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of Ontario

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 30 March 2005

Mercredi 30 mars 2005

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 30 March 2005

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 30 mars 2005

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WASTE DISPOSAL

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): You may have visited the 100 or so septic trucks, tractor-trailers and portable toilets—I can hear the horns honking outside right now on Queen's Park Circle—and if you haven't, I invite you to come down to rural Ontario or go to northern Ontario, where these haulers are spinning their wheels as the options to dump their loads continue to dwindle. Like the visual display outside today, many of these hard-working haulers feel that they are going in circles with this government while the pile of potential problems piles up.

There are over two million septic tanks in Ontario. Sewage haulers solve a lot of our problems, but they have run out of options. They don't send this stuff to the moon. It doesn't just disappear. It has to go somewhere. It's quite simple: Rural Ontario produces waste, just as urban Ontario does. Rural waste must be safely disposed of, as does that in the city.

Members of OASIS, the group outside today, have a strong reputation for high-quality service. It's high time this government showed some leadership. Don't force the rural haulers to truck down here to get your attention. They don't need a study; they need some action today. The question is, will this government give OASIS somewhere to drop their loads, or will it continue to ignore rural and northern Ontario?

I used the washroom today. I thank the sewage industry. I will ask you to greet members of OASIS, as they are around Queen's Park today.

KNIGHTS TABLE

Mr. Vic Dhillon (Brampton West–Mississauga): I'm pleased to rise today to acknowledge and commend an organization and a group of volunteers who have worked tirelessly to help those less fortunate in my riding of Brampton West–Mississauga.

In October of last year, I stood here in this House pleading on behalf of the Knights Table, for those in the community to do whatever they could to assist in finding this kitchen a new home nearby. The Knights Table was

being forced out of their downtown Brampton location, where they had served millions of meals for over 10 years. It seemed that every door was being slammed shut. The Table was being forced out: forced out of supporting and helping children and adults much less privileged than us.

Thankfully, a compromise was reached and they were able to remain at their location until the end of last year. After seemingly endless negotiations, a new permanent and nearby location was found for the Knights Table. Through the work of Nilda Patey, the executive director of Knights Table, and her army of deeply committed volunteers, they were open and ready to serve the community on February 1 of this year. On March 22, the Knights Table held a dinner party in honour of these volunteers, where it was time for us to say thank you for your support during our move, thank you for lending a helping hand and thank you for being you.

If you are ever in the neighbourhood, please stop by. The Knights Table always will be more than a soup kitchen, but a warm, safe and comforting place for friends to gather.

HYDRO ONE

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): I rise in the House today to speak to the excesses of the Minister of Energy's good friend over at Hydro One. Hydro One's executive spending is out of control. First it was the 35% pay raise to Tom Parkinson. Now Parkinson has courtesy flights, thanks to the Ontario taxpayer, to his estate escape on Lake Muskoka.

The minister responsible has been defiant in supporting this ridiculous expenditure. How coincidental. After all, this is the same minister who took a friendly helicopter ride with his good buddy the president of Hydro One in July over the same locale. The minister should know that this personal helicopter ride to and from the cottage at the expense of the taxpayer is simply wrong.

I also sense that there is a growing rift at the cabinet table. While the minister says, "These things are always difficult to explain to people," his boss, the Premier, was much more resolute when he said he thought there were "better uses of public money." I agree with the Premier on this one. Clearly the Premier and his minister aren't reading from the same flight plan. Either the minister is asleep at the switch or he is the pilot of this gravy helicopter ride.

It is clear that the ratepayer is the one who is going to pick up the cost of this gross hypocrisy, above and beyond the growing rates that are about to start on April 1. Be prepared for more reckless control by the Minister of Energy.

HAMILTON DISTRICT HEALTH COUNCIL

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): Tomorrow, March 31, marks the end of an era in quality community-based health care planning. It will be a sad day on Thursday, when Hamilton District Health Council closes its doors one final time following a long legacy of providing valued community service. Hamilton joins 17 other district health councils across Ontario terminated by the McGuinty Liberals.

As of April 1, 2005, costly local health integration networks, LHINs, headed by high-priced CEOs, will be responsible for the planning and administering of local health care programs and services. I want to publicly thank the hard-working and dedicated members and staff of the Hamilton District Health Council—not just the current 19-member council, but all past members who as citizens, municipal representatives and health care providers contributed their talent, skill, expertise and unparalleled knowledge of our community.

The Hamilton DHC was our authoritative local voice in health planning. Its members fostered partnerships, worked with stakeholders and stood as our community leaders in support of a responsive health system. On behalf of all of Hamilton, I extend appreciation to the current council members. Thank you also to the staff of the Hamilton DHC, under the able leadership for very many years of Ms. Marion Emo.

It will be a rocky transition from the DHCs to the LHINs. Quite frankly, I'm very concerned that doctors, health care providers and ordinary citizens are shaking their heads over the McGuinty Liberal government's dismal health care planning process. Showing great volunteers the door, tearing down DHCs and leaving a big, gaping hole in service doesn't sound like a plan for improving health care delivery at the community level.

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TRY RECYCLING

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe): On February 25, I toured the local business in my riding called Try Recycling. I was pleased to have the Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, and the member from London North Centre, Deb Matthews, accompany me on the tour.

Try Recycling is located on Clarke Road. They have been in business for 14 years. They employ 25 full-time employees, and during the summer they hire additional staff. This company takes materials such as yard waste, clean wood, clean asphalt and reinforced concrete left over from construction or renovation sites and processes

them into material that is sold to business and industry for use in finished products.

Here are some facts about Try Recycling. They recycled and reused 98% of material brought to their facilities, recovered enough metal to build 5,250 cars, recycled enough construction material to build a 30-storey building, recycled enough wood to save 150 acres of virgin forest and recycled enough concrete to fill 9,000 cement trucks.

This year, the London Chamber of Commerce nominated Try Recycling for a business achievement award. I am proud to have Try Recycling located in my riding, a company not only employing people and making a profit, but helping to protect our environment for future generations.

OMA AGREEMENT

Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean–Carleton): It was only five short months ago that almost 60% of Ontario's physicians put a vote of non-confidence in this McGuinty government and in their pathetic offer to physicians. The doctors rejected the deal because they wanted to send a message to the Liberal government, which made the health care crisis in the first place.

In the last deal, there was no plan to attract or retain new doctors. There was no plan to address wait-lists or to improve services. All there was was a strategy that tried to bribe doctors to prescribe fewer medications to the frail, the elderly and the disabled.

The November vote of non-confidence in this minister's abilities and the McGuinty government's malformation agenda shamed the government into going back to the table after the John Tory Conservatives demanded answers. But in the months since the first deal was rebuffed, what costs have been incurred? What costs have the taxpayers paid? There is still no public costing of this deal.

The government that insulted, the government that maligned, the government that tried to beat up physicians in Ontario still won't tell hard-working taxpayers in Ontario how much they've spent on this deal. One physician is quoted as saying that physicians were able to get a \$500-million sweetener added to the deal after the McGuinty government said they wouldn't go back to the table. They call this Premier "Premier Blinky," because he keeps drawing a line in the sand and then erasing it and backing down.

FIREFIGHTERS

Mr. Bruce Crozier (Essex): We're shining some light on real heroes, the firefighters in all our communities. We're providing funding for the first time in 20 years. Ontario firefighters are receiving \$30 million as a one-time Ontario fire service training grant, distributed to municipalities throughout Ontario.

The people of Windsor-Essex directly benefit from this funding. Essex county's squads, and Windsor's, will

receive \$960,000—\$90,000 each for Amherstburg, Essex, Lakeshore, LaSalle, Leamington and Tecumseh; \$70,000 for Kingsville; and \$50,000 for little old Pelee Island. Windsor will receive \$300,000.

It's been a long time since our firefighters have received the support they deserve. This is for the men and women who work day and night to protect us when we are most vulnerable. They are at the front lines of our communities, ensuring our safety and peace of mind.

I would like to thank Minister Kwinter for his unwavering support of our firefighters and his dedication to rural needs. Ontario fire marshal Bernard Moyle has said that the funding “provides fire services with the flexibility to tailor the funding for local needs so that they may continue to deliver outstanding service to the people of this province.”

I'm pleased that we've made fire service training funding available to our local firefighters. They are on the front lines, protecting our communities from disaster, and they deserve every ounce of that protection.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex): We've talked a lot about the farming crisis in this House and about grain and oilseed farmers. They've been hit hard across this country because of low commodity prices, and they came here from across the province earlier this month to express their needs.

I'm proud to say that yesterday the Minister of Agriculture and the McGuinty government announced a \$79-million investment in the market revenue program to help these farmers deal with the current crisis. Our government is confident that the agricultural funding announced yesterday will deliver meaningful change and will help to make a lasting impact on our farms and in our communities.

As a farmer and a long-time resident of rural Ontario, I know first-hand the challenges of keeping a farm profitable, and of the very hard work that goes into running a farm and the desire to leave something of value for our children. It is a struggle to be a farmer, but the rewards in farming cannot be measured in just dollars and cents.

We are also glad that the federal government announced funding for the agricultural industry yesterday, in particular \$480 million for the grain and oilseed sector. In light of the crisis our farmers are facing and the fact that there is a \$23-billion gap in what Ontario gives to the federal government versus what we get back, I call on the federal government to give Ontario its fair share and invest \$120 million in Ontario's grain and oilseed farmers.

Like all Ontarians, farmers are proud Canadians and, like the farmers, we know that a strong Ontario is critical to a stronger Canada. So it is important that the federal government support a strong Ontario for a stronger Canada.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward–Hastings): I would like to take this opportunity to give a little bit of advice to the federal members of Parliament representing Ontario.

Interjections.

Mr. Parsons: No heckling.

The advice is very simple: Smarten up. You were elected to advocate for the people of Ontario in Ottawa, not the other way around. You know how strong Ontario is and how much we contribute to this country, and we want to keep doing so. But your federal government keeps \$23 billion more of our citizens' money than it provides in services to them. This is wrong. It jeopardizes the very things that we as Canadians value, and you know it.

When you boast of your budget surpluses, you must remember that that money came out of the pockets of your constituents—money they need for such essentials as health care, education, seniors and farming.

Ontarians elected you to stand up for them. Don't forget your roots: where you came from, who elected you and why you're there. If you won't fight for your constituents here in Ontario, who will? Canada is strong only if Ontario is strong. Join with us in the fight for fairness in the treatment of your province. Our citizens expect nothing less.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated March 30, 2005, of the standing committee on government agencies. Pursuant to standing order 106(e)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): I believe we have unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: I move that pursuant to standing order 96(g), notice be waived for ballot item 56.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

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STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): It's my pleasure to rise in the House today to tell you that the McGuinty government is making history, not only in Ontario's electricity sector but in the evolution of Canada's energy landscape. Through our efforts to replace coal-fired generation with cleaner sources of energy, to restructure Ontario's electricity sector to meet our long-term supply needs and to work with other provinces to enhance our transmission infrastructure, the McGuinty government will leave its mark as a government that got the energy issues right.

Today, I'm pleased to announce that we're embarking on a new and exciting chapter. Mr. Speaker, as you know, we are setting the pace as the only jurisdiction in North America that is committed to replacing coal-fired generation with clean, reliable and sustainable power. We're doing this because we want to protect the best interests of Ontarians by reducing harmful emissions and cleaning up the air we breathe.

Our government is interested in maximizing every source of renewable energy that is available to us. We are particularly interested in expanding our supply of hydroelectric power, such as the power that has been generated from Niagara Falls since 1905. Through our request for proposals for renewable power and through the efforts of my colleague the Minister of Natural Resources, we are removing barriers to achieving Ontario's potential for additional water power in our province. Why? Because it's clean, affordable, sustainable and reliable. The good news is, there is an abundance of clean, untapped hydroelectric potential not only in our province but all across Canada to help us meet our long-term supply needs. Newfoundland and Labrador has an abundant supply of hydroelectric potential at the lower Churchill River. In fact, Gull Island and Muskrat Falls on the lower Churchill represent the most economic undeveloped hydro sites in all of North America.

That's why I'm pleased to announce today a joint proposal with Hydro-Québec to support Newfoundland and Labrador in the development of a major hydroelectric generation project at the lower Churchill River in Labrador. The proposed project would yield 2,824 megawatts of clean, affordable and sustainable electricity, enough to power almost two million homes. I'm excited about this partnership and the benefits it could bring to Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador. This initiative demonstrates how our government is working with our neighbours to find mutually beneficial solutions to meet our long-term energy supply needs.

The joint proposal would see Ontario and Quebec work with Newfoundland and Labrador to develop the 2,000-megawatt Gull Island site in Labrador and an additional 824 megawatts at Muskrat Falls. Ontario would receive one third of the total output of the project. If our proposal is accepted, Ontario would benefit from an additional 670 megawatts of reliable and affordable power from the Gull Island site and an additional 275 megawatts from Muskrat Falls. Combined, that is equivalent to the annual electricity requirements of over 550,000 homes.

Our proposal will ensure billions of dollars in construction activity as well as significant and perpetual direct resource benefits to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We believe that our proposal includes options that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador will find attractive, and we look forward to working with them to find a solution that maximizes benefits to all of our provinces. And because hydroelectric power is among the most affordable sources of power, we are hopeful that this agreement would allow Ontario access to an affordable power source over a very long period of time, which will help stabilize long-term electricity prices in our province.

Importantly, as part of our partnership with Hydro-Québec, we would also agree to advance the construction of a 1,250-megawatt interconnection between Ontario and Quebec, which will be in service by 2009. It will provide Ontario with greater access to power from Quebec at a time when Quebec is adding significant capacity. It's important to announce that this will be our first real inter-tie with Quebec and another link in the east-west grid that Dalton McGuinty and this government are bringing to bear.

In addition, Hydro-Québec has indicated a willingness to provide Ontario with 670 megawatts of power by 2011, which is representative of Ontario's share of Gull Island's expected power flows. If successful, this proposal would be a major step in enhancing trade and interprovincial relations between Ontario and Quebec as we take a lead role in working co-operatively with our neighbouring provinces for the benefit of all of Canada.

We look forward to updating you further on this proposal as the process in Newfoundland and Labrador develops. In the meantime, we are also working with Manitoba, our neighbour to the west, to enhance transmission interconnections and bring even more clean hydroelectric power to our province. In fact, we are actively studying a proposed hydroelectric project in northern Manitoba and a transmission line that would bring 1,500 megawatts of clean hydroelectric power to our province, enough to fuel over one million homes.

I firmly believe that enhancing transmission inter-ties between Ontario and our neighbours would strengthen interprovincial relationships and trade, enhance our energy security, stimulate economic development, lessen our reliance on fossil generation and reduce greenhouse gases. Not the least, it would help our First Nations share in the prosperity of southern Ontario.

As we move forward to replace coal-fired generation—we buy 80% of our coal from the United States; why shouldn't we buy cleaner, more reliable, sustainable power from other Canadians? That makes sense. That makes the most sense. Hydroelectric power is a zero-emission source of electricity. So the more hydroelectric power we have, the cleaner our air will be, now and for generations to come.

That is the legacy this government will leave: We will close our coal plants and replace them with cleaner, greener, reliable electricity at a cheaper cost in the long term. That's in everyone's interest. We're proud, as a government, to begin this process with Quebec and Newfoundland.

MUNICIPAL FIRE SERVICES

Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services): Strong, safe communities are one of the McGuinty government's top priorities. Every day, firefighters across Ontario risk their lives to keep our communities safe. This will always be a job full of risks, and Ontario firefighters know this, yet they put their lives on the line to keep the rest of us safe. But we can do our part to help reduce those risks.

Last week, in the first such initiative in more than 20 years, I announced direct funding for municipal fire services. While the grant is unconditional, we expect that fire services will use the funds to improve training and provide new equipment. This new funding will have a direct impact on improving the safety of Ontarians.

Firefighters need to have the training and equipment to do their jobs as safely as possible, whether they're responding to a house fire or a car accident. We are investing \$30 million in the Ontario fire service grant. The grant is being distributed this week to 385 municipal fire departments to help them meet training needs and buy new equipment.

We recognize that in the current fiscal environment and with increasing demands on emergency response services, some municipalities need extra support to keep providing high-quality fire protection services. Rural and small communities, in particular, face this challenge because they have a lower property and business tax base. Seventy-one per cent of the Ontario fire service grants is going to municipalities with populations of 50,000 or less. These municipalities have told us they need help, and we are providing it. But we also know that larger fire departments operate under some of these same pressures. This grant will improve firefighting in all communities.

There are more than 10,000 full-time, 113 part-time and almost 18,000 volunteer firefighters in Ontario. Ninety-five per cent of fire departments in Ontario are volunteer or have a volunteer component. The office of the fire marshal will work with municipalities and fire chiefs across the province to identify their training needs and priorities.

1400

The Ontario fire service grant can also be used for the purchase of firefighting equipment, to improve firefighter safety or for public education and fire prevention. Life-saving equipment, like thermal imaging devices, helps firefighters locate and rescue fire victims through dense smoke. With the Ontario fire service grant, fire services will be able to purchase vital equipment.

We look forward to working with the municipalities and our other partners to ensure that Ontarians and firefighters are kept safe. We will work closely with the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association and the Fire Fighters Association of Ontario. Our partners welcome the Ontario fire service grant, and many fire chiefs across the province have expressed their support. We will continue to build on our relationship with fire chiefs and our municipal partners to reduce the risks faced by the valiant men and women in the firefighting profession.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Responses?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I'm pleased to respond today to the statement by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

First of all, I wanted to point out that I was somewhat surprised by this budget announcement on March 22. It was a \$30-million announcement, following an announcement just previously that week that the government had found itself with a ballooning deficit of almost \$7 billion—and that's with an additional \$7 billion in revenues. That's somewhat ironic, in the fact that in the 2003-04 budget, the Eves government announced \$40 million for fire departments as well as a helicopter, and this government found itself not able to follow that direction, and of course they cancelled the helicopter and cancelled the \$40 million. That being said—we know that this government is not fiscally responsible—it is good to see money going to small and rural fire departments in particular.

What I was disappointed with was the way the announcement was made. I've made this statement already in this House. Quite frankly, the Liberals, the government members, made sure that the fire departments in their ridings knew the exact amount of money, whereas the Progressive Conservative members and the New Democratic Party members didn't get any of that information. I found it difficult that the minister responsible for law and order would pull a stunt like that.

However, that being said, as the critic for community safety, I certainly support any assistance going to the fire departments. I would, though, have liked to see the minister correct the double-hatter issue. This is his way of avoiding dealing with that. He thinks that if they try to train the fire departments, the double-hatter issue will go away. In fact, it hasn't gone away. Most of the small fire departments are still talking about the loss of double-hatters, including a call I had just last night from a fireman who represents two fire departments.

We'll have a lot more to say on this tomorrow with the grow-op operation. We'll be looking forward to that

debate, because that's the first debate that this minister has had take place in this House.

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): I'm optimistic in some respects. I would say I'm pleased that the minister recognizes the importance for Canada to have a national grid plan. No one could fault this. But let the viewer be aware that the announcement today is a clear admission that their policy on coal is simply wrong. Their plan to eliminate coal by 2007 will plunge Ontario into darkness. Even in the plan, he knows that he cannot diminish the coal production before 2007. If he admits nothing else today, he is admitting that that is another broken promise.

He should also tell the consumer that the money going into these projects hasn't been announced. But there's only one payer, and that's the person at the end of the wires. The consumers of Ontario, as of April 1, are going to pay more, and into the future they're going to pay even more.

The downside of this is that Ontario, a once strong and once proud province, under this government is now going to be dependent on Manitoba and Newfoundland and Labrador for their power. We're also going to lose the investment and lose the jobs.

Clearly, they have no plan. In my view, this is an admission today that they have no plan.

Everyone understands that we must have a safe, reliable and affordable source of power. Now we have Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador, and the investments that aren't announced here today are clearly the next shoe to fall on this very difficult policy area in which the minister seems to be floundering. I put this to him today, as a summation of this announcement on our part: Tell the people of Ontario the truth. Are you going to close the Nanticoke plant prior to 2007 and, if you're not, why won't you just tell the people of Ontario the truth? What they want is certainty and confidence in a government that can manage a very important economic file.

At the end of the day, the consumer, under this government, has undertaken two increases in the price at their meter at home. The announcement today is that there are going to be more, and the investment is going to be in Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec and Manitoba. The workers and the investors of Ontario are going to be left paying the bill.

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I want to respond to yet another exercise in media spin by the Minister of Energy, and I want to place this in context. The McGuinty government promised that they were going to close all the coal-fired stations by 2007. They also promised that they were going to maintain hydroelectricity rates at 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour. People across Ontario want to see a plan to do these things.

Did we hear a plan today for the closing of the Lambton coal-fired station? No. Did we hear a plan for

the closing of the Nanticoke coal-fired station? No. Did we hear a plan to keep electricity rates anywhere near the 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour that was promised? No. That went by the wayside a long time ago. Is there any kind of plan here at all? No. Is there even an agreement? No. Is there even an agreement to sign a future agreement? No. What we got was a proposal, and it was obvious from watching the press conference that it was cooked up on the back of an envelope. The minister couldn't even explain his own proposal. He had to call officials in to do it.

This so-called proposal will only provide Ontario with 800 megawatts of electricity some time after 2011, but the promise is to close the Lambton and Nanticoke coal-fired stations by 2007. No plan. This is once again the McGuinty government strategy: When you're in trouble and you don't have a plan, hold another press conference, run out the media spin and hope that somebody will fall for it. As I say, there's no plan here. There's no agreement on power provision here. There's not even an agreement to be signed at some future date. It's simply a proposal.

Let me tell you what people wanted to hear. In northern Ontario, where paper mill after paper mill after pulp mill after pulp mill is either being closed or is slated for closure, they wanted to hear something from the McGuinty government that recognizes that the northern Ontario economy is very electricity intensive, and that paper mills, pulp mills and sawmills cannot afford 6.3 cents or 7 cents a kilowatt hour, which is what this government is now forcing them to pay.

Let me give you some examples. This is from Abitibi. I know Abitibi presented this to the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Energy. They are very clear. The paper mill in Kenora, looking at a total of 382 jobs, is under review for closure. Why? Because electricity rates are too high. The Abitibi paper mill in Thunder Bay—a total of 382 jobs—is under review for closure. Why? Because electricity rates are too high. The pulp mill in Terrace Bay is closed: 150 workers out of work. When you talk to management, what was the biggest issue? The biggest issue was the cost of power. Go to the Tembec mill in Kapuskasing and talk to them—800 jobs. What are they worried about? The price of electricity. Go to the St. Mary's paper mill in Sault Ste. Marie—300 jobs. What are they worried about? The price of electricity. They can't afford what the McGuinty government is doing to them.

Was there any announcement here today to respond to those communities where literally thousands of jobs are at risk? No. Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

1410

Let us get to the coal: 7,500 megawatts will have to be replaced. Was there any mention here of 7,500 megawatts? No. This might deliver 800 megawatts sometime after 2011 if all the stars line up and if the government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the government of Quebec agree.

This wasn't the announcement of a plan today. This wasn't the announcement of a strategy today. This is a government that has no plan but is desperate to cover up the fact that they have no plan with more media spin.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): I draw the attention of the members to the east gallery: a former member, Murad Velshi from Don Mills in the 34th Parliament. Let's welcome him.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): I also have a very delightful announcement here. I would like to ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of legislative pages serving the first session of the 38th Parliament: Julie Banks from Oshawa, Zoé Campbell from Ottawa South, Nicole Cliteur from Algoma-Manitoulin, Ryan Cowieson from Scarborough East, Scott Dickson from Simcoe-Grey, Peter Entecott from York North, Michael Flemming from Kitchener-Waterloo, Peter Green from Parkdale-High Park, Jessica Jepp from St. Paul's, Alex Kellermann from Mississauga South, Amanda Kelly from Halton, Ryan Ko from Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge, Jean-Olivier Lambert from Timmins-James Bay, Stephaine Lawrence from Whitby-Ajax, Jean Murray from Kitchener-Waterloo, Alexandre Nanoff from Eglinton-Lawrence, Alexandra Schwabe from Sudbury, Sameer Sethi from Brampton West-Mississauga, Jessica Simoneau from Niagara Centre and Nevetha Yogarajah from York South-Weston. Let's welcome them in the usual manner.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PROVINCIAL DEFICIT

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Finance. Since the Premier was unable to answer this simple question yesterday, I thought I would try to pose it to you. As the minister responsible, could you give us your best estimate as to what the deficit is going to be for this current year just now concluded?

Hon. Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance): I'm glad to see that the Leader of the Opposition is repeating his questions. I can simply tell him that he'll get to know, as he spends more time around this Parliament, that every quarter the government of Ontario publishes its Ontario Finances report. If my friend will simply refer to the financial report that we published in February, he will see that right there on page 1 we show that the province is currently planning for a deficit of \$6 billion. He will also know that, whether it's a government or a business, neither a government nor a business actually puts up-to-

date, daily re-estimates of finances. So I simply invite him to remain in this Parliament and to be here for the presentation of the budget, where we'll give a final report on our financial circumstances for 2004-05, as well as present a budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Mr. Tory: Well, we've gone from the Comedy Channel yesterday to the Mystery Channel today. The Minister of Finance does not need to tell me too much about how often business puts out its numbers, but I can tell you right now, it is shocking to me that two days before the end of the fiscal year, you are unwilling to tell the people your best estimate—as of now, not as of some report you put out several months ago—as to what the deficit is going to be.

I know full well, because I've been around here long enough, that you are having very regular briefings with your officials about the state of the deficit. Any reasonable person should expect that you have had at least one of those briefings in 2005, in this year, and you should be prepared to tell the people of Ontario, when it's their money, what the deficit is going to be for this year. Will you tell us what the deficit is going to be for this year, your best estimate as of now?

Hon. Mr. Sorbara: I simply tell the new Leader of the Opposition, of the Progressive Conservative Party, that he shouldn't sacrifice his credibility so early in his term in this Parliament. Have I been meeting with officials from the Ministry of Finance, dealing with last year and this year? Every day, sir, for hours and hours, in preparation for our upcoming budget.

But I simply want to tell him—I'm asking him to go back to his days as CEO of Rogers Communications. I don't know of one occasion when he regularly reported to his shareholders on a day-to-day basis what the profit for any particular year was, or in his case the losses on a daily basis. I simply tell him that the procedure in this Parliament is to report quarterly on financial performance—

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Tory: If I had gone to a meeting, when I was asked a simple question like that, and given the kind of answer you've given today, I would have lost my job.

The fact of the matter is, we are not dealing here with a company; we are dealing here with the finances of the province of Ontario. We are dealing here with money that is not your money. It's the people's money, and they have the right to know, any given day they want to know, when we ask on their behalf, "What is your best estimate?" Are you willing, or do you just not know what your best estimate is of the deficit of the province of Ontario for the year ending right now, today? No excuses. What's the answer?

Hon. Mr. Sorbara: The Leader of the Opposition speaks about losing his job. I want to remind my friend that his predecessors, that government, in October 2003, days before the people voted, put out a financial report which predicted a zero deficit. Within several weeks, the former Provincial Auditor said that the deficit, far from

being zero, was some \$5.6 billion. That's the mess we inherited. So we are methodically, diligently and with discipline overcoming all of the mess that your party left when it was in government.

1420

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): I was wrong. It wasn't the Mystery Channel; it was the Scream Channel.

My second question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Food. On behalf of the hundreds of farmers in my constituency and indeed on behalf of farmers across Ontario, can you tell this House specifically how farmers can access the funds that you announced yesterday?

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I take this opportunity to welcome the member to the House. I look forward to working with him.

It's very simple, and perhaps, hopefully, you've now learned what a heifer is. It's my understanding you've had some difficulties in dealing with agricultural issues on the other side. It's very simple, and I would encourage you to talk to your agriculture critic.

We have in place in this province the market revenue insurance program. The MRI program has been in place for a number of years. Based on the data that has been received for the 2004 crop year and the \$88 million that we have flowed already, the \$79 million that's going to flow is going to flow through the market revenue insurance program, and those cheques should be in the mail within the next two to three weeks.

Mr. Tory: The minister, of course, didn't answer the question. We called the number that you referenced at your news conference yesterday. We called it this morning. Your announcement said yesterday that you would flow the money to the farmers from the 2003 and 2004 crop seasons. When we phoned, we were told by your ministry officials that the money you announced is to pay for problems that occurred with the crops last year and was not going to help anyone with the problems they might have this year. Worse still, they didn't even know how to deal with someone who might be a new client for the ministry in this area.

What the farmers need—the farmers in my riding and in the ridings of many other members of this House—is a commitment from you that the crop they're being asked to plant this year is going to receive some support. That commitment, of course, just doesn't exist. This isn't a good start, but I will ask the minister this: Will you outline a support program for farmers for this year before they put the seeds in the ground in the planting season?

Hon. Mr. Peters: I would welcome the member to come over to the ministry office for a detailed briefing as to the programs that we do offer to farmers in this province. If there is a specific individual, a farmer, who is having difficulty accessing any services that the Ministry of Agriculture and Food provides, please do the responsible thing: Have that individual farmer sign a

waiver form, as we do in all of our offices, and contact my MPP liaison.

The dollars that we are flowing are very clear. This is in support of the dramatic decrease in commodity prices that occurred in the 2004 year. We have flowed \$88 million. We've announced an additional \$79 million. That's \$167 million that is flowing in support of farmers to deal with the crisis that they're facing coming out of the 2004 crop year. Those dollars will assist them to be in a position to plant their 2005 crops. We have undertaken a comprehensive review of our business risk management programs that's going to lead to where we go forward with safety nets for this problem.

Mr. Tory: The minister full knows that a lot of that money in respect to last year, if he gets it out in the three weeks he's promised, will go to pay down bank loans that people had to take out to stay in business last year.

Perhaps even more disturbing than your being contradicted by your own officials is the word that the province of Ontario was excluded from top-level discussions that took place between the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premiers of Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

As you've said many times in this House, agriculture is the second-largest industry in this province. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture said yesterday that they were disturbed about the fact that your government was not talking to the other governments in Canada; there wasn't the kind of coordination we'd expect on something like this. Minister, why did you not work with the government of Canada before your announcement yesterday and before theirs to make these announcements work together for farmers in Ontario?

Hon. Mr. Peters: I'm really disappointed that the honourable Leader of the Opposition is so pessimistic about our farmers in this province. We're working to ensure that farming is viable, that our farmers produce safe, high-quality food. I would challenge the member to perhaps pick up the phone and call the minister, because I spoke with the federal agriculture minister on Monday evening, prior to the announcement yesterday.

As well, I was on a conference call yesterday with all the provincial ministers, talking about where we go moving forward, because the federal government, quite honestly, acted unilaterally in this decision without proper consultation with the province. So we had a conference call of the provincial agriculture ministers yesterday. We'll be meeting on April 9 in Ottawa. We met on March 2 and 3. I was outside. I stood beside you at the rally outside. Following that rally, I jumped on a plane and went to Ottawa to present Ontario's case to the federal minister.

So we've been working very hard, and all we've heard is silence and nothing positive and constructive from the opposition in helping our farmers.

PRIMARY CARE REFORM

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Health. You promised that

your deal with Ontario doctors would help Ontario patients. You said that it would help patients who don't have a doctor find a doctor. You said that it would help those people who were on waiting lists move up on the waiting list. In short, you promised primary care reform. But today what we find is that the doctors, yes, voted for a deal, but it's not a deal that provides primary care reform; it's a deal where most of those primary care reform measures have been put on the shelf. In short, the doctors voted for a deal where you blinked. You opened up the vault, you wrestled the salary figures to the ceiling, but you didn't deliver primary care reform. Minister, when did furious George become Blinky?

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Notwithstanding the honourable member's fascination with cartoon characters, I want to make a couple of comments—

Interjection.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: Yes, you make it easy for everyone except the one million people in the province of Ontario who today do not have a doctor as a result of the record of those two parties while in government. All the questions that that honourable member might want to ask—all Ontarians must be reminded that, on that fateful day when you were the government in the province of Ontario and sat on your hands while the cabinet decided to close medical schools, you have been the greatest contributor to the problems of health care in the province of Ontario. The deal that we have signed and the evidence of the extent to which primary care reform is alive in the province of Ontario is to be found in the fact that 213 communities across the province have applied for family health teams, our model of primary health care reform.

Mr. Hampton: Not only is furious George blinking, but he has obviously forgotten his history. No medical schools closed in the province of Ontario.

Here's what we find in your deal. You have delayed a series of measures that would have helped ordinary Ontario families who can't find doctors or who are on lengthy waiting lists. You're delaying programs and strategies for seniors' care, palliative care, after-hours care at nursing homes, diabetes care and strategies that would have brought more physicians and more specialists to hard-pressed northern Ontario communities. That's what you've done. You've wrestled the physicians' salaries to the ceiling, but all of those things that you promised in terms of primary care reform, you've put on the shelf.

Minister, you promised primary care reform. Why did you blink when you promised primary care reform?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: There's ample evidence in the province of Ontario, found in at least 213 communities which on February 15 submitted applications to be part of our government's model of primary care reform, and that is family health teams. That's well-known to the honourable member and to honourable members in all parties, because communities all across the province of Ontario have asked to be part of an

interdisciplinary method of practice that brings together our doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and dietitians to provide the kind of comprehensive care that is at the heart of our model of primary care. I recommend to the honourable member that he stay tuned because in the days ahead he will see, from this government, movement in the form of hope for community after community in the province of Ontario that was left behind by your government's short-sighted decision to chop our medical schools down.

1430

Mr. Hampton: I invite the Minister of Health to tell us what medical school closed.

This is your record as Minister of Health. Here's the situation: palliative care for seniors, shelved; providing better care for seniors in their homes, shelved; helping people manage their diabetes, shelved; improved funding for specialists in northern Ontario, shelved. All of those things were shelved in this agreement.

But it's more than that. During the election, you decried what you called "wasted health care dollars on tax cuts." What do we find in this agreement? A very lucrative tax cut for physicians, which will allow for all kinds of income splitting and tax avoidance; in fact, tens of millions of dollars of tax avoidance. Can you tell us this, Minister: How does a—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Order. Member from St. Catharines, will you come to order, please.

We'll let the leader of the third party complete his question.

Mr. Hampton: Obviously, Liberal cabinet ministers don't take this issue of better decorum to heart.

My question for the Minister of Health is, after decrying tax cuts during the election, can you tell us how these tax cuts are going to provide patients who don't have a doctor with primary care reform?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: The agreement that we've reached with the Ontario Medical Association, supported by 74% of Ontario's doctors, paves the way for enhanced care for the people of the province of Ontario, and all of the work on the part of the honourable member to change that will not, nor can the honourable member escape the very present reality. The present reality is a piece of history, and the history is that when that party was in government, they cut down our capacity to produce a sufficient number of doctors.

On the issue at hand, we have invested the money of Ontarians in an appropriate place. We did it ensuring that we have a competitive environment for our doctors so that we not only keep the doctors that we have, so that we can create an environment where people want to practise medicine in the province of Ontario—for example, by our increase in family residency spots recently—but so that Ontario is back in the business of having doctors in communities where, as a result of those governments when in office, they had been eliminated. We will be attracting doctors back to the province of Ontario.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr. Hampton: To the Minister of Health: I simply want to remind the minister that it was a Liberal government in Ottawa under Paul Martin that cut the medicare budgets, and it was a Liberal government in Ottawa that mandated that all provinces reduce the number of physician spaces in medical schools.

But I want to ask you another health question. In September, we learned that you were misspending federal health care dollars earmarked for victims of hepatitis C who contracted the disease through tainted blood. We revealed that your government, despite receiving \$66 million in federal funding, was not using that money for enhanced services for victims of hepatitis C.

Caught red-handed, you quickly formed a committee to look into the matter. But that was eight months ago. Now we find that the committee has never met. There are no terms of reference, no committee members. A whole lot of very sick hepatitis C victims are suffering while you're doing nothing. How do you justify this almost eight months of delay while hepatitis C victims grow sicker and sicker?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: First off, on a matter of history, I recommend that the honourable member take a look at Hansard for May 10, 2000.

Hon. Mr. Harris: ... I'm just disappointed that you oppose some of the longer-term solutions such as free tuition. I think that's disgraceful, when you're the government that slashed places for doctors in our medical schools."

In response, *Ms. Frances Lankin:* Premier, I'm glad you raised that issue. I guess we should admit that it's true: We agreed with the Mulroney government's directive ... and maybe in hindsight that wasn't the right thing to do."

That is the history of medical school spots in the province of Ontario.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: On the matter of hepatitis C, the honourable member's assertions are entirely incorrect, and I will not address all of those. In October, we committed to establish a secretariat within the ministry to focus our affairs on hepatitis C. That has been done, and I'll be pleased to give the honourable member more information in the supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: Minister of Health, what you neglect—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Minister of Community and Social Services, I've asked you twice already.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Can we get some order so I can hear the leader of the third party put forward his supplementary?

Mr. Hampton: Cabinet is upset by these health care questions. I just want to point out to the minister that, yes, it was the Mulroney government that set the direction. It was, immediately after that, the Liberal

government in Ottawa of Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin that implemented it.

But I want to come back to those 3,000 tainted-blood hepatitis C victims in Ontario. They have endured severe physical hardship because of the terrible diseases that they've contracted through no fault of their own. Some 400 of these victims have died since the federal government deal was signed. To this day, the survivors have also endured severe financial hardships. Now they have to endure you spinning a press release saying that you're going to start a committee to investigate this, and the committee hasn't even met in over six months. They don't even have terms of reference. How do you explain that to these victims who have suffered so badly under your watch?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: Since the honourable member insists on disbelieving the words of Frances Lankin, let me reread them for the record one more time—and she had been a health minister, I believe: "Premier, I'm glad you raised that issue. I guess we should admit that it's true. We agreed with the Mulroney government's directive, and maybe in hindsight that wasn't the right thing to do."

Some facts on hepatitis C: The federal government's resources were provided to the province of Ontario, and Ontario, like every government—including those governments led by the New Democratic Party—has spent every cent of that federal money enhancing the quality of services for people with hepatitis C in our community.

On the issue at hand, on October 1, we committed to establish a secretariat within the ministry, which we have done, and to establish a committee that would give us further advice. John Plater is the chair—

The Speaker: Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: We disclosed to you, Minister, all of these hepatitis C victims who were suffering, and your response was to say you were going to set up a committee. But here we are: the victims still suffer; some have died in the interim. Has your committee met? No. Has your committee even terms of reference? No. Has your committee done anything to address the suffering of hepatitis C victims, who are supposed to be receiving this federal money, in terms of enhanced services? Have they received anything? No. This is like your mishandling of the health care file so often. You promise 3,000 new nurses; instead, you lay off almost 1,000 nurses.

What's your answer to those hepatitis C victims who believed that you were actually going to set up a committee to look into their suffering, to look into the injustice and unfairness that happened to them? How do you justify the fact that the committee hasn't even met, it doesn't have any members and it has no terms of reference six months after you promised them?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: Fact number one: Every cent of the federal money that has been sent to Ontario for the purpose of assisting people with hepatitis C has been spent on hepatitis C. Secondly, that party while in government worked on a strategic plan for hepatitis C, and they failed to include people who had been infected

and were at risk of being infected. I found that inappropriate, so we sought applications from people interested from around the province: those who are intravenous drug users and represent them, those who are at risk of becoming infected with hepatitis C, those who have been infected.

By February 15, we had applications come forward. They have been narrowed down. I signed the letters last night. The committee is coming to life under the very able leadership of John Plater. That committee, like the one we have on the AIDS advisory, is one that I will meet with, that I will work with and that we will take advice and direction from, because we believe fundamentally that a strategic plan for addressing hepatitis C must involve those people who have been infected and are at risk of further infection.

1440

GREENBELT

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie—Lincoln): I have a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I wonder if the minister would release the entire list of developers and lobbyists that he or his political staff met with concerning the greenbelt since it was announced December 18, 2003.

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors): Let me once again say that this government is extremely proud of our greenbelt. We added a million acres to green space protection in the greater Toronto area. Now, I know that party over there is not in favour of the greenbelt. They would like to see it paved over. They would like to see strip malls. It would be interesting to see where the leader, Mr. Tory, stands on that as well. It would be very interesting to see, because I believe he gives one story inside Toronto and another story outside of Toronto as far as where he stands on the greenbelt.

We are very proud of what has been accomplished. I can tell you, we used the best scientific information possible from the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture to come up with the greenbelt. We've created a greenbelt that indeed generations can be proud of for many, many years to come.

Mr. Hudak: The minister talked about everything but the question that I asked him—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Order. Over a couple of weeks, I've been hearing comment coming from this side in regard to questions and how they came about. I would rather that members, especially from the government side, refrain from doing that.

The member from Erie—Lincoln.

Mr. Hudak: I had a simple question, Minister: Would you kindly release the list of developers and lobbyists that you and your political staff have met with? I know you don't want to answer the question because you do have a credibility issue. You told TVO that you had not

met with any developers, and it was revealed that that did not meet fully with the facts.

On March 8, you also said that you made a decision personally not to meet "with any particular landowners within the greenbelt. I didn't do that. I met with their duly elected councils, with planners." Well, your parliamentary assistant has a different story. On February 10, at committee, he said that the minister "has been very accessible to a number of different individuals," and has given everybody impacted "ample opportunity to make their case to our staff and to the minister directly."

On the same day, the member from Stoney Creek said that the minister "met with people personally in my riding and he's invited municipal leaders and stakeholders to his office to talk about this."

Minister, that doesn't seem to fit with what you said before. Kindly clear this up. Release the list of those you met with.

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: I can tell you that in developing this greenbelt, which we can be proud of for many generations to come, we have done more consultation through the Greenbelt Task Force, through the consultation that the ministry itself was involved in, through the legislative process etc., than just about any other bill that has ever been brought through this House.

What is interesting is that I have a letter here that talks about a certain fundraiser that's going to take place next week, as a matter of fact. It states that a limited number of people, by invitation only, in order to allow the opportunity to speak to "John" personally, have been invited. When you look at the committee list—

Interjection: How much?

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: For \$1,000 each—it includes developers and all sorts of interesting people. Which John are they talking about? They're talking about John Tory, the Leader of the Opposition.

Let me once again say that we are extremely proud of what we've achieved with respect to the greenbelt. It has been endorsed by municipal leaders across this province. It has been endorsed by the College of Physicians and Surgeons. It has been endorsed by—

The Speaker: Thank you.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I have a question to the Attorney General. Across Ontario, loan sharks are flouting the law while you and your government do nothing. Yesterday in Ottawa, a judge ruled that two payday loan companies were trying to "exploit the vulnerable" by charging criminal rates of interest. The judge says that the victims of these companies don't have to pay, but that's only 34 of the thousands of Ontarians who have been victimized by these scams and these operators. Will you ensure that the thousands of Ontarians who have been charged criminal interest rates get the money back that they lost to these thieves and scofflaws?

Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal): I don't want to speak to the particular case that the member raises, because it is still a live case and it still is under appeal. But I am happy to speak to the member about what our government is doing and how the process works.

My involvement arises where the police investigate and determine that it is a matter that should move forward. It is one of those provisions that require the attorney of the day to personally consent to a prosecution. I can tell you, I will take those matters, as they come up, very, very seriously. This particular matter would not fall into this category until and unless the police brought it forward, if at all.

I will also tell you that some time ago, I wrote to Minister Cotler to deal with the lacunae in the Criminal Code; in particular, to review section 347 of the code, which deals with criminal interest rates, to ensure that it covers abusive payday loan practices.

Lastly, I can assure the member that we will use all of the tools within our disposal on the civil side to ensure that those who have lost money as a result of alleged crimes or crimes under civil forfeiture get that money back.

There's more to come in my supplementary.

Mr. Kormos: More of the same old hot air. We're not talking about the rare criminal charge; we're talking about regulating this scofflaw, scoundrel industry. Your government hasn't regulated. Your government has not established a regime wherein victims are protected from this predatory behaviour by these companies. To quote one editorial, "It's difficult to fathom how a provincial government that's prepared to tell us what snacks kids can eat in our schools can stand by while consumers are victimized in apparent contravention of the law."

A judge has ruled that payday lenders are victims of a crime. Will you ensure that the thousands of Ontarians who have been ripped off and charged usurious, criminal interest rates get the money they lost to these companies returned to them? It's as simple as that.

Hon. Mr. Bryant: The member asked me a question about the particular case, and I want to tell him what the government is doing on this, so I will refer the supplementary to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services.

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I would remind the honourable member that this Legislature passed Bill 70. If it wasn't for the foot-dragging and the filibustering of the honourable member from Niagara Centre, who on June 15 wasted House time and on June 22 adjourned debate, resulting in further delay, we would have the legislation proclaimed at this point. The fact of the matter is that it will be proclaimed on July 30. It will allow full disclosure so consumers are fully aware.

I would suggest that the honourable member stand up at the appropriate time and apologize to consumers. His outrage is not to be taken seriously, because he wasted

valuable time when this piece of legislation was introduced last April.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Today at lunchtime, you met with delegates of the septage hauling industry. Like me, you represent rural communities where private septic systems are common and everyone knows that the tank must be pumped out on a regular basis.

The operators I spoke with indicated the industry's desire to help our government fulfill its commitment to ban the practice of spreading untreated septage on land, but they also expressed concern about the lack of septage disposal alternatives if the ban is implemented in the very near future. Can you please update the people of Ontario on what our government is doing to fulfill its commitment to ban the practice of spreading untreated septage on land?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment): First of all, I want to thank the septage haulers who came to downtown Toronto today. One of their missions was to bring attention to a very important industry, one that I think is very undervalued in this province. They were able to come here today, meet with me, have a reception and focus attention on an issue of our environment that is very important.

I also want to commend the honourable member. A few months after I was named Minister of the Environment, he invited me to his riding to meet with members of this industry so that I could better understand what their issues were.

I'm happy to say that our government is very committed to working with the industry to build the capacity to ban the spreading of untreated septage in the province of Ontario. We have a lot of work to do. The previous government did not put one red cent into building capacity. Our government is working with municipalities and with this industry to do so.

1450

Mr. Lalonde: I want to thank the minister for her positive response. I am certain all Ontarians will be pleased to hear that our government is not ignoring the challenges of banning the spreading of untreated septage on land. Minister, can you please describe some of the work that our government is doing to address the challenges, and could you also give Ontarians some indication of when they may begin to see progress toward implementing a ban on spreading untreated septage on land?

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: I think what's important to identify here for the members of the Legislature is that when you ban untreated septage, it means there have to be standards developed for the treatment of it, and that is what we are in the process of doing at the Ministry of the Environment with industry partners and municipalities. We have a pilot project underway in Huron county. As

well, we are working with specialists at the University of Guelph, and they are advising us around what the standards should be for septage. We look forward, before the end of this year, hopefully in the fall, to bringing forward our plan to ban the spreading of untreated septage

FABRY DISEASE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. On March 22, I received a desperate e-mail from Darren Nesbit, a 27-year-old Fabry patient from Sarnia, who said:

“On March 31, 2005, I will lose my treatment and join Bill and his sister in the fight for our lives.... Now that time is here! And where is my Ontario government? They are hiding behind the CDR board.... I tell you and anyone who will listen to me that this health minister and his government are killing us. They have the chance right now to change the thoughts of young, sick Fabry’s children. Give these people a chance.” End of the desperate e-mail.

I say to the minister, what is your answer to Darren’s desperate plea for help as he fights for his life?

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I say to you, honourable member, that Derek is in exactly the situation that you surely must have envisioned when you were a leader in helping to create the Common Drug Review in our country. The reality is that of course we have sympathy for patients who are in a circumstance where they have been offered the opportunity of a hopeful new product, but each product must be measured for its clinical efficacy. This is the long-established practice in Ontario.

The member, in her role as Minister of Health, working with other Ministers of Health, went even further, and that was to create the Common Drug Review. The company wasn’t satisfied with their first go-round of the Common Drug Review. They said they wanted to resubmit based on new data, and everybody agreed. That’s the current status. My argument to the honourable member in the earlier session of the House this year was that it was inappropriate for the company to suggest that they would cut people off while this review was ongoing, and it’s my understanding that the company has made those arrangements and is flowing product for those people to whom it was being provided heretofore. So I believe that’s the answer for Derek.

Mrs. Witmer: The minister’s answer gives little comfort to Darren or to any other people who have been told they will no longer get treatment. The minister also knows that the CDR was never established to deal with this type of drug product.

But Darren sent me another desperate e-mail yesterday, March 29, and he says: “I, Darren Nesbit, have no more treatments of my drug! How can this government kill its own people? My MPP from Sarnia has done nothing on this issue.... I watch Queen’s Park every day, watching and seeing if anyone cares.”

Minister, what do you say to Darren, as he has now been cut off and he fights for his life? Will you now commit to permanent funding for enzyme replacement therapy?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: First and foremost, any drug program operated by any province must establish clinical efficacy before a product can simply be listed on the formulary. With all due respect to the honourable member, for whom I have great respect, she knows this fundamentally from her role as Minister of Health.

The situation, as I have been apprised of it, is that we will work to make sure that this is the circumstance in his situation—and I’m not sure if you said Darren or Derek; I apologize. The company has advised us they are going to continue to ship the product to hospitals. They’re also sending invoices along; we think that’s inappropriate. The company subsequently asked for a review through the Common Drug Review. They submitted additional data. That review is ongoing. It has been our position for quite some time that it’s appropriate that in that circumstance they continue to support people on the compassionate grounds that they did when they first began to offer this product.

So my understanding is that the product is continuing to be available to that patient, but if you want to provide us with that information, we’ll make sure that he is being treated as the company has told us that he would be. In the meantime, the Common Drug Review and clinical efficacy will stand, as it must for any province.

LABOUR UNIONS

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): To the Minister of Labour: Workers and their friends across this province are denouncing your Bill 144 as not only inadequate but discriminatory, sexist and racist. Yesterday you heard some of that outrage and denunciation here in this chamber. Workers who are mostly women, mostly new Canadians and mostly people of colour, all of them desperately underpaid—surely these workers deserve the same rights of card-based certification that you’re prepared to restore to building trades workers. How do you justify this blatant discrimination against so many women, new Canadians, people of colour, visible minorities and underpaid workers?

Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Labour): Actually, Bill 144 does nothing such as the member outlines. It’s a very progressive series of changes that will assist working people, regardless of where they work, in deciding for themselves whether they wish or do not wish to be members of a union. It contains changes, such as remedial certification and interim reinstatement, that apply for the protection of all workers.

This government does not simply wish to delegate its role in protecting the vulnerable, protecting all workers, to any individual or group or organization. That’s why we’ve taken very significant roles in enhancing worker health and safety in all workplaces, in ensuring the minimum wage is increased, in bringing about the end of the

60-hour workweek, in bringing about family medical leave legislation and in ensuring that the employment standards provisions in the province are actually enforced.

Mr. Kormos: Minister, the women providing home care for seniors, the recent immigrants, the new Canadians providing retail services in Wal-Mart stores, surely deserve the very same right to card-based certification as you're prepared to give to workers on a building site. David Peterson, Bill Davis and even Leslie Frost understood this. Only Mike Harris, Ernie Eves and now you and Dalton McGuinty think that this sort of blatant discrimination is acceptable.

Bill 144 discriminates against workers who are mostly women, mostly new Canadians, mostly people of colour and the poorest, lowest-paid workers in this province. You have created two classes of workers. Have you at any point conferred with the Ontario Human Rights Commission to get their opinion on your discriminatory bill?

Hon. Mr. Bentley: Once again, the legislation does nothing such as the member outlines. In fact, it is a very progressive series of changes that will assist all workers.

We're determined to ensure that all working people have support in exercising their right to choose whether they wish to be members of a union or do not. That's why there are provisions that apply to all workplaces. Because construction has long been recognized as a separate and distinct part, for the purposes of the act, for the purposes of bargaining regimes, there are some extra steps that we had to take in the context of construction to ensure that that right to choose is effective.

What we won't do is return to the NDP position between 1990 and 1995, where they did everything they could to drive out investment and business from the province, because that means every worker is out of a job. We won't go there.

1500

TRAVEL INDUSTRY COMPENSATION FUND

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke North): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. We were all shocked two weeks ago when Jetsgo airlines folded so suddenly, leaving travellers stranded in airports across the country. The federal transportation minister's response to this crisis was to suggest that nothing could be done for these customers, effectively leaving them financially stranded as well. Minister, what has our government done to aid consumers in the wake of this unfortunate event?

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I thank the honourable member for Etobicoke North for his question. I want to take a moment to thank Michael Pepper. He's the CEO of the Travel Industry Council of Ontario, an agency of my ministry. They acted extremely quickly after the Jetsgo failure to provide hourly information updates to con-

sumers on their Web site. They also worked around the clock to secure alternative travel arrangements for stranded passengers. Our office worked to inform members of provincial Parliament of what was going on and what our compensation fund was all about.

Ontario is a leader when it comes to a compensation fund for end-supplier failures. We have a compensation fund that is in extremely good shape: a \$5-million cap per incident, \$5,000 per individual traveller. Information is available on the TICO Web site, which is www.tico.on.ca, for those individuals who were registered through a travel agency and bought their tickets through those travel agencies.

Mr. Qaadri: Certainly, people are encouraged, but there are many customers who are still waiting for compensation—

Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Me.

Mr. Qaadri:—including the MPP from Toronto-Danforth, from a similar situation that occurred over three years ago when Canada 3000 went belly up. Minister, how is our government working with the federal government to ensure that Ontario's travellers never again become victims of poor business practices by airlines like Canada 3000 and Jetsgo?

Hon. Mr. Watson: I'm sorry that the honourable member from Danforth was not stranded longer at her destination, but I could certainly look into that.

The member raised the situation of Canada 3000, a much more complex issue, because Canada 3000 was, in fact, five separate corporations. TICO advises me that compensation claims will be available within two to six months for Jetsgo customers.

As the member knows, the federal government is responsible for regulating the airline industry. I'm pleased that Minister Lapierre just yesterday indicated that they're willing to look at a national compensation fund and follow Ontario's lead. I look forward to working with the federal government and my other provincial consumer ministers at our consumer ministers conference in Quebec City in June for the better protection of all consumers, not just those in Ontario, but across Canada.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Yesterday you announced a trickle of money for our tobacco farmers and another trickle for our grain and oilseed producers. The tobacco farmers tell us that this just isn't enough. A mere \$35 million cannot offset the burden of increasing higher tobacco taxes. We now discover that the \$79 million going to the grain and oilseed producers is only 40% of their MRI entitlement.

On May 15, 2002, Minister, quoted in Hansard, you said to the minister of the day: "We know that the safety net programs in this country are cost-shared on a 60-40 basis, but you can go beyond; you can do more. Alberta does more; Quebec does more." Minister, these are your words, and you are absolutely correct: You can do more.

Minister, yesterday you announced that our farmers would get 40% of the 2004 benefits. When are you going to do more? Why did the casinos get \$400 million and the oilseed farmers are only worth \$79 million?

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food): On a number of fronts—and I'll start with tobacco. Perhaps the honourable member may want to talk about other issues.

We've been commended by the University of Guelph for the efforts we have taken to invest in tobacco-growing communities—\$15 million—to assist: "This funding will provide an opportunity for continued partnering, and the university is ready to assist the sector in any way it can to develop innovative solutions for farmers facing challenges." We're investing in community economic development. We're investing \$35 million to assist tobacco growers in transition, as they move to alternative crops. We have approximately 750 tobacco growers in this province who are certainly facing a number of challenges. We made a commitment that we were going to come to the table with \$50 million in support for growers and communities. Promise made; promise kept.

Mr. Hardeman: Mr. Minister, in yesterday's announcements you also indicated that you expected the federal government to stand up and put in \$120 million to make it a complete payment in our market revenue program. I want to go on and quote from the same part of Hansard. This is you speaking: "I know we can hear this rhetoric from the other side," and I want to say that to you now, "Well, the federal government has to do its part." I'll repeat the words that I said yesterday. I will say it again and put this government on notice, to the Minister of Agriculture, that waiting for the feds ... is like waiting for hell to freeze over."

Minister, that's what you said. So are you saying now that the farmers should just wait for hell to freeze over because that's how long it's going to take for you to support them?

Hon. Mr. Peters: I think we've demonstrated very clearly the support that we're giving to agriculture, unlike the previous government: in 1996-97, \$12.8 million cut from the budget; 1997-98, \$31.4 million cut from the budget; 1998-99, \$62.8 million cut from the budget.

We're making significant investments in support of the agricultural industry. Not only did we flow \$88 million for the 2004 market revenue; we've added an additional \$79 million, which comes to a total of \$167 million in support for the grains and oilseeds sector. We've flowed and will be flowing over the next two years \$172 million in support of wedge funding for transition to programs, including an investment of \$35 million in research, including the CAIS program, which for the 2003 crop year will flow in excess of \$180 million in support for Ontario farmers.

I agree with what the member—

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): New question.

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Education. Fort Severn is the most northerly community in Ontario. The school in that First Nations community is closed for public health reasons. Toxic mould is found virtually everywhere in the school building. As a result, children and their families have been forced to move hundreds of kilometres to communities like Sioux Lookout or Thunder Bay just so their children can attend school and get an education. But many in the community can't afford to move to Thunder Bay or Sioux Lookout, so their children are now doing without.

These students are citizens of Ontario. They need access to education. You are the Minister of Education for Ontario. What will you do to help these students receive the education they deserve?

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): I know the member opposite, and no member of this House, would want to politic with the future of those particular children, who are facing more than the average challenge of students in this province.

The member opposite is fully aware that there's a federal government responsibility and a dispute in that community. What I should say is that the education ministers of Canada recently had a meeting in Toronto and have decided to make aboriginal education, notwithstanding any level of government's ostensible and constitutional responsibility, part of their business; in fact, one of their three top priorities. There is work going on right now with my office and the offices of other education ministers to try to find a way that we can collaborate.

I want to assure the member opposite that we agree there is no excuse for any school-aged student in this province not to be getting a quality education. We will work, and we invite the member opposite to work with us, to find a resolution wherever that is taking place. But we have initiated that through the federal government, through our colleague ministers. We are looking into our responsibilities. It's certainly in our sights, and we will help find a solution for the situation he's describing.

1510

Mr. Hampton: The minister should know that, yes, the federal government has primary responsibility here, but the federal government is dithering on the issue of building a new school. Meanwhile, these students have to follow the Ontario curriculum. They have to pass Ontario literacy tests and other standardized tests, just as children all across Ontario have to pass those tests. They are citizens of Ontario, just as someone who lives in Toronto or Ottawa or Thunder Bay is a citizen of Ontario.

I'm asking you to do two things: Will you get in touch with the federal ministers responsible and say to them, "It's not acceptable in Ontario that children go without an education just because they're aboriginal children"? And, in the interim, will you help those families who've had to move to Thunder Bay or Sioux Lookout in order that

their children can receive an education? Will you do those two simple things, Minister?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: Again, I think, at root, one of the most serious challenges we have in this country is the future of aboriginal children. The education system that should be giving them a boost forward—and I think everyone is in agreement—is not doing that to a sufficient degree.

I would say to the member opposite that when it comes to these particular kids, more is required than what you have offered. What you have offered, frankly, isn't about their specific needs. There's a problem to be solved. I ask the member opposite to lend his good offices to untangling the mess in that particular community, and I offer to do the same. They deserve a school in their home community, they deserve not to be dislocated and they deserve not to get ensnared in machinations, whether it's the federal bureaucracy or provincial politicians. So I say to you, member opposite, that these kids need to have a direct involvement from the federal government. That is their responsibility. However, there is a need for third parties, wherever they can come from, to actually roll up their sleeves and help solve this problem.

We are providing additional resources to the communities where First Nations people are receiving an education, and we'll continue to do that.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): My question is to the Minister of Education. I'm concerned about violence in our schools. A report released last year by the CAMH stated that one third of students were being bullied in the year 2003. This is unacceptable. We must ensure that our schools are safe places for our students. They shouldn't have to worry, when they go to school every day, that they're going to be verbally or physically bullied or abused.

Last December, the minister appointed a special safe schools action team to advise us on the implementation of new measures to protect students. I know the action team has been travelling the province and meeting with parents and students. When can we expect the safe school action team to release its findings?

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): I think it's something that everybody in this House has some exposure to but still is fairly unremarked on as an ongoing problem. Bullying is probably a fact in every school in this province. It's something that we need to do more about. We have an action team. In fact, the author of the report from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health is on that team. They found so much interest in getting a successful anti-bullying program into every community and every school in this province that they're now holding public hearings and discussions with people, one of which was held this week in Kingston. It's headed up by Liz Sandals, the parliamentary assistant to the

Minister of Community Safety, and it involves some of the best people in this province.

We need to do this. We need to turn the corner on making bullying unacceptable in this province.

Mr. Duguid: Students across Ontario are already experiencing the benefits of the McGuinty government's education reforms, but safe schools are an essential element of a quality education. While we look forward to the action team's recommendations, apart from helping victims of bullying, what other initiatives will the action team examine to ensure that Ontario schools are safe learning places for all our students?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: It's an easy thing to take for granted, the safety of our schools. They are safe, but we need to have constant alertness and vigilance about it. So the safe schools action team has been working since December to make sure we have physically safe spaces; for example, that entranceways in elementary schools are not accessible by intruders who can't be seen by the school staff. They're working on that problem. They are also going to examine some of the incomplete work by the previous government around safe schools. We may stand in this place and think so, but you can't pass a law and suddenly make kids safer. In fact, we need more prevention. We need not to fill the shopping malls with kids who have been expelled or suspended from school. We need to prevent violence, or the incipient acts of bullying and other things that lead to violence, from taking place in the first place.

We'll be reviewing the Safe Schools Act, making changes in programs and reviewing the Robins report as well to make sure we have comprehensive alertness on the safety of children in our schools.

Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like once again to seek unanimous consent that we call Bill 92 today. I am pleading with the government to call this bill to help AMO, Roger Anderson and Pat Vanini. Would you do that?

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): The member from Nepean-Carleton has asked for unanimous consent. I'm hearing a no.

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Again the government seeks unanimous consent to give second and third readings to Bill 92, to assist the member and his desire to help AMO. Will you grant us unanimous consent for second and third readings of Bill 92?

Mr. Baird: We would be more than happy to give second and third readings if we can begin to debate the bill today.

The Speaker: The government House leader has asked for unanimous consent to call second and third readings. Do we have unanimous consent? I heard a no.

PETITIONS

ONTARIO FARMERS

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas thousands of Ontario farmers have been forced to take their concerns directly to Queen's Park because of a lack of response from the Dalton McGuinty government to farm-related issues; and

"Whereas farming in Ontario is in crisis because of the impacts of BSE, unfair subsidies from other jurisdictions and bureaucratic legislative burdens that fail to understand the value of agriculture as a strategic industry; and

"Whereas the current prices for farm products do not allow for sustainable agriculture in Canada, with a 10.7% decline in the number of Canadian farms reported between 1996 and 2001;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to consult with Ontario farmers to develop a long-term strategy to ensure the viability of agriculture in our province and to develop immediate short-term solutions, such as support for grain and oilseed producers, a workable production insurance program for horticulture and a CAIS program that delivers real income support on a timely basis."

I'm pleased to support this on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls): My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It's titled "Save the Southwestern Regional Centre, Home to People with Developmental Disabilities."

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their commitment to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close the Southwestern Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in their community;

"Whereas closing the Southwestern Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities;

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of the Southwestern Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep the Southwestern Regional Centre open as a home for people with developmental disabilities, and to

maintain it as a 'centre of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

1520

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I'm pleased to sign that.

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): This petition has been sent to me by John and Anne Deveau, who live in my riding. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close the Rideau Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing the Rideau Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities;

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of the Rideau Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep the Rideau Regional Centre open as a home for people with developmental disabilities and to maintain it as a 'centre of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

The petition has been signed by about 393 people. They've asked me to introduce it for them, and I have, and I've affixed my signature to it.

COLLEGE FUNDING

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): I have a petition signed by literally thousands of students.

"Whereas Ontario's colleges in 2003-04 served 53% more students than 15 years ago and received 29% less in grant and fee income (after inflation);

"Ontario colleges currently rank 10th out of the 10 provinces in Canada in per student funding; and

"Ontario college students are now paying at least 145% more in tuition fees than in 1990;

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

"That the Ontario government must commit to increasing funding to Ontario's colleges in the 2005 budget to reach the national average by 2007-08."

I have signed this petition myself. I have this box with probably 1,000 petitions, and I have eight other boxes that will all be coming to the table.

ONTARIO FARMERS

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas thousands of Ontario farmers have been forced to take their concerns directly to Queen's Park because of a lack of response from the Dalton McGuinty government to farm issues; and

"Whereas farming in Ontario is in crisis because of the impacts of BSE, unfair subsidies from other jurisdictions, rising costs for energy and a crushing regulatory burden on farmers; and

"Whereas current prices for farm products do not allow for sustainable agriculture in Canada, with a 10.7% decline in the number of Canadian farms reported between 1996 and 2001;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to consult with Ontario's farmers to develop a long-term strategy to ensure the viability of agriculture in our province that protects our rural way of life, and to work in the short term to alleviate the farm income crisis and listen to the concerns of farmers about the greenbelt."

I support this petition.

CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly from my riding of Mississauga West. It reads as follows:

"Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and the Halton Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now and 514 beds by 2016; and

"Whereas the Credit Valley bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

"Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fundraising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility to meet the needs of our community;

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

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite."

I certainly support this petition. I've affixed my signature to it, and I'm going to ask Alexandre to take it down.

PIT BULL LEGISLATION

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:"

I'm trying to leave time for the member from Simcoe North.

"Whereas Ontario's Attorney General has raised the issue of banning pit bulls;"—it's passed now—"and

"Whereas we, as concerned members of the public, believe the proposed ban is a mistake; and

"Whereas we would rather see legislation requiring all breeds of dogs to be micro-chipped and spayed or neutered within the first year of possession unless being shown or bred under the CKC regulations; and

"Whereas owners should be held responsible for their animals' behaviour at all times, laws must be enforced, and the responsibility for control of dogs should be rightfully placed on dog owners;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take all the necessary steps to re-evaluate and reconsider the pending law to ban pit bulls."

I read this because, after passing the law, this petition still has merit.

DISABILITY BENEFITS

Mr. Bill Mauro (Thunder Bay–Atikokan): I've got a petition here from the Thunder Bay and District Injured Workers Support Group on deeming. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board adds Canada pension plan disability benefits to an injured worker’s deemed earnings to determine the loss of earnings or future earnings lost; and

“Whereas deducting Canada pension plan disability benefits from loss of earnings or future earnings loss benefits systematically undercompensates injured workers; and

“Whereas the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board bases long-term compensation on deemed earnings that an injured worker is not actually receiving;

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

“To amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act by removing the deeming provisions and providing legislation to base a loss-of-earnings benefit to reflect actual lost earnings;

“To amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to end the deduction of Canada pension plan disability benefits from future economic loss and loss of earnings benefits retroactively.”

FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey): A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Sir Frederick Banting was the man who discovered insulin and was Canada’s first Nobel Prize recipient; and

“Whereas this great Canadian’s original homestead located in the town of New Tecumseth”—Alliston—“is deteriorating and in danger of destruction because of the inaction of the Ontario Historical Society; and

“Whereas the town of New Tecumseth, under the leadership of Mayor Mike MacEachern and former Mayor Larry Keogh, has been unsuccessful in reaching an agreement with the Ontario Historical Society to use part of the land to educate the public about the historical significance of the work of Sir Frederick Banting;

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

“That the Minister of Culture and the Liberal government step in to ensure that the Banting homestead is kept in good repair and preserved for generations to come.”

I’ve affixed my name.

TUITION

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition that’s been sent to me by Shailagh Keaney, the vice-president of student issues at Laurentian University. It has 1,492 signatures, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario Liberal government took an historic step forward by funding a tuition fee freeze for two years; and

“Whereas a majority of Ontarians support increased public funding for colleges and universities as well as reduced tuition fees; and

“Whereas increasing student debt through income-contingent loan repayment schemes or raising loan limits only increases the cost of post-secondary education for students from modest means; and

“Whereas per student investment in Ontario still lags gravely behind the vast majority of jurisdictions in North America;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, supporting the Canadian Federation of Students’ call to increase funding for colleges and universities and reduce tuition fees for all Ontario students, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reduce tuition fees for all students in Ontario, increase public funding for post-secondary education to at least the national average, and implement an upfront, needs-based grant system for Ontario full-time and part-time students.”

I agree with the call for reduced tuition fees, and I’ve affixed my signature to this.

1530

SENIOR CITIZENS

Mr. Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls): I have a petition here from the Retired Women Teachers of Ontario, St. Catharines branch.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“To immediately commit to action and funding to ensure the rights and protection for our citizens living in nursing homes and retirement homes in Ontario.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I’m very pleased—

Interjection: Have you done one already?

Mr. Dunlop: This is my second one, thank you.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

“Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

“Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities;

“Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into ‘centres of excellence’ to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live.”

I am pleased to sign my name to this.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I’ll try to read it as quickly as possible.

“Whereas funding has only been increased to provide better long-term care for people in long-term-care facilities ... but not to any ‘self-directed’ programs that help seniors live in their own homes (because they either choose to live at home or because they are not suited to live in LTCFs)” —which are the long-term-care facilities —“and

“Whereas the current policy continues to use the community care access centre ... model to look after all long-term care in this province; ...

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

“That the government consider amalgamating the five separate CCACs in Toronto and create one CCAC that will indeed follow its own motto of ‘Helping People Live at Home’ and, if necessary, create a new self-directed LTC model, perhaps like the one instituted in Germany in 1994 and adopted by other European countries, to allow seniors, our parents and grandparents to live at home, if they choose. This model has proven to be more caring because it is family-based, while eliminating the frustration of bureaucracy and the wasteful and inefficient management of health care funds. Our seniors and the disabled would get what they always wanted: the choice to stay at home.”

I submit that to the assembly today.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LABOUR RELATIONS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT DES LOIS CONCERNANT LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 29, 2005, on a motion for second reading of Bill 144, An Act to amend certain statutes relating to labour relations / Projet de loi 144, Loi modifiant des lois concernant les relations de travail.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I’m pleased to speak on behalf of New Democrats here at Queen’s Park, but as well on behalf of thousands upon thousands of working women and men who are going to be denied their right to effectively join a trade union if this bill is not amended to ensure that every worker—be he or she in the building trades, on construction sites or working in a Wal-Mart—has the right to establish their union local by way of card-based certification.

Let’s understand at the onset that it is our position in the New Democratic Party, and increasingly the position of more and more working women and men and their friends, families, co-workers and neighbours across the province, that this bill is discriminatory, that it is sexist and that this Bill 144 is racist, and I will tell you why.

Let’s for a moment, though, reflect on the history of card-based certification, because it is by no means a radical proposition. Indeed, it goes back 50 years, to 1950, when Ontario created its own Labour Relations Act—it included card-based certification; card cert., as abbreviated—through to 1961 under Premier Leslie Frost, a Conservative Premier of this province—no radical, no left-winger, no Bolshevik or anarchist; far from it. Card-based certification was a way in which working women and men, all working women and men in this province, could exercise their right to belong to a trade union.

From 1961 through to 1971, under Premier John Robarts: card-based certification. John Robarts: no radical, no left-winger—far from it—no Bolshevik, no anarchist, no syndicalist, no Wobbly; as conservative as they come. Under the premiership of Conservative John Robarts, card-based certification was the rule of the day for every working woman and man in this province.

Bill Davis graced this House yesterday. Bill Davis was no red, no pinko—far from it—as conservative as they come. Yet under the premiership of Bill Davis, from 1971 through to 1985, card-based certification—card cert.—was the rule of the day. It meant that signing up 55%-plus membership cards in a trade union would effectively form a trade union local.

Frank Miller, whose legacy is, among other thing, his own son sitting in this Legislature, and again, no lefty—far from it—as conservative as they come. Under the premiership of Frank Miller, card-based certification—card cert.—was the order of the day for every working woman and man in this province, not just for some; not just for one group who were entitled to card-based certification yet another group wasn’t, never mind the largest number of working women and men in this province. Every worker was entitled to exercise his or her right to join a trade union by virtue of card-based certification.

David Peterson, while Premier of this province—card-based certification was the order of the day.

It wasn’t until 1995 and the election of one of the most reactionary governments that this province has seen in many, many, many years, if ever—the Mike Harris revolution and Bill 7; the neo-cons and Bill 7. Among the

first orders of the day for the Harris revolutionaries was the most fundamental all-out attack on workers in this province that has been witnessed in 70 years. Not since the Pinkertons of the 1920s and 1930s have we seen as vicious an attack on workers in this province and their trade unions, and nothing changed under the leadership of Ernie Eves.

People voted for change in 2003 when they elected Dalton McGuinty, and nothing changes even now, because even now, card-based certification, denied workers by Mike Harris and his gang of neo-con revolutionaries and maintained by his successor—worthy or not, but I'm sure liked by so many—Ernie Eves, is now a tradition that's being sustained by Dalton McGuinty. Dalton McGuinty, you see, hasn't joined the company of Leslie Frost, John Robarts, Bill Davis, Frank Miller or David Peterson. No, Dalton McGuinty is joining the company of Mike Harris and Ernie Eves.

If you had to choose where you're going to be in the history books, who you're going to be with and where you're going to be situated in the index, one would think that for a Premier who campaigned on and advocated change, Mike Harris and Ernie Eves would be the last chapter mates you would choose. But in fact we've learned perhaps far more about Dalton McGuinty than we've ever wanted to when we witness his aligning himself with Mike Harris rather than with David Peterson, Bill Davis, John Robarts, Leslie Frost or Frank Miller.

1540

So we witness an ongoing attack on workers in this province, and shamefully, regrettably, tragically, on the weakest workers, the most vulnerable workers, the lowest-paid workers: women—by and large, women—new Canadians—by and large, new Canadians—recent or relatively recent immigrants to this country, many for whom English is not their first language, invisible minorities and people of colour.

Those in this chamber witnessed a spontaneous expression of denunciation and concern around the racist, sexist and discriminatory nature of this bill—inappropriately, I acknowledge—coming from the visitors' galleries. These people were apprehended by the gendarmerie and promptly escorted from the building. But I say to you, their message was not lost on those of us in the New Democratic Party, because the denunciation of Bill 144, the maintenance of the Harris-Eves denial of card-based certification of the vast majority of workers in this province, is ringing and echoing across Ontario. That's why, first of all, New Democrats say very clearly to this government that this bill has got to be the subject matter of public and province-wide committee hearings—that's number one—not token hearings.

There's a whole lot of folks out there, a whole lot of working women and men, a whole lot of workers, a whole lot of new Canadians, a whole lot of women workers, a whole lot of visible minority workers, a whole lot of the lowest-paid workers in this province who have

something to say about being denied the right to join a union on the basis of card-based certification; not just joining but forming a union local.

Understand what this means, Speaker. Being able to form a union local means that you can engage in free collective bargaining with your boss. What could be a more fundamental right in a democratic society than to be able to engage in free collective bargaining with your boss, of course for wages, of course for benefits, of course for pensions, but also for safer workplaces, for fairer treatment in those workplaces and for the maintenance of jobs that workers work hard at?

I had occasion to tell you yesterday, during the opportunities given to me during questions and comments in response to other members' participation in this debate, and I'm proud to say it again, that I firmly believe that the trade union movement, its membership, its leadership, does more to create social and economic justice in this province, in the Western world, than any other institution, bar none. I have no hesitation saying that because I believe it. I believe it as firmly as I could ever believe anything.

Why do I believe that? Well, I've had occasion to tell you more than once how I, like any other person, am very much the result of how we grew up and who our parents are or were and our grandparents before them. Like more than a few others here, I'm the son of immigrant parents, for whom completion of grade 8 was considered a significant achievement, and grandparents who were illiterate in their own language, never mind their new language of English, grandparents who couldn't read or write their native language. They were peasants, illiterate and uneducated, or rather, unschooled.

As a child during the 1950s, and then growing up into the 1960s, I watched this generation, in this case post-war immigrant Canadians, build things. I watched them build homes, and they did it with their own hands, breaking their own backs in the course of doing it. You, Speaker, being, give or take, my age, may recall that there was a time in this province when building a house didn't mean hiring a contractor; it meant you and your partner and your kids, if they were old enough, and maybe some relatives, coming down and building a basement—digging it not with a steam shovel but by hand—and living in that basement while you built the first floor and then the second floor of that house. I'm sure I'm not the only person in this chamber who has recollections of that as a kid during the 1950s.

These people built homes, they built neighbourhoods, they built schools, they built churches, they built hospitals. They built and worked in factories, and in the course of working in those factories and creating huge amounts of wealth—because those workers did, they created huge amounts of wealth. They, in the course of forming trade unions and engaging in collective bargaining and advocating for fair labour laws in this province, which date back to the 1950s with the advent of card certification under the premiership of the very conservative Leslie Frost, and building those trade

unions, struggling—and struggle they did, and the struggles oftentimes were bloody. People went to jail, and people were, as they said it then, blacklisted and denied the opportunity of working in any number of industries because they were active in the trade union movement or they were organizers in the trade union movement or they were considered agitators.

So the struggle to build trade unions in this province is not an insubstantial one by any stretch of the imagination, nor is it an insignificant part of this province's or this country's history. The median age in this chamber is adequate for most of us, albeit as children, to have been witnesses to some of the significant battles, struggles and sacrifices made by working women and men during the course of building trade unions and trade union locals and developing fair labour relations legislation here in the province of Ontario and in other parts of the country.

The achievement of that was not without its substantial consequences as well. The trade union movement is solely responsible for the creation of the working middle class. There would not be a working middle class were it not for the trade union movement. No corporate boss ever gave a raise to a worker or let that worker take home his or her fairer share of the wealth that that worker created in that workplace as a result of, oh, largesse or benevolence or noblesse oblige. Let's understand something—and don't take it from me. George Soros himself—you know George Soros; I've talked about him before—the multi-billionaire money trader, über-capitalist and author, writes very fundamentally in more than one place in the numerous stuff he has published about how the very nature of the corporate beast is to make profit, and it's neither good nor bad. It's an entirely neutral thing. Corporations have no conscience, they have no soul, they have no heart and, increasingly, as we understand, they have no nationality—none whatsoever, do they? Capital can be rotated and switched from one jurisdiction to the other, not even with the stroke of a pen any more but the click of a computer key. We witness it on a daily basis, don't we, and working women and men in this province suffer as a result of it on a daily basis?

Just as an aside, I remember 1988. I remember that federal election around free trade. I will concede that many of us, if not all of us, who fought against free trade weren't entirely sure that the predictions we were making about free trade were bang on; we weren't. We suspected it, but we had no life experience. But at the end of the day—reflect on this—everything that any of those opponents of free trade ever predicted in that debate has in fact come true in relatively short order, even though we weren't sure of it at the time, hasn't it?

When you see, yes, primarily young people taking to the streets in places like Seattle or Quebec City, where I know I was with many of my colleagues wading through the tear gas but a few years ago, we understand that the impact of free trade and globalization on working women and men in this province and in this country has been

disastrous, and furthermore that it has done nothing to better the lives of those workers in so-called Third World or sub-Third World countries.

1550

Let's understand what it means for the trade union movement. With the participation and leadership of the workers who form and constitute it, let's be very clear about what it means to say that they created the working middle class. Let's talk about those things that are the subject matter of debate on a daily basis in this province, in this Legislature, as I suppose they should be, those things that make us characteristically Ontarian—no, characteristically Canadian—those things that the rest of the world envies: public education and public health care. They're both very much under attack—we're witnesses to that—but both very much, in my view and in the view of New Democrats here in the Legislature and across Canada, worth saving.

Understand that the corporate bosses, the corporate elite, never had any interest in building, creating or developing public education, never mind public post-secondary education. If you're part of that corporate elite, if you are a corporate boss, if you are the person or persons who not only control but own the wealth that's being created by workers in the workplace that you own, you don't need public education, because you always have been and always will be able to send your kids to the private schools providing the best education that money can buy.

Public health care: Public health care is not that old. It's not so historic that there aren't a whole lot of us in this chamber, Mr. Hudak excluded because of his youth, who have a clear recollection about that point in time in the history of this province and in the history of this country. Let me say this, as I have had occasion to observe before: It wasn't that long ago—well within the lifetime of most of us here in this chamber—when once the kitchen table was cleared, a mother and father sat down and in hushed tones debated about whether or not to take a sick kid to the doctor the next day, because doing so meant dipping into the rent money or the mortgage money or the utility money. You see, it wasn't that long ago—well within my lifetime—that we didn't have a public health care system, when it was but a dream of people like Tommy Douglas and other CCFers and other progressives. It wasn't until the 1960s that public health care began to become entrenched.

Let's understand: The very wealthy, the owners of corporate wealth, have never had any need for or interest in developing public health care, because if you're very wealthy—whether 50 years ago, 70 years ago or today—your wealth enables you to purchase the best health care that money can buy.

Just as with public education, especially public post-secondary education, it was that working middle class, trade unionists inevitably, that built those factories, worked in them and created the wealth, and then fought and struggled to get a fair share of the wealth, and that created that working middle class. It was they who had

the resources, through their tax dollars, invested in their communities, in their province and in their country to build public education, to build public health care.

I have no hesitation in telling folks, as I've had occasion to tell them before, that I'm the first generation in my family to be able to access post-secondary education. I'm sure my critics consider it perhaps a waste of my time and their public money. But I want to tell you that I consider myself to be incredibly blessed—and I hope others who are in a similar position to me would agree in their own right, having been the first generation in a family of immigrant, working-class Canadians—to be able to access post-secondary education.

I remember the 1960s. I remember that era of democratization of education, especially post-secondary, here in the province of Ontario. I'll give credit where credit was due: Bill Davis, as Minister of Education and then as Premier, was the author of much of it, prompted, make no mistake about it, by CCFers and New Democrats, who were a formidable force then, as they are now, here in this Legislature. That's the period in time, late 1960s and early 1970s, when we witnessed the growth of community colleges, with the promise that held for more and more children of working-class and lower-income families accessing post-secondary education, as well as the growth of universities like Brock University in St. Catharines, like Laurentian in Sudbury, like Lakehead in Thunder Bay—any number of places. It was working people that paid for these schools, paid the salaries of their professors and paid the salaries and wages of the support staff in them. Whether it was Brock, Lakehead or, yes, even York, working women and men did it. They built them with the \$2-, \$3-, \$4-, \$5-a-week check-offs on their paycheque, and, trust me, paycheques were modest. They did it not so they could attend those schools but so their kids and grandkids could.

To deny the role of the trade union movement in that social phenomenon is to be blind to the history of this province and of this country. To deny the role of the trade union movement and its struggle for workers and by workers to get a fairer share of the wealth that they create, to deny that role in the development of public health care is to ignore the history of this province and of this country.

I, for the life of me, cannot understand why the current Minister of Labour and his Premier, Dalton McGuinty, would align themselves with the Wal-Marts of North America rather than with the workers—women, new Canadians, visible minorities—who have so much to give this province and this country and who are effectively being excluded from membership in and participation in trade unions, trade union locals and free collective bargaining by this government's adamant denial of card-based certification to them.

Discriminatory? Well, let's understand fundamentally what discrimination is. Discrimination means treating one class of persons different from another class of persons when they're the same persons. We have overcome any need to debate legitimacy around dis-

crimination based on gender. We have, a long time ago, overcome the need to even consider the legitimacy of discrimination based on race or on skin colour. Yet we witness in this bill, authored by this Liberal government, the most reckless and dramatic discrimination against the largest group of workers in this province, the most vulnerable group of workers in this province, the most readily and easily intimidated group of workers in this province, by granting one group of workers card-based certification and denying it to another.

I've got to tell you something about the Tory position, and I disagree with it wholeheartedly. However, the Tories are not engaging in the same discrimination that the Liberals are. The Tories make it quite clear: They don't want any worker to belong to a trade union. Whether they're building trades workers, whether they're needle trades workers, they don't want any worker—indeed, the Conservatives demonstrated, when they were in power, through Bill 7 and other bills, other pieces of legislation, that they would pass as much legislation as was necessary to create more and more hurdles for workers to belong to trade unions.

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I'll take this one further and tell you that not only do I believe, and New Democrats believe, that the entry into the trade union movement has to be the same for every worker in this province without discrimination against one group of workers, but that every worker in this province has to have the right, acknowledged by legislation, to belong to a trade union movement, to a trade union, a trade union local and to collectively bargain, including agricultural workers. The NDP legislation that accorded agricultural workers their right to join trade unions and to freely collectively bargain was a highlight in this province's history and in the history of the labour movement and of working women and men. New Democrats insist that before any sense of justice can be attained, we have to restore that NDP legislation in this province that accords every worker—agricultural workers included—the right to belong to a trade union and the right to freely collectively bargain. Needless to say, that isn't a part of Mr. Bentley's Liberal labour reform package.

Furthermore, New Democrats and others in this province recall the period of labour peace when the NDP anti-scab legislation was in effect, legislation which was promptly ripped out of the statute books by the Conservatives, just as was the right of agricultural workers to organize, as was the right of all workers to form a union local on the basis of card-based certification. When anti-scab legislation was in effect in this province, when there were labour disputes and work stoppages, they were fewer, they were shorter and they were certainly far more peaceful. Nobody was mowed down by scab buses being escorted by hired goons, strikebreakers in their black stormtrooper uniforms with their snarling German shepherds and Rottweilers and their truncheons at their side. No picketing worker was ever mowed down by strike-

breaking goons when anti-scab legislation was in effect in this province.

Corporate bosses knew they had to resolve differences at the negotiating table, and they did. They did. In fact, anti-scab legislation was part of the policy regime that started to lead this province out of the deepest, darkest recession that it had experienced since the Dirty Thirties, and we should never forget that. We witnessed some of the most substantial investment in the automotive industry while anti-scab legislation was in effect in this province, and we witnessed a resurgence of the economy, a recovery from the dark, deep, scary, frightening, dangerous, tragic depths of the horrible, deep recession—a depression.

Let me just explain to you what companies like Wal-Mart—and I don't have to tell what you kind of reputation Wal-Mart has across the province, the country, the continent, do I? Their reputation precedes them. They are as anti-union, anti-worker a corporate body as one could ever find. As I made reference to George Soros, let me finish that. He explained very clearly that not only is profit the single motive of the corporate entity, but he explained how you make profit, and it's not rocket science. You make profit by employing the fewest number of people at the lowest possible wages—end of story. Wal-Mart has made no secret of that, have they? Wal-Mart has made no secret that its huge profits are derived from sub-living wages paid to its workers and the avoidance of responsibility for things like pensions and benefit plans by virtue of chopping up jobs into part-time jobs, sub-part-time jobs and, yes, even contract jobs.

It's really about choices. For the life of me, I don't understand why Liberal backbenchers would want to be the crafters of a province which makes it increasingly difficult to belong to a trade union, knowing full well that when it's increasingly difficult to belong to a trade union, wages remain suppressed, workers' rights are non-existent and workplaces continue to be more and more dangerous.

There's nothing attractive about a low-wage economy. Just ask the folks who live in one. From time to time, like everybody else, I'm involved in these talking-head programs, where they put somebody up from one of these so-called right-wing think tanks—an oxymoron, if I ever heard one—who somehow suggests that if you reduce wages or keep them low, you'll increase the number of jobs. Well, hell, let's reduce the minimum wage to 50 cents an hour and we could create a whole lot of jobs. We know now that women and men out there who are being forced to work for minimum wage understand that it's not a living wage.

Hundreds—no, thousands—of homeless people in the city of Toronto work every day, don't they? You know they do. They get picked up by vans, they get picked up on the street corners. We witnessed it with the scab newspaper operation down in Hamilton just a little while ago, where a Toronto Star subsidiary had a contract company picking up newspaper delivery persons, adults, and shipping them into various locations in the city,

delivering the local giveaway paper. What do you call it? There's a special name for that; I don't know it off the top of my head. They give away the paper free, an advertiser type of paper. It's circumventing every labour law in the book, paying sub-minimum wage, adhering to no employment standards, not providing vacation pay, not providing CPP deductions. They did it because they can.

Linda McQuaig talks about the level of desperation. When you've got an increased level of desperation, when you have sustained high levels of unemployment, you've got people competing with each other for jobs, and they bid against each other for jobs. It's where scabs come from. It's where people who are prepared to work for lower and lower wages come from.

It's not smart to have a low-wage economy. Come to Third World countries and understand what low-wage economies do. Low-wage economies don't support strong public education systems. Low-wage economies don't support strong public health care systems. Low-wage economies don't support manufacturing and other economic activity.

I refer, or defer, to George Soros once again, who warns his corporate capital friends very clearly, "Be careful what you wish for." If you want to drive wages lower and lower, you may well be able to do that, especially in this context of globalization and with right-wing governments like this government here at Queen's Park that are going to facilitate you with anti-labour legislation. But be careful what you wish for, because if you drive wages low enough, nobody out there has the capacity to purchase the goods that other workers are making, and then you've got no economy. You roll the clock back 100 years—understand?—when you've got the Carnegies, the Rockefellers and everybody else in line-ups outside food banks and soup kitchens. Unlikely prospect? It's happening every day in every part of this province and every part of this country, and across the United States as well.

1610

Some oh so clever policy developers who feel oh so on top of things, arguing, "Oh, my, if we let wages go up to a living wage, it will have an inflationary effect,"—and, again, it's inevitably a woman and a mom. Tell that to the mom who works at the hotel in Niagara Falls, starting at 5 in the morning, scrubbing other people's crappy toilets and changing their filthy beds, and then goes to the 7-Eleven or the Avondale or the Winks to work the 3-to-11 shift for a minimum wage, because that's what you've to do to if you're going to keep food on the table for two kids and you're a single mom. I know these moms, just like you do. I know you do, Speaker.

Trust me, that single mom is not paying any substantial amount of taxes, because when you're making that kind of money, you're not paying a whole lot of taxes. But let's not for a minute applaud that, because understand, if those workers aren't paying taxes, we're not supporting those public things that make our com-

munity, our province and our country a healthier, a safer, a more just place to live in, a more prosperous place to live in.

I just sat down with a group of seniors a couple of weekends ago at the Legion down in Welland who are volunteers in and clients of—that's probably not the right word to use—a senior care, senior support program, which includes everything from home care through to helping people with rides to the doctor or to the oncologist for radiation treatment, stuff like that. One of the observations that was made by everybody there was that it's far cheaper for all of us, as taxpayers, as a community, to spend 100 bucks a week getting a home care worker into our folks' or our grand folks' home while they're still living in it than to spend \$300, \$400, \$500 or \$600 a day putting that old person into extended care. It's true. Again, it's so basic. It's so fundamental.

What does this government say to those women who provide that home care? This government says that it's hell-bent on making it harder and harder for that woman and her co-workers to belong to a trade union. What does the government say? "Oh, heck, we've got a debate that may well be coming on about the retirement age." And I'll say over and over again, I'm hard pressed to witness a retirement age in this province when increasing numbers of workers don't have access to pensions and when I see increasing numbers of seniors working at, inevitably, the lowest-paid jobs, be it at a Wal-Mart or a McDonald's or some other fast-food joint or operation.

The issue isn't about eliminating the retirement age. The argument, the debate, has to be about ensuring that every worker in this province, every member of this provincial community, upon reaching senior years, retirement years, has access to a pension that enables them to live with dignity and in health.

That's what the debate should be about, and you can't have that debate without talking about how important it is to have those workers unionized, because it's their trade union that's going to fight for and negotiate those pensions. No worker in this province, in this country, across North America, across the western world, ever got a pension as a result of the largesse, the benevolence, the noblesse oblige of a corporate boss. Every penny in workers' pension plans had to be fought for and earned and then won again by that worker.

Let me tell you what happens in places like Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart used every tactic in the book to defeat a union organizing effort. Even when there has been a clear majority of its workers who have signed union cards—knowledgeably signed them, knowingly signed them, willingly signed them—that usually one-week period of time between a card campaign and that so-called vote can have a devastating impact on the free will of those workers.

First gambit, the oldest one in the book: "We'll shut 'er down; we'll move out of town. Nobody will have a job then." Problem is, Wal-Mart means it. That's what they did in Quebec, didn't they? That makes the threat a little more formidable. But we know that they aren't

going to shut down every Wal-Mart in every part of Ontario, are they, because they need Ontario consumers to make money. But the workers in that Wal-Mart in that community aren't going to risk losing their jobs. Let's face it: If you're working at Wal-Mart, you don't exactly have a whole lot of options, do you? You don't have people knocking down your door offering you \$50-an-hour jobs. That's why you're working at Wal-Mart, and God bless those people, because they work hard. They do.

I read a wonderful book, *Nickel and Dimed*. Have you read that book? It's by an author from the United States. A wonderful book, *Nickel and Dimed*. Check it out on the Indigo-Chapters Web site, or Amazon or wherever it is you buy your books on the Internet, or go down to a bookstore—Lord knows if you can find one. *Nickel and Dimed*: a wonderful book by an investigative journalist in the United States who worked for a greasy-spoon restaurant joint down in Key West, Florida, then worked for one of these Molly Maid kind of cleaning companies, then worked for one of these rah-rah, join-the-team Wal-Mart type of operations, and more often than not had to sleep in her car while she was doing it, because when you're working for these kinds of operators, you don't earn a living wage.

What is our anathema for a living wage? What is the problem with us? There isn't a single member of this Legislature who doesn't earn a living wage; I'll tell you that right now. Minimum wage in this chamber is, oh, around 85 or 86 grand a year, and nobody here is going to suffer a whole lot of workplace injuries. Maybe the occasional paper cut—you know what I mean, Brother?—or, "Oh, I pinched myself shutting my desk." The only time people in this chamber are likely to wake up at 4 in the morning is to use the washroom and then get back into bed, because it isn't until 5:30 or 6:30 or 7 that you've got to get into your work clothes and head off to the mill, to the furnace, to the mine, to the farmer's field. Minimum wage here is around 85 or 86 grand a year. I'm sorry; I apologize to the staff. That's for the elected members. The staff working here are realizing, "My goodness, we're doing all the work and these guys are making all the dough." You know what? You're right.

What have we got against a living wage for every worker in this province? What have we got against the right of every worker in this province to negotiate a safer workplace? We're coming up to the Day of Mourning again, yet one more time, this year. All of us, I trust and hope, will be joining workers and families and friends of workers in our communities, more often than not in communities that have erected monuments to injured and slaughtered workers.

We persist in suffering workplace deaths—even now, in the year 2005—year after year after year, and workplace maimings and poisonings year after year after year. I can tell you there's one pattern that's oh so clear: The non-unionized workplace is far more dangerous than a unionized workplace. Make no mistake about it. The most dangerous unionized workplace is safer than the

perceived safest of non-union workplaces, because in a unionized workplace, unionized workers, with the strength of the union, can collectively bargain around workplace health and safety. You know that. You've been there, Speaker.

1620

Communities with unionized workplaces are inevitably more prosperous communities, because when workers are unionized, they're making better wages. That's clear. Let's understand that when somebody in this chamber stands up and says they don't want a worker or a particular class or group of workers or any workers to belong to unions, that person is saying they want the community that that worker lives in to be less prosperous than a neighbouring community. When workers are entitled to collectively bargain for a fairer share of the wealth that they create, they become consumers.

Let's face it: It's only this many of our population that get to stash away the money in those tax havens. Where are they? Down in the Caribbean, Nassau? Where are they, the tax havens? Working women and men don't stash money away in offshore accounts. Working women and men don't put money away in RSPs that are increasingly more generous as a result of federal government changes so that the very wealthiest are entitled to make more and more tax-free while the lowest-income workers have to pay proportionately more and more taxes. They do. You know that too, Speaker.

What in the world would anybody in this chamber have against the right of workers to form a union? It rots my socks when I read or hear about the vilification of workers for wanting a 25-cent-an-hour increase. You've read the same stuff I have. You've heard the same stuff I have on wacko right-wing radio talk shows: "These workers are greedy. They're selfish. They want another 25 cents an hour or they're going to drive the economy into the ground." Some poor stiff trying to make an extra 25 cents an hour is vilified, yet when Bill Gates or his ilk—who is that guy from Nortel? Is it John Roth? When John Roth steals millions of dollars from Nortel employees and shareholders, he's on the front bloody page of Maclean's magazine. They're heroes. We worship multi-millionaires and billionaires. We do. And if some working stiff tries to make another 25 cents an hour, we kick him or her to try to get them as low down into the ground as possible. What is the matter with us?

Frank Stronach, Belinda's dad, makes—what was it this year?—\$52 million, give or take. His income was \$52 million, give or take. That's a million bucks a week income. And the guy doesn't work. He doesn't shovel stuff. He doesn't work at the grindstone any more. He's not a millwright with a wrench. He's not digging stuff with a shovel or a jackhammer in the mine. Frank Stronach just owns the company—\$52 million a year income. And do you know what? Do you want to know something, Speaker? I bet you dollars to doughnuts any day of the week that he pays less income tax proportionately, percentage-wise, than you do. And he's a hero.

By God, driving that QEW from the Gardiner Expressway in Toronto to Welland, Pelham, Port Colborne, Thorold, south St. Catharines and Niagara, every time I see one of those Mercedes-Benz S500s, never mind an S600, I say, "There's another SOB not paying his or her fair share of income tax." Make no mistake about it. Think about it. You've got working homeless, because the minimum wage is not a living wage, and then you've got these guys in a \$160,000 car that rusts just as readily as my old Buick or Hudak's old Chevy truck, and we doff our hats to these guys?

I've told you before and I'll tell you again: John Roth, never mind Conrad "Tubby" Black, doesn't belong on the front page of Maclean's magazine. They belong in a back cell at Kingston Penitentiary. Conrad Black and Babs Amiel—you know, they've got the KP4W, Kingston Penitentiary for Women, just down the road there. There is a cell there for Babs. And if John Roth and Conrad have to share a cell, well I say, "Too bad, so sad."

Think about it: These people have stolen more money from more people than any outlaw biker gang that I've ever known of or read about. They have. I'm not defending outlaw biker gangs, but John Roth and Conrad Black have stolen more money from more people than any gangster ever has, than Tony Soprano ever dreamed of. And we put them on the damned front cover of Maclean's magazine, because somehow they're heroes. Trust me, they are adherents to that fundamental philosophy of how you make money by employing the fewest number of people at the lowest possible wages. If that means fighting trade unions, you fight trade unions. If that means electing governments that are going to pass legislation that makes it more and more difficult for workers to join and belong to trade unions, then you elect those governments, like the Liberals here at Queen's Park. That's what's happening with Bill 144, and the minister simply isn't coming clean.

Bill 144 is a fundamentally discriminatory bill. I don't begrudge any worker, building trades or otherwise, joining a union and forming a union local by virtue of card-based certification. That's why our position is what it is. We will not allow, we will not tolerate, the New Democratic Party will not collaborate with the exclusion of the largest number of workers in this province from card-based certification. Earlier today, on behalf of the NDP caucus, I put to the Minister of Labour during question period whether or not he had or indeed was prepared to submit this legislation to Keith Norton over at the Ontario Human Rights Commission, because I would be very interested in what Mr. Norton, as Ontario Human Rights Commissioner, has to say about whether or not this bill discriminates.

There is no doubt that the bill is discriminatory. The bill grants card-based certification to one group of workers who, I must tell you—it's no fault of theirs—happen to be male and predominantly white-skinned. The bill accords card-based certification, card cert., to a group of workers who are predominantly male and white-

skinned—oh, what do I say? Lighter skinned—and who, quite frankly, are amongst the higher wage earners in the province. You've heard what I had to say; I hope you have. I'm not about to reject that. It grants card-based certification to that group of workers and denies it to that much larger group of workers who are predominantly women, new Canadians, immigrant Canadians, visible minorities, people of colour—the lowest-paid workers in the province, the ones most likely to be intimidated by the Wal-Mart-type goon activities that take place between a card sign-up drive and the vote a week later. They are, and you know it, sisters.

I've got two women here, trade unionists, in the members' gallery, Ethel LaValley and Sandra Clifford, who have spent a lifetime—two lifetimes—working with workers, alongside of workers, in solidarity with working women and men as trade unionists. They'll tell you in a New York minute who are the lowest-paid workers in this province, who are the most vulnerable when it comes to that one-week gap between a card drive and the so-called vote and who are most readily intimidated.

1630

The intimidation is legion: the use of private investigators, the use of surveillance, the use of infiltrators, the use of fifth columnists, the use of coercion. New Democrats have stood up in this Legislature and talked about outright physical violence, beatings and goons being hired—in this day and age, in the year 2004-05—by corporate bosses right here in Toronto, in an effort to suppress union organizing drives, and workers having the crap beat out of them on their way to or from workplaces, with baseball bats, by goons.

Let me tell you, when you're earning minimum wage, when you're in a strange land with a strange language and when you're already subject to discrimination as a result of your accent or your name or your appearance or your headdress or your skin colour, that beating is all it takes to make you change your mind real fast, even though you know in your heart that you should stick to your guns. But sticking to your guns can sometimes be mighty painful and awfully expensive. These same workers who work so hard for so little and sacrifice so much because they're raising families—and they're raising families real good—want to make sure that their kids go to school and don't have to work in some of the downright crappy places and dangerous places and vile places that they have to work in.

I hope I've made it clear: New Democrats are standing firmly, shoulder to shoulder, arm in arm, in solidarity with working women and men in this province. We will not countenance legislation that denies a single worker the right to belong to, join and operate within a trade union, a trade union local, and within that great labour movement; that denies a single worker the right to do that by virtue of card-based certification. It was the standard for trade union organization during the period of greatest growth in this province, from 1950 through to 1995. If this government is serious about restoring prosperity to Ontario and Ontarians, it's got to make sure that there is

no discrimination against some of the most vulnerable workers, that every worker is entitled to card-based certification. This government has got to make sure that we praise and support and applaud the trade union movement and trade unionists for what they do for themselves, their fellow workers, their families, their communities and the economy of their province and country.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): It's certainly a pleasure to rise today in support of Bill 144. What this proposed bill will bring in, obviously, is card-based certification in the construction sector, interim reinstatement in all sectors and remedial certification in all sectors.

It's interesting to note, though, having just been lectured on how a political party should treat its people, should treat its employees—I'd like to read to you a letter dated October 22, 2004. It's from the Ontario public service staff union and it's addressed to "Howard Hampton, Leader, Ontario NDP." It reads, "Dear Brother Hampton," and the letter goes on. I've only got a short period of time. I'd like to read some of the excerpts from the letter. It says:

"So it has saddened me to see that the party status has not yet returned all our OPSEU NDP caucus bargaining unit brothers and sisters back to their jobs.

"Rather, the caucus"—that would be the NDP caucus—"has made every effort to exclude senior bargaining unit members, especially union activists, from the new human resources plan. Experienced, senior staff who should have been recalled have seen their jobs posted, and then they have been denied at the interview stage.

"The current plan that has 13 managers/excluded and only 9 members in the bargaining unit is a travesty."

It goes on. It certainly is a damning letter and doesn't contain some of the information we've just heard given to us in a very passionate way. It says:

"The Ontario NDP should be a model progressive employer, sensitive to labour principles and workers' rights. However, it appears to be far from that," and the Ontario public service staff union "has long experience of its own in that regard."

It seems to me that we've introduced legislation that is going to bring back some workers' rights that were denied, and bring back some balance. The previous speaker belongs to a party that might talk about that but in practice simply doesn't do it.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): It's always my pleasure to hear from the member from Niagara Centre, but I must say that on this particular occasion, I happen to disagree with him. I think that in our democracy we are governed by the secret ballot. We're attempting to transpose our view, or the Western view of democracy, to many places in the world. It is a hopeful sight, indeed, to see many countries adopting more democratic positions in regard to their populace. The basis of our democracy—other than the Bill of Rights, of course—is the secret ballot.

I do believe that our government introduced once again the right of a secret ballot in certification of unions within Ontario. Unfortunately, Minister Bentley, with the co-operation of the third party, wishes to change the democracy that was injected into labour union certification by introducing compulsory certification without a vote of the members. This is undemocratic. It has always proven to be undemocratic. It will result in unionization of workers against their will by the intervention of third parties.

I will be voting against this most undemocratic step.

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): It was a pleasure to listen to my colleague from Niagara Centre. I want to reinforce what he said in his remarks, that there is, regrettably, no difference between the Liberal position on card-based certification and the Conservative position on card-based certification. The only minor difference is that the Conservatives banned it for all workers and the Liberals are going to ban it for all workers except those in the construction trades. They're going to ban it for most workers, not all, so I don't see a big difference between the two positions; what I see is discrimination against those workers who need representation by a union most of all because they happen to be working in low-wage occupations where health and safety is usually not a priority for the employer, where there are regular abuses with respect to the Employment Standards Act, and people regularly go without pay or vacation pay or holiday pay, and the list goes on.

I want one of the Liberal members to stand up in your place and justify why it is that you think it's OK not to allow card-based certification to all workers. Why do you think that's OK? Why do you think it's OK to apply the provisions of card-based certification only to the construction trade? For those of you who may not believe that that is the case, you just have to read the explanatory note at the front of Bill 144, which makes it clear that card-based certification only applies in the construction industry. I'm interested in card-based certification that applies to all workers, because I know we need it most for immigrant workers, women workers, workers of colour, who are regularly abused in Ontario workplaces. That's why this has to apply to all workers.

1640

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe): I'm honoured and privileged to stand up and speak in support of Bill 144. The riding I come from is home for many unions: building trades, bricklayers, plumbers, electrical. Many of them are in my riding of London-Fanshawe. I believe they'll be happy when they see this bill passed, for many reasons. They see that the Minister of Labour has always been working hard to make sure that workplaces are safe and that workers are protected.

We've been talking about the minimum wage many, many times this afternoon. The Minister of Labour, after eight years, authorized, through this House, the minimum wage to be increased every year. I think it's a very important step to help the people who are working long hours to earn enough money to pay their rent and to pay

whatever's necessary, to send their kids to school and buy food.

Also, to compliment what Minister Bentley has been doing for the last year and a half, he came up with sick leave time to protect the workers. Also, he ended the 60-hour weeks—all these initiatives. It's a very important step toward reform in the labour movement in this province.

This bill would mean stability in the labour movement and stability in the construction area. As you know, almost 1.5 million people in this province are construction workers. I believe we need some kind of stability in order to keep going with our economy and to keep on constructing this province.

The Acting Speaker: The member from Niagara Centre has two minutes in which to respond.

Mr. Kormos: I'm grateful for the patience demonstrated by my colleagues during the hour that I had the floor, but I want to repeat my gratitude toward trade unionists, trade union members and other working women and men in this province who are mobilizing to take on this government to ensure that this government extends the right to card-based certification to every worker in this province.

Up in the visitors' gallery today there's a row of—well, as it is, it's all working men. There are no working women up there; there could have been, but it happens to be all working men. I'm grateful that they have a sufficient interest in this debate and what it means to them and their families—maybe, for a couple of them who are my age, give or take a couple of years, not so much to them any more, but to their kids and their grandkids.

I talked to you about the sacrifice of our parents' generation and my grandparents' generation. I say that we had better muster up just a fraction of the courage and commitment and sacrifice that they displayed in building a strong trade union movement and building a prosperous Ontario to revive that strong trade-unionized Ontario, to revive that prosperous Ontario, to make sure that the legacy that was left to us is left by us to our children and grandchildren in turn.

New Democrats cannot support a bill that discriminates against one worker, and we'll never support a bill that discriminates against the vast majority of workers, the most vulnerable workers.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek): It's a pleasure to stand and speak in support of Bill 144. I'm not so pleased, however, to follow my esteemed colleague the member from Niagara Centre. I cannot hope to be as flamboyant or as entertaining as he always is when he's speaking. His passion is something that I admire tremendously. He has always displayed tremendous passion.

What I am going to attempt to do, however, is to explain a little bit about this bill and why I support it, in perhaps not as entertaining a manner as our previous speaker, but hopefully in an effective way.

First of all, this legislation is an effort and a start to restore some of the balance that we lost in the province over the last number of successive governments. Labour relations in this province went one way and then went back the other way. Often when this government is introducing legislation in this House, we hear arguments from one side and the other, and if they're really, really against it, then I think we're probably hitting the nail on the head.

The thing with card certification—actually, there are two things before we get into that; two things that this bill does.

First of all, it restores something that was taken away by the Tories previously. It restores remedial certification. That was taken away in 1998. Basically, what happens is that if it becomes quite apparent to employees that they are being intimidated to the point where they don't feel comfortable to vote in favour of a union, then the OLRB, the Ontario Labour Relations Board, once again has the authority to certify that union. If it's found that in fact an employer is engaging in unfair practices, in trying to intimidate its employees into not voting for a union, then the OLRB once again has the right to go in there and certify that union—bang, done. So that is a big step forward. On the other side, on the flip side, if it is found that the union is engaging in the worst possible behaviour, in intimidating workers, then that certification application can be dismissed. So again, we've tried to restore some balance.

The other thing that is happening around this legislation, as has already been remarked about by one of my colleagues, is that there is a lot of other legislation that we are introducing to help support workers. I'm going to go through a couple of them.

First of all, the minimum wage, which had not been increased in nine very long years, is being increased annually right now. That's because we introduced legislation to do so.

Family medical leave: The government passed a law allowing up to eight weeks of job-protected leave from work for employees wishing to stay home and care for gravely ill family members. Interestingly enough, this was something that the New Democrats held up. We couldn't even pass it because they were looking for some extra resources or something to do some party work. We couldn't even get this, which was really supporting workers in a very meaningful way, through this House. It was being held up by the party that stands for workers here.

We've gotten rid of the 60-hour workweek. That was a ridiculous thing anyway, in my view. Nobody should be working that long. It's not sensible.

Enforcement and prosecution: This is an area where I think we have done a tremendous amount. In fact, in less than a year we have done 2,071 inspections in high-risk industries where we have gone in to make sure not just that workers were being paid properly but were being paid, because in some cases they weren't. So we have sent inspectors in. And speaking of inspectors, we've

hired 100 new inspectors and are going to hire 100 more inspectors. So we have those inspectors going in and making sure that workplaces are safe and workers are being treated fairly. We're actually doing it. We're putting the enforcement back into the enforcement act. It's not just a joke; we don't just talk about it; it's not just in writing any more. We're physically out there doing it, on the front lines with the workers, protecting them, sending a body in there to do it.

We have multilingual Employment Standards Act brochures, and this is rather effective: 21 different languages so that people can know their rights.

We have a gateway to women's information now so that women can specifically access information that's important to them.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act: We are moving forward on a number of fronts there. When I talk to the Minister of Labour, what I get from him is that his number one concern is the health and safety of workers, and he is doing his utmost to make sure that workplaces are safe for workers in Ontario. It is something that he is very, very passionate about.

There's another thing that I just wanted to remark on, because we've talked about the one side where we have the certification issue, but from the other side there was something that was really making workplaces a little on the unstable side. The previous government allowed decertification information to be posted in workshops. There was no mandatory posting of certification information, but there was mandatory posting of decertification information. Clearly, that's been one-way, and that created a lot of animosity and concern and did create an unstable work environment. This legislation gets rid of that.

1650

When we talk about card certification versus vote certification, card certification—with our legislation and with all the accompanying legislation that we have around it, vote certification works, and works properly, because we support it and we've given the OLRB the remedial decertification as well. It works in stable environments. If a store, for example, is going to be facing certification, the employees come to the store to go to work. It's in one place.

The construction industry doesn't have that situation, where people come to the same place and where they can vote in that place. So card certification is more necessary for the construction industry, because they go out to different locations. They're scattered around all over the province. They might be working in Toronto one day, they might be up in Barrie the next day, they might be in Hamilton the next day. It's all over the place. It's more mobile, so the card certification process is more necessary, because you have to have the opportunity for the union to go and just get a signature. We're not going to be able to bring all these people to one place for a vote. That's not going to work. We recognize that; that's what this legislation recognizes. So we've restored the powers to the OLRB. We've given them the opportunity

to support vote certification in the way it should be, and not to unnecessarily antagonize or try to create situations where it's imbalanced.

In the area of a mobile industry, where you can't get the workers in one place for a vote, this legislation finally addresses that. So you can go to the employers, wherever they are—Toronto, Barrie, Hamilton, wherever—and say, "Here, would you like to sign up here? Fifty-five percent: You've got yourself a union." It's as simple as that.

It's a very straightforward and, I think, a balanced piece of legislation. I think it addresses a number of issues that have long been overdue to be addressed. That's something we experienced a long time ago in this province: a fair and balanced labour relations atmosphere, environment, where both sides' needs and concerns were being addressed and people had more of an opportunity to work together and move forward as an economy in a productive way. That's what we have to restore. The government should not necessarily be leaning to one side or another, but should be making sure that people's rights are protected and enforcing it in a realistic way. That's why the accompanying legislation makes this make much more sense.

There has been concern from some people that having these sorts of supports for workers and for unions discourages investment in a working environment, but I disagree with that. I think if you protect rights and you create a stable working environment, that's the sort of environment that people are going to want to invest in, to work in and to bring their companies to. These are the reasons why I think this is fair, it's balanced and it has addressed many of the serious concerns, and why I will be voting to support this bill.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Ms. Martel: Let me raise this question with the member. I heard her say that part of the reason that card-based certification was going to be applied in the construction trade was because construction sites don't have a traditional workplace, that there's not a specific site that other workers would come to in the workplace which would make it easier for unionization to occur. I have to ask the member: What's the difference between construction sites now and that possible problem, and construction sites in 1950? The reason I raise this is because it didn't seem to be a problem in 1950, when we first brought in the OLRA and when we first allowed for card certification for all employees. It didn't seem to be an issue for the government of the day, for those in the construction industry or indeed for those others who actually had the opportunity to use card-based certification to form a union. It didn't seem to be a problem under Leslie Frost, John Robarts or Bill Davis, or even under David Peterson or Bob Rae, all of whom—various stripes, different governments—had card-based certification available to all employees, not just employees on a construction site in the construction trade.

So this is an argument that I don't buy at all. I'm wondering why the Liberals are even raising it as a

defence, because you should be embarrassed about the fact that your legislation clearly discriminates against workers in other workplaces outside of the construction trade. You're only going to allow workers in the construction trade to form a union using card-based certification. There's something wrong with that. That's discrimination, and it means you're leaving out the majority of workers who really need unions in their workplaces, workplaces where there are a lot of new immigrants, workplaces where there are a lot of women, workplaces that, by and large, are low-paid, where you need a union to bring those wages up. I don't understand this discrimination.

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey (Brampton Centre): I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 144 this afternoon. I believe this legislation will go a long way in restoring fairness and balance to the labour relations system and in improving workplace relations and maintaining the stability necessary for a productive economy.

Businesses make decisions to locate for many reasons, and they choose our province partly due to our highly educated workforce, our technological capability and the quality of life found in Ontario. I believe this bill will allow us to continue to create an economic environment in Ontario which will ensure that businesses continue to invest and grow.

Although there has been reference to anecdotal evidence about investment leaving Ontario, there is no data that I've found that supports this or suggests that the specifics of our labour legislation are a primary consideration for corporations when investing in Ontario.

The proposed reforms in this bill are designed to restore balance and fairness in labour relations and to restore confidence in the labour relations system. In the past, labour legislation reforms have been dominated by political ideology favouring either labour or business. I'm happy that our government has taken a new approach, and I'm also happy to support this bill. I believe this legislation is long overdue. We've finally found a bit of balance. In my mind, it's a good first step, and it shows that our government is intent on restoring fairness and balance to a system that has been long overdue for this bill and this step in the right direction.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton): The member from Stoney Creek spoke eloquently about this bill. Unfortunately, this bill isn't about workers' rights; this bill is about payback. The construction unions donated \$63,000 to the Liberal Party for the last election. This is strictly payback. This is a terrible piece of legislation; a piece of legislation that takes democracy out of the workplace.

The member for Niagara Centre spoke eloquently as well, but he missed the point. It's not about democracy; it's about taking democracy out of the marketplace. What's wrong with the secret ballot? The secret ballot has done this country and the western world rather well for the last 600 or 700 years, and now you're saying that we can sign a card in the presence of other people. The intimidation that can take place through that process is unbelievable.

That's what a secret ballot is all about: It does away with intimidation. It allows people to speak their minds, to be honestly confronted with the issues and to take an honest position as to how they feel personally about it without recrimination. That's what this bill is going to destroy.

1700

The only good thing about this bill is that it's only going to do it to one small sector—one fairly significant sector, really: the construction industry. It's not going to open it up to all industries in Ontario. It's going to minimize it to a rather small section: the construction industry. I think that's wrong.

I will stand very proudly and vote against this bill, and I will work very hard in future Parliaments to ensure that this bill is turned around and defeated, as it should be.

The Acting Speaker: Further questions and comments? Seeing none, the member from Stoney Creek has two minutes in which to respond.

Ms. Mossop: Thank you very much for the comments from the members from Nickel Belt, Brampton and Halton.

Again, we have to clarify that the important thing that is happening in this legislation, which had not happened before, is that card certification is being restored in the construction industry. It is going to happen in the construction industry, where it had not been happening before. That's the important thing.

Bill 144 does not take away the right to associate from any sector at all, and that is an important thing to know. It maintains the right to vote, it maintains the right to unionize, and it strengthens it in many ways. It's creating a working environment that is less adversarial. That is important.

As I mentioned before, it is also important to note the other pieces of legislation that wrap around this that help to support workers. The support for workers in this society, in any society, but particularly in Ontario—and I agree with the members when they talk about new immigrants and protecting people's rights and making sure that they understand their rights. That is why we have introduced other pieces of legislation as well that do that.

We've strengthened the vote certification and put card certification in an industry that needs it. Vote certification cannot realistically work in the construction sector because it is such a mobile industry. That's why it is being done this way: Vote certification works in the more stable ones, and we've strengthened that; card certification where it doesn't work as effectively.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie—Lincoln): I'm pleased to enter into the debate on Bill 144, An Act to amend certain statutes relating to labour relations. My colleague the member for Kitchener—Waterloo spoke very eloquently yesterday, as the official opposition, about our objections to this bill on a number of scores, and my colleague from Halton just spoke very well about some particular concerns to the bill.

I look forward to listening to the continued debate in this chamber on Bill 144, particularly what the government members are going to say, because as Mr. Chudleigh, the member for Halton, and Mrs. Witmer, the member for Kitchener—Waterloo, brought up, and my colleagues from Nickel Belt and Niagara Centre as well, the question as to why you have card-based certification solely for the construction industry and any other sector would not have that additional right—if anything, I heard the most recent speaker from Stoney Creek tie herself into rhetorical knots trying to explain that. I think the average person listening or any member of a union or a non-union workplace would be very puzzled as to why the construction sector would have card-based certification and no other one would have that.

The member for Halton raised a point that maybe it has something to do with donations to the political parties. The construction industry donated, I think he said, some \$63,000 to the Ontario Liberal Party for the last election campaign. In fact, I think they financed those very hard-hitting negative ads as well that said, "Not this time, Ernie. Not this time." It was certainly one of the most negative campaign advertisements I can recall seeing in politics in support of the Ontario Liberal Party. So maybe that's part of the influence. Maybe there is payback there as well. Unless I hear a convincing argument from members of the government side, I'm led to conclude simply that this is payback, as the member for Halton has said. He has convinced me of his arguments. I have not heard an effective response, a rebuttal, to that argument.

Mr. Chudleigh: They don't even mention it.

Mr. Hudak: In fact, they tend to skirt past it, as the member for Halton is saying.

Again, for those viewing at home or following along with Hansard, the bill would allow those in the construction industry—if 55% of the workers or more signed a card indicating they wanted a union, then a union would be effectively certified. There would be no democratic vote or secret ballot vote for union certification. That would be a substantial change from the law that exists today, which says that all union certification votes must be done under a secret ballot, a democratic process, just as members to this chamber are elected, and just as important a precept in Canadian history—part of our culture, I would argue. Such an important decision—electing members to the Legislature, to a local council, or deciding whether you want to be recognized and organized by a union or not, certified or decertified—should similarly be done by a secret ballot vote that members can cast based on their own feelings without fear of intimidation from union members, fellow workers, employers, whoever. I think it's an important concept. This bill changes that in one sector only. The construction sector would have card-based certification where 55% or more of members have signed cards to be a union. Every other sector would not have that new right, which begs the question as to why the government has made this choice for one sector only. Unless I hear

otherwise, I'm convinced by the member from Halton's arguments that it has more to do with donations and financing of attack ads during the last campaign than any description of industrial relations.

Some particular concerns that we'll discuss from the opposition on Bill 144:

—section 2 of the act, which amends sections 11.1 and 11.2, about how a trade union is certified. I mentioned some of that;

—sections 4 and 5, the preparation and posting of documents regarding certification or non-certification;

—section 6 of the act we'll discuss as well, which deals with salary disclosure of union leaders who make, I believe—over \$100,000 a year, I think, is the existing law.

Section 7 deals with extraordinary powers to the Ontario Labour Relations Board for interim orders in terms of reinstating an employee who was fired before any kind of hearing could take place to determine the nature of that dismissal.

Section 8, as I mentioned already, is the construction-based industries' certification process by cards, which is unique compared to every other potential trade union in the province.

Section 2, I will discuss.

One more general point before I get to section 2: The government members seem to say that if the Conservatives are against it and the NDP are against it, they therefore must have it right. I haven't heard from a single group or individual who thinks that they have it right aside from members of the Liberal caucus. We heard yesterday quite clearly from a number of trade union members who were here in the gallery during question period. They objected quite strongly with very strong language that they found this bill to be "sexist," was the term they used; they found the bill to be racist, which is very strong language that you don't often hear in this Legislature. But surely, if you're hearing that from members of the trade unions, they feel very strongly that this legislation has got it wrong.

At the same time, we have a series of letters from the chamber of commerce, from various business groups including the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, one of the key voices for small business in Ontario that is similarly very critical of this legislation. I bet if you had asked the construction unions that get the additional rights for card-based certification, they would probably agree with members of the third party, who would argue that it should be for all unions. So even if they say that the construction industry is happy with this bill, I would bet that their preferred position would be for a more general card-based certification rather than a special exemption for them, because it does beg the question that the member for Halton rightfully brought up only a few minutes ago.

The member for Niagara Centre said it quite well. He does not agree with the position of the Progressive Conservative Party that we believe, in all circumstances, that a vote to certify or to decertify a union should be a secret

ballot, a true democratic process just like electing officials to the Legislature or to council. The member for Niagara Centre did give credit that we are consistent, and I will give credit in return that the third party, the NDP, is consistent in believing that there should be card-based certification for all sectors. The Liberal Party has chosen one sector to benefit and the rest not to be impacted by this legislation.

1710

This is a bit reminiscent of one of my favourite topics to criticize, and that's the greenbelt bill, where some landowners are more equal than others. We've heard questions and strong and persuasive arguments under the greenbelt bill that some developers had better access at a \$10,000-per-person fundraiser. We also saw that developers had some land exempted from the greenbelt—one example, a \$15-million windfall—where farmers across the greenbelt area had no such access to the minister and have found, by and large, that their requests have been ignored. So just like some landowners are more equal than others for the Ontario Liberal Party, so too some unions are more equal than others when it comes to Bill 144.

I would look forward to some evidence from across the floor of groups or individuals who feel that this legislation is appropriate. It looks like, by trying to give a little bit here, give a little bit there, ultimately the Liberal Party is making nobody happy—

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): No plan.

Mr. Hudak: —and they have no plan. It just seems like it's more trying to satisfy political needs as opposed to good policy for labour relations in the province of Ontario.

It is reminiscent, too, of—I forget the bill number; maybe my colleagues can help me; Mr. Speaker, maybe you can refresh my memory—of the so-called elimination of the 60-hour workweek bill that we'd been debating in this chamber just a few months ago. Some members of the government just mentioned it moments ago, saying that they've eliminated the 60-hour workweek. Well, no such thing has happened. That bill was more appropriately called the rubber-stamping bill, where individuals will still work 60 hours a week; all that happens is, some bureaucrat or maybe some stamping machine at the Ministry of Labour will simply stamp all of these applications to continue to work 60 hours or more a week. So that was, I would say, a bill under a false premise. If the emperor had no clothes when it came to the rubber-stamping, 60-hour workweek act, and similarly on Bill 144, it makes nobody happy, except for maybe the backroom political operators of the Ontario Liberal Party.

Let me get into the bill a bit more. I talked about section 2, which amends sections 11.1 and 11.2 of the act. It gives the Ontario Labour Relations Board the extraordinary power to order the certification of a union even if the employees did not vote to become unionized. As I said, a very important principle, a part of our culture in Canada when making big decisions that impact on

individuals significantly and over long periods of time, is that a democratic process should take place, which includes a secret ballot. I was pleased to be part of a government that ensured that individual workers would have the right to determine themselves, without fear of intimidation from employers or fellow employees or whoever, whether they wanted to be part of a trade union or not. This bill gives the power to the Ontario Labour Relations Board to order a union to be certified even if the employees did not indicate that they wanted that to happen. No doubt that would have a chilling impact on investment in the province of Ontario. I think Quebec actually has this provision and maybe Manitoba; there have been some stories in the news recently about that. This will put Ontario in a category that will discourage investment and job creation decisions in our great province.

Let me give you an example of some of the submissions that we've received. The one I have in my hand right now is the Ontario Chamber of Commerce submission to the minister, Mr. Bentley, on March 29, 2005. They have a similar line of thinking. They say that Bill 144 does the following: It "will fail to restore balance and fairness to the current" labour relations "system"; it "threatens the fundamental principles of democracy and fails to protect workers' rights"; and third, it "will hurt Ontario's long-term competitiveness and investment climate."

They go on to say, "Implementing the proposed changes may destabilize labour relations in the province and convince future or pending investors to rethink investing in Ontario-based businesses."

It's particularly important when we hear forecasts from the bank, among other sources, about slowing growth in the province of Ontario. There are some macroeconomic challenges, with a higher dollar, for example, and limited trade with the United States, our biggest trade partner, particularly for our province.

We have seen in this chamber, despite the Minister of Finance's refusal to respond, that our leader, John Tory, has rightly pointed out that the Liberal projections for growth are substantially greater than they appear to be in 2005, impacting on the budget. In fact, the Minister of Finance finally had to confess that the budget deficit for this year is going to be, I would think, at least three times what he said it was going to be when he stood in this chamber almost a year ago and claimed that it would be a \$2.2-billion deficit. Now we discover that it is actually going to be \$6 billion, and, I suggest, even more.

If the economy slows down, that impacts on our ability to improve health care, to invest in education, to invest in our roads, our police forces—priorities of the vast majority of Ontarians. Certainly by bringing in a piece of legislation like this, they give a chilling effect to the chamber of commerce, for example, and other industry associations. It should be a signal to the government that they are going to be impacting on growth in the province, which will further handicap their ability to invest in hospitals, to invest in community

services, to invest in the classroom, and will further erode the already messy fiscal situation the Minister of Finance refuses to fully present to the Legislature despite repeated days of questioning here in this House.

They go on, further, about section 2. The chamber of commerce letter goes further to say that they "advocate for the secret ballot system as it is the most democratic approach to union certification," a point that I made earlier, as my colleagues have as well. That is why we brought forward bills like Bill 69 and Bill 7 to restore better balance in labour-business relations in the province.

The chamber goes on to say, "Under this provision the OLRB (Ontario Labour Relations Board) can permit automatic union certification if the number of employees in the bargaining unit who have signed membership cards exceeds 55%, thereby eliminating the requirement of a secret ballot vote"—that, of course, for the construction sector only, if Bill 144 were to pass.

The OCC makes a further good point. They say that a secret ballot voting system is the most "secure way of ensuring the employees' true wishes are realized," because there's no force of intimidation. Nobody is looking over their shoulder. It's a secret ballot, by definition. That employee could make a decision whether he or she belongs to the union or does not want to belong, and if the majority say yes, it would be certified. The OCC is simply lined up on the same side as the Progressive Conservative Party: that the best way to ensure that the true wishes of employees are realized is through a classic secret ballot democratic vote.

They point out that they surveyed their members to make sure that the OCC was being an accurate voice for chamber of commerce members and their businesses across the province. They say, "When asked if automatic certification should be extended to other sectors beyond construction, 69% of the respondents were opposed" to that.

Later in the letter, on the same topic, the chamber says, "The OLRB's role should be focused on protecting workers' rights, including their right to choose representation in a secret ballot vote in all instances." You would think that if this government, the Dalton McGuinty Liberal government, were truly inspired by the concept of protecting workers' rights, they would protect a worker's right to choose certification or not through a democratic vote.

Other items on this: The Coalition for Democratic Labour Relations is an industry group that claims to represent 12 industry associations—and I believe that is true—representing over 100,000 small, medium and large businesses and roughly two million jobs in key sectors in Ontario's economy. They say, in their letter dated February 18, "When Bill 144 was introduced, it was presented as a tool to achieve 'fairness and balance' in the workplace." We're used to members of the Dalton McGuinty Liberal cabinet saying one thing in the presentation of the bill, but when we look beyond the cover we find something truly different underneath. Certainly, this

government has a well-earned reputation for breaking promises. At least according to the Coalition for Democratic Labour Relations, Minister Bentley's description of the bill was far from accurate.

They say, "We take issue with the way this bill threatens the fundamental principles of democracy by removing the democratic right of employees to vote on whether or not they choose a union and by impeding an employer's right to free speech."

1720

On an earlier topic as well, the impact on the business environment, this coalition which represents roughly two million jobs in key sectors in the province says, "Without major amendments, the coalition believes the bill will create uncertainty in the business community, and will likely delay key decisions about investments and hiring.... This couldn't come at a worse time, especially given the recently revised forecasts predicting slower economic growth for Ontario in 2005," reinforcing a position that I put on the floor just moments ago.

As I said, not only are business groups pointing out that this bill is not as the minister says it is and pointing out their objections, so too the trade unions have been heavily critical of this government's intent, this legislation and the broken promises. The release from Wayne Samuelson, president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, and Irene Harris, the executive vice-president, has these thoughts in it: "Card certification, for example, is only extended to the construction trades, leaving the vast majority of workers, in particular low-wage workers in the labour-intensive service sector where most women, youth and people of color are employed, without this access to the union of their choice."

You would think, by the rhetoric, that a Dalton McGuinty Liberal government would be concerned about this kind of accusation, but I know when this question was asked in the House and we had members above in the gallery just yesterday, it was dismissed. I've not heard a counterargument that is anywhere near convincing, other than from the member from Halton, who talked about donations to the Liberal Party, as to why they would choose one sector over the other.

The OFL executive vice-president, Irene Harris, has even stronger language. She says, "Premier McGuinty needs to remove sexist bias from his law reform package by extending card certification to all workers"—very, very strong language.

Again, I'm confused how members of the government's side can claim that they've got the balance right, when they are being criticized by every group I've heard from on Bill 144 that their legislation is far from useful and, in fact, misguided in many circumstances.

I realize my time is quickly expiring. I know my colleagues will speak to some of those other issues. I did mention concerns about union salary disclosure. Leaders of publicly traded corporations need to disclose their salaries if they're at a certain level. The previous legislation had balance, where union leaders, if they made over \$100,000 a year, would similarly disclose those

salaries, just like our sunshine laws in the province of Ontario. That's been eliminated, as well as the balance of posting documents. If people want to certify or decertify a union, in plain language, why not have both options in sight so people can make a true democratic choice? Regrettably, this bill fails to please anyone besides members of the Liberal caucus.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Ms. Martel: It's worth repeating, in response to the comments that were made by the member from Erie-Lincoln, that we're going to oppose the bill and so are the Conservatives, but for very different reasons. He's quite right about that.

We were very opposed to the changes that were made by the previous government through Bill 7, changes, for example, that did away with the card-based certification for workers, measures that had been in place since the 1950s. We were very opposed to other measures in their Bill 7; for example, the repeal of our anti-scab legislation, which made sure that employers in a lockout or strike position couldn't bring in scabs to do the work of those who were legitimately out on strike, trying to bargain for a first contract or bargain for better wages or bargain for improved health and safety conditions. So it is certainly true that we opposed the Conservatives when they brought in Bill 7, which put in place many of the negative changes that we have seen in the last number of years with respect to the ability of workers to organize, to be part of a trade union, to bargain collectively, to bargain for a first contract.

What's interesting is that we're not going to support this bill because what the Liberals are doing is essentially the same as the Conservatives. They are going to stop card-based certifications or continue the restriction with respect to card-based certifications on the majority of workers in the province of Ontario. The only single sector that's going to have the privilege and the ability to use card-based certification to form a trade union happens to be those in the construction trades. I ask again, why is it that the government is only reinstating card-based certification for one sector of the economy, for the construction trades only? What about the majority of workers out there who need card-based certification too, and who had that right before the Conservatives took it away, and this government wants to continue to keep it away from those workers?

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to see you again.

My premise on this bill is that I think the two opposition parties have made an excellent case about why we're moving forward with this bill. The member from Erie-Lincoln just said that both sides are unhappy: labour is unhappy and business is unhappy. Everyone's unhappy. Well, I've learned a few things about government in the last 18 months. I would think if the people on both sides of the extreme are unhappy, we must have been getting this balance just about right.

What I find interesting is that there seems to be kind of an amnesia here. When it comes to remedial certification and when it comes to interim reinstatement and particularly remedial dismissal, we've had this from 1950 to 1998. From 1950 to 1985, the government was the Progressive Conservative Party. From 1985 to 1990, it was a Liberal government. From 1990 to 1995, it was an NDP government. From 1995 to 1998, it was a Progressive Conservative government. There seemed to have been a balance, agreed to by all three parties, for many years in this province about this very issue, one of the core premises. But that balance has been upset. What has happened in this province is that we've allowed people who are driven by ideology to interfere with the free collective rights of people to form unions and with the ability and the freedom of business to make a profit, which is what we need to power this economy so that we have workers.

So what Minister Bentley is trying to do here—and I commend him, and the debate here just reinforces it with me. Obviously, we must have agreed to—gone back to a system where there was a balance, the balance that business needs to see; that someone, of course, can have remedial dismissal as well as remedial reinstatement, again, when there is just an egregious example that things are not being done fairly. So I support the bill on that alone.

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): The member from Erie–Lincoln does raise a number of concerns. He raises issues of fairness and balance. I have some concerns about Bill 144 with respect to what I perceive is some unfairness and some unbalance in this particular piece of legislation. I'm concerned about what impact it may have on our economy that at times can be fragile, and I'm concerned about the impact it would have on business investment and, of course, the impact on jobs.

As we've been hearing during debate this afternoon, this bill is seen as a Liberal payback to union bosses following the most recent election. I'm concerned about what this bill does with respect to rights of individual workers, whether they are in a union shop or a non-union shop. Again, to what extent does this contribute to balance in the workplace and to what extent does this contribute to fairness in the workplace? How long will it be before the government drags all sectors into a card-based system? So I'm concerned about balance. I'm concerned about unbalance and unfairness.

The member for Erie–Lincoln made mention of the secret ballot. There has been quite a bit of discussion about the secret ballot. This allows employees to make their support for certification or their support for a union or lack of support for a union in a way where there is no peer group pressure, no coercion or intimidation or potential intimidation, whether it be from fellow employees, from the employers themselves or from union organizers. I regret that employees in the construction trade will no longer have this democratic right.

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Mr. Ramal: I'm privileged again to stand up and speak in support of this bill after I listened to many speakers from both sides of the House talking about it.

I want to go back to the member from Erie–Lincoln, who started talking about an undemocratic process, forcing people to sign an agreement and the minister interfering to force them to sign this agreement. I guess he didn't read the bill very well. The bill says that if there is any unsolved problem between the union and the employer, the minister will go in and solve it in order to create stability in the construction sector. It's very important to all of us to have that stability.

Stability is especially important for construction because of the nature of the work and the short season. When you start building something, it takes a lot of preparations and a lot of effort. So, in order to create that stability, we have to make sure. The Minister of Labour, or the ministry in general, looks after that stability.

Also, I agree with many things being said in this House about the right for construction working people to form a union, and also for the ministry to make sure that this is not being driven by some people who have no intention for the stability of the future of this province and no intention to create more work. We as a government have to make a balance between both sides: the labourers and the people who are looking after a whole segment of the society to make a profit. So it's all about balance, all about protection. Since the Minister of Labour became the Minister of Labour in this province, he has been working all the time to protect the workers, to have fairness in the workplace and to make sure that workplaces across the province are safer.

The Acting Speaker: The member from Erie–Lincoln has two minutes in which to respond.

Mr. Hudak: I appreciate the comments from my colleagues. As Nickel Belt said, while the Progressive Conservatives and the New Democratic Party will disagree fundamentally on the legislation, we do respect the fact that each of us is consistent, as opposed to the Liberal Party, which has a well-worn reputation for saying one thing and doing the opposite when in government.

I appreciate Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant's comments. He shares my concerns about the impact of this legislation, among other initiatives, including a significant penchant by the Liberals to increase taxes on working families and on businesses. Combined with this type of legislation, it's going to have a dragging effect on our economy, limiting our ability to invest in key priorities like health care and education.

Perth–Middlesex had a good quote that I'm going to have to write down and use. His basic point was that if everybody is unhappy, then therefore we must be right; that if everybody says that they're totally wrong, then the Liberals must be right. Lewis Carroll, I think, would be proud of the kind of logic that says that everybody disagrees, therefore the legislation must be all right.

Perth–Middlesex also used the term that the “extremes” are griping. I don’t know if a member of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business in Listowel would agree with the description of the CFIB as an extreme group, nor would the Stratford Chamber of Commerce like to be called an extreme association, as Perth–Middlesex tends to describe those who object to the legislation. While the Ontario Federation of Labour’s Mr. Samuelson may not always agree with the positions of the Progressive Conservative caucus, I would be very loath to say that one of the biggest unions in the province is an extreme group, as the Liberals seem to be describing them in debate today.

London–Fanshawe—I’ve run out of time. I think he made up his mind on this bill before listening to my debate, but I will still try to convince him to vote against Bill 144.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms. Martel: It’s a pleasure for me to participate in the debate. I want to say at the outset that of course I will be opposing Bill 144. I’m opposing it because I am fundamentally against the discrimination which is inherent in this bill, which the Liberals continue to try and justify in a manner that is beyond me.

Secondly, because we are dealing with amendments to the Ontario Labour Relations Board, I would have thought that the government was going to be bringing in provisions, which we had when we were the government, to ban scabs in the province of Ontario. But this government is not bringing in legislation to ban scabs, despite the fact that a number of Liberal members, when in opposition, called on the Conservative government to ban scabs. My, how times have changed, because here is the opportunity for the government of the day to do just that, and nowhere in this bill do I see any of the provisions that we had in place when we were the government to ban the use of scabs during strikes or lockouts in Ontario.

Let me deal first with the discrimination which is inherent in Bill 144. I’m not sure that the member from Perth–Middlesex has read the bill and understands what’s happening in this legislation. I say that, based on the comments he has made in the debate, because he has tried to say that if the legislation was good enough for Bill Davis and David Peterson, then, by God, this legislation is good enough for him. I wonder if he understands—and I don’t think that he does, so he’s going to have to read the bill. It’s not a long bill, so I’m encouraging him to read it. He should read it, and he will understand that the section with respect to card-based certification that the Liberals are bringing forward is different than that which was in place under Leslie Frost, under Bill Davis, under David Peterson and under Bob Rae. The provisions are different, Mr. Wilkinson, and I think you need to read the legislation and then you will understand that.

Under previous governments, going back to 1949: From 1949 to 1961, under Conservative Premier Leslie Frost, there was card-based certification for all workers;

from 1961 to 1971, under Conservative Premier John Robarts, there was card-based certification for all workers; from 1971 to 1985, under Bill Davis, there was card-based certification for all workers; 1985, under Frank Miller, card-based certification for all workers; 1985 to 1990, under David Peterson, card-based certification for all workers; and 1990 to 1995, under Bob Rae, card-based certification for all workers. The key is “for all workers,” so I hope Mr. Wilkinson and others in the chamber are going to understand this: all workers. That’s what was in place until 1995 and the election of the Conservatives, and then there was no card certification at all for any worker.

This minister, under the Liberal government, now brings forward legislation for card-based certification for only some workers. Only those workers in the construction trades are going to be allowed to join a union through card-based certification. Speaker, I know that you understand what I’m saying, but I’m going to repeat it for the benefit of those Liberal members who I don’t think have gotten it yet. Up until the election of the Conservatives, every worker in every sector in the province of Ontario could use card-based certification to become a part of a trade union. That was eliminated entirely under the Conservatives, and now the Liberals bring forward a half-baked proposal which would allow only workers in the construction trades to use card-based certification as a means to form a trade union.

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I disagree fundamentally with that approach. If it was good enough for Leslie Frost and for John Robarts and for Bill Davis and for Frank Miller and for David Peterson and for Bob Rae to allow all workers to use card-based certification to become part of a trade union, then it should be good enough for the Liberal government of Dalton McGuinty to allow all workers to use that model. But apparently, under the McGuinty Liberals we now have two tiers of workers in the province of Ontario: those who are fortunate enough to be part of the construction trades—who will, after this bill is passed, be able to use card-based certification to form a trade union—and every other worker in every other sector who wants to join a trade union but will not have the ability to use card-based certification to do so because of the discrimination that is inherent in Bill 144.

That’s the reality, that’s why I’m opposing this bill, and that’s why I’m asking those Liberals who have gotten up to speak today and who will after I finish defend that discrimination: Stand in your place and tell me and those thousands and thousands and thousands of other workers who don’t work in the construction trades why it is that they can’t have access to card-based certification too, why it is that you are discriminating against them in that respect, when previous governments of all stripes allowed all workers to use card-based certification in order to form a trade union. Explain that discrimination to me and explain why you think it’s appropriate to discriminate against other workers in every other sector in that way.

I say that because it's worth repeating what my colleague from Niagara said, and that is that the majority of workers will not be able to form a trade union based on card-based certification. Many of those workers include the most vulnerable workers in the province of Ontario: immigrant workers who desperately need a job, who aren't aware of their rights and who, even if they were, would probably not exercise their rights because they're so desperate to provide an income for their family; female workers who traditionally have not been paid equal salaries for equal work, who traditionally are doing some of the most important work, for example, in the public sector, caring for the elderly in home care, caring for kids in child care settings; many immigrant women who are working in the garment trade and who are being exploited every day. We saw evidence of that in the auditor's most recent report with respect to violations of employment standards: again and again and again, violations in the garment industry, where most of those workers are women.

These are the most vulnerable workers in the province of Ontario. These are the ones who need the most protection when it comes to trying to be part of a trade union. These are the workers who are most vulnerable to employer intimidation and employer tactics when it comes to people trying to form a trade union to bargain collectively and to have better health and safety. These are the very workers who most need access to card-based certification as a model to join a trade union. These are the very workers that this government is discriminating against in saying, "No, you can't have access to card-based certification."

I don't understand that discrimination, especially against some of the lowest-paid, most vulnerable workers in the province, those who are the most likely to be intimidated by employers when there is a membership drive for a trade union going on.

I heard the member from Stoney Creek say that the reason we have to do this in the construction sector is because the construction sector traditionally doesn't have a worksite per se where you can go on an organizing drive, so because it's more transient as a workplace, we need to have different rules. Well, that didn't apply under every other government except the Conservatives, who did allow card-based certification to apply to all sectors. I don't understand the difference. Nothing has changed that dramatically in construction that would allow for a different set of rules in the construction industry and a different set of rules for everybody else.

But I guess I shouldn't be surprised that she was saying that, because the Ministry of Labour, when it released information about this bill November 3, used exactly that as the pathetic defence for why card-based certification was only going to be applied in the construction trade. It said, "Special certification rules" need to be in place "to recognize the uniqueness of the construction sector.... Given the emphasis on project work and the mobile nature of the workforce in the construction sector, re-introducing such a system here

promotes individual choice, fairness and balance." Well, what about other people who work part-time, casual jobs, who work at different workplaces? My argument is that their situation is the same.

Think of any number of security guards in the province of Ontario who through their employer are doing security work at different workplaces. That's transient work. They are not at a set work site day in, day out, where it's easy to organize them, where it's easy for them to sign a card. There is any number of immigrant women working in the garment industry, for example, who are working in more than one place or doing piecework. They're pretty difficult to organize too, pretty transient, casual work, different workplaces. Their challenges are the same, so why are we applying one set of rules for workers that the government defines to be in a transient industry when we know there are thousands and thousands and thousands of other workers whose circumstances are essentially the same—who are working alone, not on a specified work site, working at different jobs on different work sites—who still have a right to be part of a trade union and who should still have access to card-based certification as a mechanism to be part of that trade union?

I heard the minister yesterday, in response to my colleague Mr. Kormos, try to imply that, in fact, there was no discrimination here, that all workers are being treated equally when it comes to card certification. Well, just yesterday in the mail I got this briefing note from OECTA, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, speaking about card certification. The whole briefing note is on card certification. They've got a different take than the Minister of Labour, because they have said very clearly, "Union representation and collective bargaining should be seen as a fundamental right in a democratic society. A card-based system for joining a union helps to assure that right by reducing the ability of an employer to intimidate employees who wish to join a union...."

"Experience has demonstrated that between the signing of the cards and the vote, anti-union employers often illegally engage in concerted campaigns to, at best, 'persuade' employees not to join a union. At worst, these situations can and do deteriorate into poisoned work environments where intimidation, coercion and threats to close down the workplace and terminate any employees who favour unionizing are commonplace. Rather than enhancing the democratic process, the twofold process of forcing a vote and signing a union card has the effect of denying the free will of workers to join a union of their choice."

Bill 144 reintroduces card certification in a limited fashion. It will be extended only to employees in the construction sector: "The government has suggested that card certification is being provided to workers in the construction sector because they tend to be mobile and may not remain at a single job site for extended periods of time. Part-time and other contingent workers searching for longer hours or better shifts are just as mobile as

those employed in the construction sector, yet without card certification their access to unionization will continue to be just as seriously restricted as it was under the Conservative government.” This is from OECTA. “The government must act to amend Bill 144 so that the law fulfills its obligation to protect and safeguard the right of freedom of choice to join a union for all workers in the province.” That was from OECTA, and all members received it in their mail recently.

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The Steelworkers have said the same thing, and they have done a lobby of a number of MPPs with respect to this bill. The Steelworkers have said the following:

“The provincial Liberal Party and its leader, Dalton McGuinty, have discriminated against all other Ontario workers. They are discriminating against women, visible minorities, newly landed immigrants and workers with disabilities with their sexist, racist labour legislation.

“The Steelworkers are committed to helping unrepresented employees join our union. We are particularly responsive to the organizing needs of the most vulnerable workers, including women, recent immigrants, employees with disabilities and those who experience intolerable and unsafe working conditions and the arbitrary and unfair exercise of employer authority.

“The United Steelworkers submit that unless the right of all working people in Ontario to join a union is restored, the standard of living in this province is threatened; also, that the Ontario Liberal government has discriminated against its own citizens.”

Here’s a letter from the CAW. This is written to the Minister of Labour from Russ Barker, chairperson of CAW local 1524:

“Dear Sir:

“After hearing your government’s position of late regarding a two-tier certification process for workers, we feel it is time to speak up on this important subject. Most non-unionized workers face discrimination on a daily basis. Those workers are now looking at that same sort of discrimination from your government.

“To give construction workers a card-check certification process and keep the undemocratic, intimidating voting system on behalf of other non-unionized workers makes no sense. This leaves the vast majority of non-unionized workers exposed to management’s threats and intimidation. Management will bully and intimidate their employees throughout the voting process. This is blatantly unfair to the thousands of workers that want and need a union’s help in their workplace.

“Please change this two-tier process so that all workers can feel comfortable to unionize.”

It’s very clear that this card-based certification only applies to construction workers, regardless of what the minister said yesterday. All you have to do is read the explanatory note at the front of the bill, which says, “New section 128.1 of the act, added by section 8 of the bill, applies in the construction industry and allows a trade union applying for certification to elect to have the application dealt with on the basis of a ‘card-based certification’ model.” Only the construction industry.

Why the discrimination? I have heard no good rationale or reason for that, and submit to you that every worker, as was previously the case before the Conservative government, should have the right to use card-based certification as a mechanism to form a trade union and to be part of a trade union

In conclusion, I said the other reason I was opposing this bill is because the bill does nothing to ban scabs. I was proud, very proud, to be part of a government that banned scab labour in the province of Ontario between 1993 and 1995. I can tell you that after the Conservatives allowed for scabs again, in my community in a single year we had no less than four workplaces where scabs were used. In one of those workplaces in particular, at Falconbridge, the company brought in hired goons from a company called Accufax who threatened and harassed and intimidated workers. It was nothing but trouble on that picket line month after month after month.

The government here is amending the Ontario Labour Relations Act, and the government should be bringing in the provisions that were in place when the NDP was in government to again ban scabs in the province of Ontario, ban scabs in workplaces where workers have been locked out or are on strike: workers who are trying to bargain collectively, bargain for a first contract, bargain for better health and safety conditions, bargain for better wages and pensions. There is no room for scabs in strikes and in workplaces in the province of Ontario. All that does is increase intimidation, increase harassment, increase violence on picket lines. Nothing good comes from having scabs.

If you look at our record, you will see that in the time that the bill was in place, there was the least amount of disruption in workplaces through strikes and lockouts in the history of the province. That’s where we should be again. This government should be banning scabs, just like some of its Liberal members said they would when they were in opposition.

The Acting Speaker: It being nearly 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10.

The House adjourned at 1755.

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Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Hamilton-Est	
Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L) Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Beaches–East York / Beaches–York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Bramalea–Gore–Malton– Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hastings–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Huron–Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Brampton West–Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest–Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Kenora–Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Chatham–Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Lanark–Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Leeds–Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy House Leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	London West / London-Ouest	Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Dufferin–Peel– Wellington–Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London–Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Eglinton–Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Elgin–Middlesex–London	Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L) Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Erie–Lincoln	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L) Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Cansfield, Donna H. (L)	Nepean–Carleton	Baird, John R. (PC)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Broten, Laurel C. (L)	Niagara Falls	Craitor, Kim (L)
Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Guelph–Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)
Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)
Haliburton–Victoria–Brook	Scott, Laurie (PC)	Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)
Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior- Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa–Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ottawa–Vanier	Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L) Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Parkdale–High Park	Kennedy, Hon. / L'hon. Gerard (L) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Toronto–Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Parry Sound–Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Trinity–Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Perth–Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Vaughan–King–Aurora	Sorbara, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (L) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Waterloo–Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Whitby–Ajax	Flaherty, Jim (PC)
Prince Edward–Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Yakubuski, John (PC)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Sarnia–Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Windsor–St. Clair	Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L) Minister of Energy, Chair of Cabinet, Government House Leader / ministre de l'Énergie, président du Conseil des ministres, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L) Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	York North / York-Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Cordiano, Hon. / L'hon. Joseph (L) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	York West / York-Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough–Agincourt	Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement		
Scarborough–Rouge River	Curling, Hon. / L'hon. Alvin (L) Speaker / Président		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe–Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St. Catharines	Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L) Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs		
St. Paul's	Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique		
Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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