signal to

us in the opposition, both the PCs and New Democrats, that it wasn't going to be just business as usual in the Legislature, that he was willing to listen to new ideas. He failed to do so. And most importantly, what we actually needed, what Ontario families want to see now, is a serious plan to take on the serious challenges that beset our great province, but what we got was seriously disappointing, to say the least.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Tragically disappointing.

Mr. Tim Hudak: My colleague from Renfrew says, "Tragically disappointing."

And then the second shoe falls today, where the finance minister basically gets a pat on the back for a massive \$16-billion deficit from his cabinet colleagues. This is a record deficit. Revenues have gone up, not down, and now we see a \$16-billion deficit. It's actually increased, Speaker, from last year. It should be going down, but it's \$2 billion higher. And then we heard in the economic statement a doubling down on the same failed economic policies that got us into the mess in the first place.

Most disturbing, we saw a finger pointed at everyone except themselves. They'll blame the Americans, they'll blame the tsunami in Japan, they'll blame the Europeans, they'll blame Greece, they'll blame Ottawa, but they say nothing about their own record. I think if we had a bit more honesty from the government, a bit more saying, "Well, maybe we spent too much. Maybe we made the wrong decisions," a bit of straight talk from Dalton McGuinty, for a change, he'd have more credit that he's actually going to carry through on his brand new initiatives he made in this campaign. But we didn't. We saw the same old blame game: that everybody else is at fault. Incredibly, it only took 236 words before the speech from the throne started to blame global economic uncertainty for Ontario's problems.

But the troubles we're seeing in Europe and the United States didn't skip over the border, they didn't skip over the oceans and land solely in Ontario's lap. The recession hit everyone. Economic turmoil internationally affects all 10 provinces, Speaker. But I ask you: Why is it that Ontario continues to get hit harder than the rest of the country? Why is it the province of Ontario fell faster, further, earlier than the other provinces, and is among the last to climb out of it? Why is that, Speaker? So the throne speech actually provided an opportunity to take a sobering look at the big picture, a sober second thought, and then to make the course corrections necessary to actually stimulate economic growth, private sector growth and job creation, and therefore protect the government services that we hold dear, not just for today but for the future as well.

The reality is, we have a jobs crisis in Ontario. We have a debt crisis in Ontario, serious issues that affect both sides of the ledger. On the one side, unsustainable spending increases of 7% a year, Speaker, have resulted in a growing deficit and a ballooning provincial debt that has actually doubled in a decade. So the economy

crawled along at best and government program spending went up by an unsustainable 7% a year.

And on the other side, their economic policies have been demonstrated to be a failure. Corporate welfare, where they pick winners and losers in the marketplace, which sees subsidies of up to \$1 million a job for so-called green energy jobs that disappear as soon as the subsidies run out, that cost us jobs in the broader public sector; tax hikes on businesses and on average families. Their movement from treating energy as an economic fundamental to a social policy has moved Ontario from having among the lowest hydro rates in competing states and provinces to now becoming the most expensive energy jurisdiction of those we compete against. And what does that all do? It stifles private sector job creation. It strangles entrepreneurship. An Ontario that has always been the engine of growth for our country has fallen to the back of the pack, and that impacts on government revenues, Speaker, as fewer people are working in the private sector.

1620

So both of these crises together present a clear and present risk to the vital services government delivers, like health and education. That's why the Ontario PC caucus says, "We don't need more of the same; we don't need warmed-over old ideas. We need action. We need new ideas, because the same failed plan we heard in yesterday's speech is simply not working. Today's fall economic update confirms that the deficit this year is even larger than last: \$16 billion. If the recession and the global market were to blame, then you'd think that all of Canada would be shouldering that same burden equally. It seems reasonable, Speaker. But while Ontario possesses one third of Canada's wealth, we now possess two thirds of the combined provincial deficit. We actually have in Ontario twice the deficit of the rest of Canada, and it's going to take us twice as long as the other provinces to climb out of it. Clearly, we have a spending crisis in the province of Ontario.

What does that mean today? Well, it means Ontario is paying \$10 billion a year to pay for interest on the debt, and just wait until interest rates go up again. To put that in perspective, if those interest payments were actually ministries of government, so if there was the ministry of interest payments, so to speak, it would be the third largest budget in the province, just behind health and education. So that means we spend more on debt interest than we do on transportation: our transit systems, our highways. We spend more on debt interest than we do for police and emergency services to keep our families safe. And if we don't stop the runaway spending now, it's going to get worse each and every year.

So with all due respect to the finance minister's excuses today, the problem isn't Greece, it's not Michigan, it's not Ottawa; it's that this government has a spending problem.

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: As my colleague says, the true cause is Dalton McGuinty.

And then \$2.5 billion in new commitments in the throne speech alone. So the deficit goes up and they're going to add on \$2.5 billion on top of that, with no plan on how they're going to pay it. We have not seen to date a single new idea to rein in spending, to root out waste.

I'll tell you what, Speaker. If they won't do it, we're prepared to do it for them. So today I'll introduce an amendment to the throne speech that will call for a legislated mandatory wage freeze for the public sector.

Interjections.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Real action. Any serious discussion on balancing the budget has to include straight talk about the cost of labour. The cost of labour accounts for well over half, about 60%, of government spending, and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business recently found that Ontario government employees already earn 27% more than their private sector counterparts doing the same job, a result of this Premier signing public sector wage agreements that are 50% more generous than they were under the previous three Premiers. The minister is looking at me. The public sector agreements you have signed are, again, 50% more generous than those signed by the previous Premiers, whether Conservative or NDP. It's clear that Dalton McGuinty's voluntary wage freeze has been a failure. Whether it's unions receiving secret deals on the side, pay increases that take place after an election campaign, whether it's arbitrators thumbing their noses at the taxpayer and giving out agreements that are way out of line with what families on fixed incomes, families in the private sector, can afford, the policies simply have not worked.

A mandatory legislated wage freeze will be impossible to ignore, and most importantly, it will provide up to \$2 billion in savings over two years. And as a son of public servants, coming from a family of teachers, I know this is not always good news to hear if you're in the public service. But, Speaker, I just think that it is not unreasonable to ask public sector employees to forgo getting another raise when Ontario's private sector is losing 100 jobs every hour, every day since the last election. It's fair to public servants and it's fair to every single taxpayer in the province of Ontario.

This brings me to the second major failure of the throne speech: the failure to address Ontario's growing jobs crisis. For three of the last four months, Ontario has lost private sector jobs—as I mentioned, 75,000 jobs last month alone; 2,400 jobs a day, 100 every hour. And while the other nine provinces were actually adding private sector jobs, Ontario shed 75,000.

Mr. John Yakabuski: What's wrong here in Ontario?

Mr. Tim Hudak: My colleague asks what's wrong in Ontario. Something has gone off the rails. We are in a jobs crisis, but there's not one new idea from this government on how to address that jobs crisis.

The only thing I see is that the Premier has a plan now to double down on the job-killing policies that failed us over the last eight years. But as Conservatives, we know that you can't subsidize your way to better jobs and you can't tax your way to greater prosperity. If you could,

with all this government spending we'd all have three jobs by now. But instead, Ontario's unemployment rate has remained above the national average for nearly five years—58 months—and today, as I speak, 500,000 women and men are out on the streets, emailing out their resumes, desperately looking for work here in the province of Ontario: half a million people who have hope for a better day but would see no hope whatsoever in the path we got today from the finance minister.

What has become absolutely clear is that this government has been pursuing the wrong economic policies. They have lost sight of the economic fundamentals that have made Ontario the leader historically when it comes to investment and job creation. And if we continue down this path, London Economics International estimates that Ontario will have the absolutely highest electricity prices in all of Canada by 2015—historically a strength, Speaker, now chasing out jobs from our province.

Mr. John Yakabuski: How can you be competitive with that?

Mr. Tim Hudak: You can't. When you combine these electricity prices with the absolutely highest regulatory burden, matched by a debt crisis and a spending problem in all of Canada, how do you compete?

We believe there are better days yet to come. We believe in the incredible future of the province of Ontario. We have a strong, skilled workforce. We have an abundance of natural resources that are the envy of the world over. We have excellent market access to both Canadian and American jurisdictions. We have the highest proportion of the population with university or college degrees in North America. Yet under Dalton McGuinty, we're not taking advantage of these opportunities. We're not taking advantage of our core strengths, and Ontario is falling far, far behind the great potential we know she has. And nowhere is the gap between our potential more clear and more alarming than when it comes to job creation.

So again, Speaker, where the McGuinty government fails to act, the Ontario PCs will. We will bring a laser-like focus to standing up for private sector job creation to make Ontario grow again. Towards that end, I bring forward a second amendment to the throne speech. This one will call for reforms to Ontario's apprenticeship system that will create 200,000 jobs in our skilled trades.

Ontario is on the verge of a skilled labour market precipice. The Ontario Ministry of Finance predicts that there will be over a million unfilled skilled job vacancies by 2021, just 10 years away, and that figure could nearly double by 2031.

1630

Under Dalton McGuinty's watch, Ontario is actually producing 46% fewer skilled tradespeople per capita than the rest of Canada—almost half in Ontario.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Something you could fix right away.

Mr. Tim Hudak: It is something you can fix right away.

And let's state very clearly where the problem lies: The McGuinty government continues to cling to an out-

of-date system, stuck in the 1970s, that quite frankly serves the interests of union bosses and special interests instead of helping out aspiring tradespeople, young men and women who want to be electricians, who want to be welders, who want to be plumbers. We're going to stand up for them. We'll stand up for hard-working people, and we'll say no to the special interests and the union bosses.

The apprenticeship reforms we've put on the table today will create 200,000 jobs. They will involve the colleges in our province. They will move us toward a one-to-one journeyman-to-apprenticeship ratio.

I remember being down in Cornwall not too long ago, talking to a young man who desperately wanted to be an electrician; he even knew a small business that wanted to hire him. But because of the outdated system, the outdated ratios, he couldn't get that job. He got a part-time job at Walmart. At least he was paying the bills, but it's not what he dreamt to do.

You will see an Ontario PC caucus that stands up for struggling people, like that young man in Cornwall, to give them the job opportunities and put that incredible skill and dedication to work in our province.

Speaker, for the 48 days since election day the Ontario PCs have put forward good ideas to address Ontario's desperate debt crisis and jobs crisis. Sadly, in my meeting with the Premier last week, or what we've heard in these last two days, Dalton McGuinty refuses to make the necessary decisions to move us forward.

The amendments I reference today are our terms. The Ontario PC caucus will be voting against Dalton McGuinty's failed throne speech unless he supports our call for a freeze of public sector wages and the creation of 200,000 jobs in the skilled trades.

Clearly, if we keep doing more of the same, we'll get more of the same results of the last eight years that are failing hard-working Ontario families, that are plunging us into deeper debt. Putting Ontario back on track is going to take focus. It's going to take openness and honesty. It's going to take straight talk and fresh ideas and new thinking and the courage to act in what's in our long-term interests.

Let me now close with this quick story. You know, I got a rueful chuckle from Sunday's Toronto Star, in which I was described as "strangely impatient about Liberal plans for major restraint and restructuring." "Strangely impatient." Never mind that that's like saying, "After eight years of steady losses, shareholders were growing 'strangely impatient' for a return on their investment." So they got it half right, Speaker.

I am impatient for a day when Ontario is managed with competence and transparency and foresight. I am impatient for a government that spends what we can afford, and I am impatient for a time when our politicians actually mean what they say and say what they mean. So yes, I'm impatient. It's my job, and I'm impatient to get down to work, starting today. And my colleagues in the PC caucus are going to stay that way until we see proof

that the government that got us into this mess has the will and the guts to start to dig us out.

So, while they continue to find the easy way out, while they continue to punt the tough decisions down the road, the Ontario Conservatives will examine the tough choices that this Legislature needs to make, and make soon. While they pass off responsibility to the next government or the next generation, we will take charge today. And while they dither on their beliefs, we are resolute in the principles that got us here—and that made Ontario strong—and the job that Ontario families sent us here to do. And if Dalton McGuinty cannot lead Ontario out of this mess, the Ontario PCs can and the Ontario PCs will.

So, Speaker, I would like to move an amendment that reads as follows:

That the address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be amended by adding after "We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session" the following:

"However, this House asks that the government create a legislated and mandatory public sector wage freeze to reduce the size and cost of government and modernize the apprenticeship system to create 200,000 skilled trades jobs in the province of Ontario."

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Hudak has moved an amendment to the throne speech: That the address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be amended by adding after "We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session" the following:

"However, this House asks that the government create a legislated and mandatory public sector wage freeze to reduce the cost and size of government and modernize the apprenticeship system to create 200,000 skilled trades jobs in the province of Ontario."

Further debate?

Ms. Cindy Forster: I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Orders of the day.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? So shall it be.

The House is adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1638.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	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
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

Continued from back cover

Aboriginal housing / Logement des autochtones	
Mr. Gilles Bisson	28
Flu immunization	
Mr. Bob Delaney	28
Transportation infrastructure	
Mr. Ted Arnott	29
Trinity United Church	
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	29
Remembrance Day	
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti	29
Economic development	
Mr. John O'Toole.....	30
Private members' public business	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	30

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, 2011, Bill 2, Mr. Duncan / Loi de 2011 sur le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être, projet de loi 2, M. Duncan	
First reading agreed to.....	30
York Region Transit Labour Disputes Resolution Act, 2011, Bill 3, Mr. Shurman, Mr. Klees, Mrs. Munro / Loi de 2011 sur le règlement des conflits de travail au sein des services de transport en commun de la région de York, projet de loi 3, M. Shurman, M. Klees, Mme Munro	
First reading agreed to.....	30
Mr. Peter Shurman	31
Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act (HST Rebate for Home Heating), 2011, Bill 4, Mr. Mantha / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur la taxe de vente au détail (remboursement de la TVH pour le chauffage domestique), projet de loi 4, M. Mantha	
First reading agreed to.....	31
Mr. Michael Mantha	31
Wireless Phone, Smart Phone and Data Service Transparency Act, 2011, Bill 5, Mr. Oraziotti / Loi de 2011 sur la transparence des services de téléphone mobile, de téléphone intelligent et de transmission de données, projet de loi 5, M. Oraziotti	
First reading agreed to.....	31
Mr. David Oraziotti	31
Imitation Firearms Regulation Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 6, Mr. Dickson / Loi de 2011 modifiant la	

Loi sur la réglementation des fausses armes à feu, projet de loi 6, M. Dickson	
First reading agreed to.....	31
Mr. Joe Dickson	31

MOTIONS

Private members' public business	
Hon. John Milloy	32
Motion agreed to	32

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

Economic outlook and fiscal review / Perspectives économiques et revue financière	
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	32
Mr. Tim Hudak.....	34
Mr. Michael Prue	34

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Rural schools	
Mr. Jim Wilson.....	35
Services en français	
Mme France Gélinas	35
Aggregate extraction	
Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	36
Services diagnostiques	
Mr. Gilles Bisson	36
Lyme disease	
Mr. Steve Clark	37
Office of the Ombudsman	
Mme France Gélinas	37
Correctional facilities	
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	37
Diagnostic services	
Mme France Gélinas	37
Correctional facilities	
Mr. Bill Walker	38
Hydro dam	
Mr. Norm Miller.....	38

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Throne speech debate	
Mr. Tim Hudak.....	38
Debate adjourned	41

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 23 November 2011 / Mercredi 23 novembre 2011

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Throne speech debate

Mr. Michael Coteau	9
Mrs. Liz Sandals	11
Debate adjourned	16

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. John O'Toole.....	16
Mr. Randy Hillier.....	16
Mr. Gilles Bisson	16

Leader of the Opposition

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	16
------------------------------------	----

Information technology in the Legislature

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	17
------------------------------------	----

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Government spending

Mr. Tim Hudak	17
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	17

Government spending

Mr. Tim Hudak	18
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	18

Power plants

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	19
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	19

Taxation

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	20
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	20

Government spending

Mr. Peter Shurman	21
Hon. Dwight Duncan	21

Long-term care

Mme France Gélinas	21
Hon. Deborah Matthews	21

Anti-bullying initiatives

Ms. Soo Wong.....	22
Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....	22

Correctional facilities

Mr. Bill Walker	22
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur	23
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	23

Child care

Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	23
Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....	23

Services en français / French-language services

M. Phil McNeely.....	24
L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur	24

Power plant

Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	24
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	24

Manufacturing jobs

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	25
Hon. Brad Duguid	25

Aggregate extraction

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn	25
Hon. James J. Bradley	25

Skilled trades

Mr. Randy Hillier	26
Hon. Glen R. Murray.....	26

Aboriginal rights

Ms. Sarah Campbell.....	27
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	27

Correction of record

Mr. Peter Shurman	27
-------------------------	----

Use of question period

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	27
------------------------------------	----

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Jack MacLaren	27
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	27

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Jamie Hubley

Ms. Lisa MacLeod	27
------------------------	----

Arts Richmond Hill

Mr. Reza Moridi.....	28
----------------------	----

Elections Ontario

Mr. Steve Clark	28
-----------------------	----

Continued on inside back cover