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of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 2 November 2005

Mercredi 2 novembre 2005

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 2 November 2005

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 2 novembre 2005

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): I want to thank Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller for yesterday's annual report. Commissioner Miller addressed the major changes to Ontario's land use planning system, land use that spawns a myriad of environmental concerns related to sprawl, highway gridlock, aggregate extraction, water quality and natural heritage.

As Miller points out, "There is a fixed amount of land in Ontario, and each year there are more of us placing more demands on that land." Four million to six million more people are coming to Ontario, mainly to Toronto, over the next 20 years—more people, more cars, more garbage, more air pollution, and more demands for water, sewer and roads as our population skyrockets.

Last year I mentioned in this House that the United Nations Millennium Assessment had a stark warning about the alarming rate at which we are eating up our natural resources. The Environmental Commissioner raises the question: Why must population grow at this rate in parts of southern Ontario? He cites the examples of prosperous European economies that thrive without a burgeoning population base. Twenty years ago, Haldimand county in my riding had the same population it had 100 years ago.

I congratulate the commissioner for pointing out what we should already know, "that a planning regime based on the continuous expansion of population and the growth in consumption of resources ... is ultimately not sustainable."

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Suzanne Aucoin of St. Catharines, like so many others in Dalton McGuinty's Liberal Ontario, is being forced to finance her own cancer treatment. Suzanne Aucoin has colon cancer and the only drug that's effective at this point in her disease is Erbitux. Erbitux has to be financed out of pocket by Ms. Aucoin to the tune of \$100,000 over the course of the next six months, not because Health Canada

hasn't approved it—Health Canada indeed has approved it as an effective medication—but because the McGuinty government arbitrarily disallows intravenous medications from consideration for section 8 application so that it can be funded by Cancer Care Ontario.

That is cruel, it is unjust, it is unfair and it is a harsh attack on people in this province, good Ontarians, who deserve this province's support. Let me tell you what people like Ken and Margaret Cosgrove of Welland have to say: "Continuing to deny colon cancer patients access to Erbitux means that the Minister of Health is willing to let them suffer and ultimately die."

I say to this government that it's time for it to merely demonstrate the political will to end this incredible injustice to people suffering from cancer, to sign the necessary paper and ensure that immediately—not next month, certainly not next year, but immediately—persons with cancer like Suzanne Aucoin have this Health Canada-approved drug, Erbitux, and other intravenous medications approved under section 8.

COMMON GROUND CO-OPERATIVE

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West): I rise today to recognize a wonderful organization in Don Valley West called the Common Ground Co-operative. The co-operative is a non-profit organization that helps those with intellectual disabilities create employment opportunities for themselves.

The idea for the Common Ground co-op was formed in 1998 when Jim and Carolyn Lemon applied on behalf of their daughter Cathy for a grant from the provincial government. The grant allowed Cathy to start up a bakery and catering business called Lemon and Allspice Cookery.

Hon. Sandra Papatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): That's a good program.

Ms. Wynne: It's a good program. This grant, along with the generosity of Community Living Toronto, which provided Cathy free use of its kitchen, enabled the cookery to expand into a successful business.

As a result of this success, the cookery created the Common Ground co-op in 2000, which provides people with intellectual disabilities the support needed to create meaningful employment for themselves. Last year, Minister Papatello and I visited the co-op and we can tell you it's really heartening to see people who might not otherwise have this chance actually have the opportunity to be contributing members of the workforce. It's been

such a successful model that they'd like to reach out to other communities around the province, and this is a model worth duplicating.

Congratulations to Jim, Carolyn and Cathy Lemon for their vision and for working with the community to create this program. I'm proud that government funding continues to support this wonderful initiative. This year, the Common Ground co-op is celebrating its fifth anniversary. I'd like to invite all members of the House to join me in commending the Lemon family for this initiative.

MINISTERS' EXPENSES

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):

On this side of the House, we've watched the McGuinty Liberal government ministers thumb their noses at the Integrity Commissioner as they hid their expenses from him and partied across Europe on the taxpayers' tab.

Was Dwight Duncan's \$800 steak dinner reviewed by the Integrity Commissioner? No. Why? Because he billed it through an OPS staffer whose expenses aren't reviewable.

Did Joe Cordiano have his \$1,000 lunch in Milan or his \$1,000 dinner in Stuttgart reviewed? No. Why? Because he funded it through an OPS staffer.

What did Dalton McGuinty say about this flagrant breaking of the rules? He said, "Oops, you caught us. We'll start following the rules from now on. Trust me." How can we trust him? He botched the Sorbara affair, he botched the Takhar affair and now he's botched the \$50,000 Dwight Duncan European vacation affair.

Can we expect the Liberals to change and start to cooperate with the Integrity Commissioner? Well, let's look and see what their new candidate for the Scarborough–Rouge River by-election, Mr. Bas Balkissoon, has to say about Integrity Commissioners: "In the future, I will not participate with this Integrity Commissioner or any Integrity Commissioner process."

That is what Mr. Balkissoon said. He said it to the North York Mirror on July 27, 2005. He said he won't participate in any Integrity Commissioner process in the future. The McGuinty Liberals seem to have found the ideal candidate. They've found someone who's just like themselves.

1340

DETROIT-WINDSOR TUNNEL

Mr. Bruce Crozier (Essex): Tomorrow will mark the 75th anniversary of the official opening of the Detroit-Windsor tunnel. It was 75 years ago that a new chapter in US-Canadian relations began when Canadian and American officials officially opened the mile-long Detroit-Windsor tunnel.

At the opening ceremony on November 3, 1930, the Honourable Thomas Gerow Murphy, Minister of the Interior and Canadian government representative, stated, "The opening of the Detroit-Windsor tunnel today is

another object lesson to other nations of the world on how international goodwill, such as that which exists between Canada and the United States, can be maintained and developed." The tunnel was also seen as a way to "enable each country to learn more about the other," and in that way, "further the spirit of international friendliness that now exists." The truth of these statements still resonates today, 75 years later.

As Canada's automotive industry heartland and a major economic hub for the province of Ontario, Ontario's and Windsor-Essex's economies are intricately linked with the international border crossing. The tunnel remains the only underwater international vehicular tunnel in the world and is a vital socio-economic link between the United States and Canada, playing a significant role in the economic health of Canada, the province of Ontario and Windsor-Essex, as it acts as a conduit for trade between the two nations.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate those who have made the tunnel a success over the past 75 years, and for the role that it has played in strengthening the friendship and the economies of both great nations. May its success continue for another 75 years and beyond.

CORMORANT POPULATION

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): I rise today to ask the Minister of Natural Resources to take effective action against the invasion of cormorants in the Thousand Islands region into other inland waterways in this province. This is a significant concern. We've seen a devastating impact on sports fishery in the Thousand Islands area. The minister, when I asked him this question almost a year ago, talked about oiling eggs and said that he felt that would be effective.

There's a press release dated September this year from New York State Senator Jim Wright, which is indicating that we're having no impact on the cormorant population in the Thousand Islands region because of the lack of action of the Ontario government. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has been stymied by the lack of action on the Ontario and Canadian side of the border. Most of the nests of cormorants lie on the Canadian side. The Americans are trying to do something, but their impact is not really telling because of the lack of action of this minister and this Liberal government.

I encourage them to take action now, before it's too late. Save our fisheries.

ADVOCIS

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): Today it's my pleasure, on behalf of all members, to welcome Advocis to Queen's Park.

Advocis is the largest voluntary professional membership association of financial advisers in Canada, with

5,500 members right here in Ontario. Its members are licensed to distribute life and health insurance, mutual funds and securities. For almost 100 years, Advocis members have provided financial advice to millions of Ontarians, delivering security and peace of mind.

As the first certified financial planner elected to the Legislature, I can share with my colleagues that I have been a proud member of Advocis for 20 years. Advocis members provide financial and product advice for Ontarians and Canadians across a variety of distinct areas, including comprehensive financial and retirement planning, finance and wealth management, estate and tax planning, and employee benefits planning. With members in every Ontario community, Advocis is uniquely placed to partner with all MPPs on all issues related to the financial services industry.

In the gallery today are several members of Advocis who have come to Queen's Park, and we welcome you. Tonight, Advocis is hosting a reception for all MPPs in the legislative dining room. On their behalf, I invite all members to attend and hear how Advocis can help their constituents and communities.

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): I rise today to recognize delegates of the Ontario Principals' Council who join us today in the House and the Legislature.

As a principal on leave myself, it is always nice to see colleagues from my former life. Today was the council's Queen's Park Day, where they have met with more than 45 members of this House to discuss the issues that are affecting their members and, most importantly, kids.

The Ontario Principals' Council is a voluntary professional association that represents the interests of principals and vice-principals in Ontario's publicly funded school system. Currently, OPC represents 5,000 practising school leaders in the elementary and secondary panels, as well as 500 associate members from within the educational community. The OPC offers a wide range of services to its members in support of exemplary leadership in public education.

Our government is committed to excellence in public education. We understand that principals play an integral and pivotal role in their school communities. They are the hub of happy and safe school systems and they keep our kids safe and happy. The Ontario Principals' Council is an integral player in ensuring our principals receive support and representation. I know that our government will invite principals to the table to help shape the future of our publicly funded school system.

I salute the principals who have joined us here today and commend them for the work they do, both in our school communities and, more importantly, for our kids, and also as part of their own organization, the Ontario Principals' Council. I am proud to be among their colleagues and I invite us all to support our principals.

TAKE OUR KIDS TO WORK DAY

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot): I rise to acknowledge the nationwide program known as Take Our Kids to Work. Organized by the Learning Partnership, a not-for-profit organization of business people, educators and community leaders, more than 1.5 million young Canadians and tens of thousands of workplaces have benefited from this program over the last decade. This learning opportunity connects grade 9 students with the world of work and their own futures, providing a real-life experience in a work environment and the opportunity to experience different workplace roles and responsibilities.

Our government believes in alternative, outside-the-classroom programming designed to help students succeed. We won't give up on our youth and will work to challenge and engage young Ontarians by making school more responsive to their needs.

I want to acknowledge and welcome the many students in the gallery today and especially students from Parkdale Collegiate Institute and Cardinal Carter Academy for the Arts who are job-shadowing with Minister Kennedy's office at the Ministry of Education. We hope they've all had an enjoyable day.

I have several friends who have brought their children to work today. I didn't have time to acknowledge them all, but I want to acknowledge Bernadette Curtis, who works in my office and who is here with her young son Sean. Welcome.

VISITORS

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: On behalf of the Peel region members, I'd like to draw members' attention to the east members' gallery and introduce Kuldip Dheer, whom we know as Jake, who is our station manager at Rogers Cable 10 in Mississauga. Jake is an indefatigable volunteer whose efforts have touched just about every community group and charity in Mississauga. He's been a proud Mississauga resident for 25 years and he is Mississauga's Citizen of the Year.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): That is not a point of order, but welcome.

I have the distinct pleasure today of introducing, in the Speaker's gallery, the Honourable Allan Lawrence, former member representing the riding of St. George in the 25th through 29th Parliaments. Help me to welcome Mr. Lawrence.

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I had the pleasure of meeting with Mr. Ian McFarlane, president of the Ontario Principals' Council, and Mr. Mike Benson, the executive director of the Ontario Principals' Council. They're here today, along with other members of the council, and I would ask members to welcome them to the Legislature.

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to advise this chamber that

with us today doing his job-shadowing is grade 9 student and former page—year 2004—Daniel Walker.

1350

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: All right. It must be Wednesday. The member for Durham on a point of order.

Mr. O'Toole: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. When you were introducing the Honourable Allan Lawrence, you forgot that he has with him his granddaughter, Emma Healey, who is a student at the University of Toronto Schools. Welcome, Emma.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: It's certainly my pleasure to introduce my job shadow today, Anya Scott. Anya, if you would please be recognized. She came from the most beautiful riding in Ontario: Huron-Bruce. Welcome, Anya.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated November 2, 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.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2005 (NO. 2)

LOI DE 2005 SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES (N^o 2)

Mr. Duncan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to implement 2005 Budget measures and amend various Acts / Projet de loi 18, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2005 et modifiant diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

The minister may have a brief statement.

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): This bill gives effect to a number of the outstanding measures that were contained in this government's 2005 budget.

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT (COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT), 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION (PARTICIPATION COMMUNAUTAIRE)

Mr. Fonseca moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to community involvement activity hours and board support / Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation à l'égard des heures d'activité et de l'appui des conseils au titre de la participation communautaire.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member may have a brief statement.

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): This bill has already received tremendous support from the mayor of Mississauga, from the school boards and from a number of seniors' groups. The bill amends the Education Act by permitting the minister to require that students complete no fewer than 60 hours of community involvement activities before receiving their Ontario secondary school diploma.

The minister may also require that school boards establish and maintain policies and procedures to assist students in completing the required number of community involvement hours. Boards are given the concomitant power to establish and maintain such policies and procedures.

CITY OF HAMILTON ACT, 2005

Ms. Marsales moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr22, An Act respecting the City of Hamilton.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Under the standing orders, this is referred to the committee on regulations and private bills.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE REPORT

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): I move that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated June 13, 2005, the select committee on electoral reform shall present its final report to the assembly no later than December 1, 2005.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I'm told you need to ask for consent.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: Then I will seek unanimous consent to move that motion, Speaker.

The Speaker: Mr. Caplan has asked for unanimous consent to move the motion without notice. Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: Now I do move the motion that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated June 13, 2005, the select committee on electoral reform shall present its final report to the assembly no later than December 1, 2005.

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

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 2, 2005, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1357 to 1402.

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

Ayes

Arthur, Wayne	Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve
Baird, John R.	Jackson, Cameron	Phillips, Gerry
Barrett, Toby	Jeffrey, Linda	Pupatello, Sandra
Bartolucci, Rick	Klees, Frank	Qadri, Shafiq
Bentley, Christopher	Kular, Kuldip	Ramal, Khalil
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Kwinter, Monte	Rinaldi, Lou
Bryant, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Runciman, Robert W.
Cansfield, Donna H.	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Caplan, David	Levac, Dave	Scott, Laurie
Colle, Mike	Marsales, Judy	Smith, Monique
Cordiano, Joseph	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Craitor, Kim	Mauro, Bill	Sterling, Norman W.
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	Meilleur, Madeleine	Tascona, Joseph N.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Miller, Norm	Tory, John
Dombrowsky, Leona	Milloy, John	Van Bommel, Maria
Duguid, Brad	Mitchell, Carol	Watson, Jim
Duncan, Dwight	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wilkinson, John
Dunlop, Garfield	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Fonseca, Peter	O'Toole, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Gerretsen, John	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Parsons, Ernie	Zimmer, David

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Murdoch, Bill
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 66; the nays are 6.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm asking for unanimous consent that all three parties have up to five minutes to

speak on Women Abuse Prevention Month, which is the tradition in this place.

The Speaker: Ms. Churley has asked for unanimous consent.

Interjection: No; a statement.

The Speaker: Statements by the ministry.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

VIOLENCE FAITE AUX FEMMES

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): I rise today to remind the members that since 1986, November has been recognized as Wife Assault Prevention Month in Ontario. With the support of many fine organizations across Ontario dedicated to stopping violence against women and supporting abused women, le mois de novembre sera désormais connu sous le nom de Mois de la prévention de la violence à l'égard des femmes. November will be now known as Women Abuse Prevention Month.

It is widely felt that this new designation more accurately represents the individuals affected and the work being done. The month itself continues as a clear reminder that violence against women remains shockingly pervasive in our society, and it raises awareness of the plight of women and children who are subject to abuse. It reminds us also of our collective responsibility to work on their behalf toward the prevention and elimination of violence.

The stats on this are chilling: 25% of Ontario women experience spousal abuse at least once in their lifetime, and only 27% of spousal assaults are reported to police. Thirty-seven per cent of those spousal abuses are witnessed by children. An average of 25 women per year are killed by their spouses right here in Ontario.

Domestic violence is a concern that goes far beyond partisan politics. I know we all agree on the need not only to address it as an issue, but to shine a harsh light on it so that all Ontarians can be mobilized in the effort to reduce it.

Domestic violence not only affects the safety and security of so many of our citizens, but also their sense of confidence and self-worth. Children who are subjected to abuse not only learn unhealthy attitudes about relationships, but can pass them on to future generations.

Il faut mieux soutenir les victimes. Il faut briser le cycle de la violence. Victims must be better supported. The cycle of violence must be broken.

It's been almost one year since we tabled a comprehensive, four-year, \$66-million domestic violence action plan. It's a long-term commitment, it's going to take time to do it right, but we are making steady progress. That

progress is measured by the improved quality of the lives of the women of Ontario.

I met a remarkable woman who endured 10 years of abuse. She tried to leave 11 times. Her husband forbade her from using the phone and from seeing her family, and forced their child to spy on her and then report. When she made that leap of faith to leave the abusive relationship, she phoned a shelter—a shelter that we, this government, support. The staff there helped her develop a safety plan and take the necessary precautions before leaving with her child. She is now safe, she is happy in a non-abusive relationship, and she has retrained for employment.

We're making progress in our implementation of our action plan, because it's built on the belief that insists that all women have the right to live free from fear and free from the threat of violence. In fact, just last week I attended the expansion of Ernestine's shelter right here in the Toronto area.

C'est une conviction que nous devons disséminer dans toute la province. It's a belief that we need to spread across the province. Le mois de novembre nous offre l'occasion spéciale de le faire. This month provides us with an opportunity to do just that.

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I am pleased that we're hosting the first Ontario-government-led conference on domestic violence here in Toronto on November 28 to 30, with space for 500 delegates and 1,000 registrants already. So we have problems aplenty. Our government will work together with North American experts, front-line workers and professionals to share information, to learn from each other and together learn how to work to address this problem.

There are many hard-working individuals who are dedicated to eradicating this problem of domestic violence, and they can often go unnoticed. I want to thank all of them for their hard work, for the compassion that they continue to show as they continue to help women and children across this province.

Sadly, while we know we've made significant strides forward, we also know how much more work there is to do. We as a government, and I know all members of this House, are committed to doing just that.

DRINKING AND DRIVING

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation): I rise in the House today to talk about a very sad but true reality in Ontario: drunk driving. This is an issue we must all work together to combat. At the same time, I'm proud to report that Ontario has the lowest rate of alcohol-related road deaths in Canada. Our government is doing everything we can to keep drunk drivers off Ontario roads.

This province already has some of the toughest anti-drinking-and-driving laws in the country, including stiff fines, licence suspension, mandatory remedial measures and an ignition interlock program.

Our government is also trying to address the fact that drinking drivers aged 18 to 21 are 25% more likely to be

involved in a collision than those aged 22 to 30. That is why my ministry targets new young drivers through Ontario's graduated licensing system. Our government has a zero tolerance policy for novice drivers. They must maintain a zero blood alcohol level while driving. A fully licensed driver who has a blood alcohol level of less than 0.05% must accompany them.

I would also like to note that our government recently passed legislation to protect young G2 drivers. Bill 73 restricts the number of teenage passengers they can carry between midnight and 5 a.m. Our research shows that new teenage drivers are almost three times more likely to be involved in a fatal or serious collision when they are carrying teenage passengers. In fact, the research shows the more teenage passengers, the higher the risk.

Our government also launched the iDRIVE campaign last year. It includes a video by and for young people to raise awareness about dangerous driving, including impaired driving. So far, 1,800 copies have been distributed to schools, community groups, public health offices and police.

When it comes to drunk driving, our government is looking at measures to discourage first-time offenders from becoming repeat offenders. We also want to target repeat and serious offenders. In short, our government is doing everything we can to keep drunk drivers off Ontario roads.

We are joined today by Carolyn Swinson, former president of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and Mary Sultana, the president of the Toronto chapter of MADD Canada. I want to welcome both of them to the Legislature.

I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the great work MADD Canada does to educate people and prevent impaired driving in this province and throughout Canada. Yesterday, I was pleased to help MADD Canada launch its annual Project Red Ribbon, along with my colleagues Minister Kwinter and Minister Bryant. MADD Canada is distributing four million red ribbons, and I'm sure all members of this House are aware of the red ribbons. Across this country this holiday season, the red ribbon is a sign of respect for the thousands of people who have lost their lives or have been injured as a result of impaired driving. By tying it on your vehicle, it serves as a commitment not to drink and drive and as a reminder to others. Tying a red ribbon on your car or key chain is also a good reminder. I know that all honourable members will want to join me in supporting MADD Canada by tying a red ribbon on their vehicle or on a key chain.

Ontario has the safest roads in North America, but the simple fact is that drunk driving costs lives—too many lives, in fact. In 2003, more than 200 people died and more than 500 were seriously hurt in collisions caused by drunk drivers. However, there is some encouraging news. The number of drinking and driving deaths is falling, down by about 35% in the last 10 years; and yet drinking and driving is still a factor in about one quarter of all fatal collisions in Ontario. That is why we have tough laws to stop people from drinking and driving, and that is

why our government is working with MADD Canada and other community groups and organizations to raise public awareness. We are doing this through holiday RIDE and other campaigns, as well as Project Red Ribbon.

I want to urge everyone in Ontario not to drink and drive this holiday season. Drinking and driving do not mix.

At the end, I want to ask for unanimous consent to make these red ribbons available to all members so they can join me in tying one on for safety.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Takhar has asked for unanimous consent to distribute the ribbons to all members. Agreed?

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): To wear them.

The Speaker: To wear them? All right.

CULTURAL PROTECTION PROTECTION CULTURELLE

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs): Ontarians and Canadians alike have great reason to celebrate. Since 1998, Canada has been leading efforts to develop an international convention governing cultural goods and services. It has worked to build international support for it through a broad range of international organizations. International consensus that cultural products and activities must be considered separately in matters of trade is now a matter of record.

On October 20, 2005, 148 member states of UNESCO voted in favour of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. This historic accord recognizes in international law the distinctive nature of cultural goods and services as vehicles of cultural expression, identity and meaning. It clearly affirms the right of countries to have cultural policies and to take measures to protect and promote their cultural expressions, including national content quotas, subsidies, tax credits and foreign ownership rules.

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La convention affirme également le principe de non-subordination. Ceci signifie que le statut de la convention en matière de droit international sera égal aux autres traités internationaux, y compris aux accords commerciaux.

Je suis fière de vous annoncer que les provinces de l'Ontario et du Québec ont contribué de façon notable à ce succès canadien, en apportant un soutien crucial et des ressources vitales.

Ontario has demonstrated and will continue to demonstrate its support for the convention.

J'aimerais profiter de l'occasion pour féliciter la ministre du Patrimoine canadien, M^{me} Liza Frulla, pour son leadership inlassable, ainsi que ma collègue du gouvernement du Québec, M^{me} Line Beauchamp, pour son soutien indéfectible envers cette initiative.

J'aimerais également remercier la Coalition canadienne pour la diversité culturelle. En tant que voix de

l'industrie au Canada, la coalition a travaillé sans relâche pour promouvoir la convention sur la scène internationale et nationale.

En mai de cette année, le ministère de la Culture de l'Ontario a organisé une table ronde en collaboration avec des leaders de l'industrie culturelle afin de mieux sensibiliser le public à cet enjeu.

Our work is not over. The convention, in order to become a binding international instrument, must be ratified by at least 30 countries within the next year. Le Canada espère être l'un des premiers pays à ratifier la convention.

The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions is great news for Canada's and Ontario's arts and cultural industries. It is also important to each and every Ontario citizen, because it aims to promote ethnic traditions and minority languages and to protect local cultures from being overwhelmed by globalization trends.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Response?

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): I am very saddened today that this Liberal government has broken a tradition in this House by not allowing the opposition their five minutes to speak on the important issue of Wife Assault Prevention Month. We have always been given that opportunity, and for the minister to stand in this House and say that this is beyond being a partisan issue—it is, and it should be. But this government has chosen to take away the opportunity for us on the other side of the House to also express our serious concerns about the whole issue of Wife Assault Prevention Month. So much for an open government and a consultative government. This government just doesn't want to hear the truth.

However, on behalf of our caucus, I would like to recognize Wife Assault Prevention Month. Wife assault continues to be very widespread today despite the efforts of all three provincial parties over many years to do something about it. It crosses all demographic boundaries, it affects people of all ages, and unfortunately, the numbers continue to be high.

I would simply, in conclusion, urge all three parties to continue to work together, because if we're ever going to solve this problem, we have a responsibility to work in a coordinated fashion and make sure that women and children in this province can live in safety in their homes and their communities.

DRINKING AND DRIVING

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): Indeed, it is a time to reflect upon what the minister has put before us today, recognizing the work done by MADD Canada. In fact, it draws to mind for me a personal story and a personal tragedy. Constable Terry Ryan was tragically killed in a two-car, alcohol-related crash on his way home from a police event in May 2002. Carol Ryan, his wife, is now a

director of MADD in Durham region. She, along with president Nancy Codlin, offers an opportunity for youth, and indeed people of all ages, to respect the efforts to educate the public. I commend them for their public service of advocacy and education. Durham region, of course, not at all different from other regions in the province, is a fine example of community participation on behalf of MADD Canada.

I also want to commend the minister for working with Julia Munro, the member from York North, and for her effort and her personal resolution on the roadside memorial signage resolution that has been endorsed unanimously in this House. I commend the ministry for working with Mrs. Munro to make that happen, along with MADD Canada. Those consultations, it's my understanding, are ongoing.

Indeed, John Tory and the opposition today give their commitment to work with you to recognize the toll on our roads. This is indeed a time that we'd all work together to tie one on for safety.

CULTURAL PROTECTION

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): First of all, let me say that receiving the news by the minister is certainly something that we on this side appreciate and support, because we as a caucus support preserving the culture and heritage of both Ontario and Canada. We recognize that it's an important thing to encourage our citizens to patronize our theatres and art galleries, and to provide educational opportunities to emphasize our history, our culture and our heritage.

However, I would underscore the fact that we on this side of the House would like to see this government make it a stronger priority. I reference the fact that if you are truly interested in preserving culture, then obviously the kinds of announcements that were made last spring to small-town libraries in our province created a great deal of uncertainty in an area that is so important for heritage and community life to be understood. I would say that this minister needs to impress upon the Minister of Government Services the importance of the archives, because they are preserving our culture.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth): I'm happy to respond to the minister's statement on abuse prevention month. I do want to take a quote right from the minister's five minutes today, after rejecting the New Democrats' proposal asking for the traditional all-party consent for each of us to take five minutes to talk about this important issue. The minister said, "Domestic violence is a concern that goes far beyond partisan politics. I know we all agree on the need not only to address it as an issue, but to shine a harsh light on it, so that all Ontarians can be mobilized in the effort to reduce it."

Well, what we saw happen here today is worse than what happened under the Harris government. I want to tell you, Minister, and the House leader of that party that

even under the Mike Harris government, with John Baird as the House leader, we would get up here and take the full five minutes to lambaste them, both the Liberal opposition and the NDP. But they would allow us to take our full five minutes, instead of making us divide three important statements today.

Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean–Carleton): Shame on you.

Ms. Churley: Shame on you. Yes, you know I'm going to criticize you, because the minister herself said that this is an opportunity to "shine a harsh light" on this problem. There's no respect for the traditions in this place and the truly non-partisan aspect of talking about domestic abuse. I will shine a bit of a harsh light on the government's plan—

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): As you should.

Ms. Churley: —as I should, because that's what we're here to do.

The minister gets up and brags in her statement about their plan. The plan actually does little to stop the cycle of violence for women and children already experiencing abuse. When in opposition and on the campaign trail, the Liberals insisted that they would listen to inquest reports, the coroner and experts to inform their blueprint to stop domestic violence. But what did they do when they got into power? It's broken promise after broken promise on issues like housing—Michael Prue can tell you about that—and poverty, both critical in breaking the cycle of violence, and not following through on measures like protecting women from re-offenders. The plan does not address how the cycle of violence is perpetuated, because there is an acute shortage of safe places where women and children can go to rebuild their lives.

Yes, last year I took my five minutes specifically to talk about the Liberals' broken promise, and urged them to fix it, on fully reinstating the funding which the Tories took away for second-stage housing. They promised that they would, and then in the plan broke that promise. Instead, the \$3.2 million has been spread around for a new program, which we all support.

Interjection.

Ms. Churley: Yeah, he's talking about increasing money for homelessness. We need money for housing for these women to go to. That's what we need. We need income supports for these women. That's the kind of thing we need to be talking about in a non-partisan way, looking at the real needs of these women and their children—children who are experiencing and watching the violence in their homes.

This is a massive, huge problem. The government did not reinstate that funding as promised. They are not building the affordable housing as promised. The minimum wage has not gone up appropriately. Welfare rates that the Tories cut by over 30%—just a 3% increase. Poverty is increasing. What do the Liberals do today? Not give the other opposition parties an opportunity to stand up and talk in depth to this issue. On that, I say shame on the women's issues minister and the Liberals for cutting this short today.

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DRINKING AND DRIVING

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): New Democrats join others in this assembly in applauding and thanking MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, for their leadership across the province and beyond in the battle against drunk driving and the carnage it leaves on our highways, and the incredible, destructive theft of life of young and old and its impact on communities and upon families.

Having said that, it's imperative that if we join together here thanking MADD, we also have to commit ourselves to ensuring that there's a sufficient police presence on our roadways to ensure that drunk drivers are detected and apprehended promptly before they take out innocent victims.

It's imperative as well that we halt this government's agenda of increasing the number of so-called agency stores where booze, liquor and beer, is being sold at anything from 7-Elevens to Avondales across southern Ontario, that we resist this government's agenda of privatizing and growing the number of liquor outlets across the province, in contrast to liquor being served and sold by experienced, trained professional OLBEU members. The government's agenda only serves—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you. It is time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Finance. Minister, on what page of yesterday's economic update can you point to a single initiative to help the over 42,000 families who have lost manufacturing jobs in Ontario so far this year? Which page of the statement?

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): In the minister's statement, appendix 1, appendix 2, appendix 3, appendix 4, appendix 5, appendix 6—appendix 7 has no reference because that deals with the consultation process.

The facts remain: Employment is up, unemployment is down. We've created 77,000 new jobs this year. It's the government's overall economic policy undoing the damage you and your colleagues did that has allowed for that growth and is ensuring that Ontario is prepared to meet the challenges that are coming at us in the future.

Mr. Tory: The minister couldn't answer my question because there wasn't one single initiative, not a line anywhere, to help the over 42,000 families who have been devastated by these layoffs over the course of the past year.

It was very telling that when I asked the Premier last week about what his government was prepared to do to help these families and these communities experiencing these layoffs, he cited a good-news story about a company in Niagara Falls, only the company he referred to happens to be under criminal investigation for fraud and never opened. So that seems to be the sum total of what the Premier has to say on this.

Minister, on top of the 42,000 families without a paycheque who you seem to ignore, all families in Ontario are being forced to endure paying your McGuinty Liberal government \$2,000 more in taxes, charges and fees. They're working harder and finding it more difficult to get by. Can you point me to one line in your statement of yesterday, one line in this whole book, that gives any relief whatsoever to those people who are working harder and falling farther behind thanks to your taxes and charges?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: Let's talk about the auto sector fund which that government refused to deal with. This government invested \$400 million to protect 19,000 manufacturing jobs and attract 1,800 new manufacturing jobs. Let me refer you to what Mr. Flaherty said about those programs. He said they didn't work. Let me refer you to what your party has said about that. They said they'd never do that sort of thing. We did that. It's in the budget. Read it more carefully. We've protected 18,000 jobs and created another 1,400 in the process. That's a record I'll put up against his record and his government's record any day.

Mr. Tory: I haven't formed a government yet, but I will. Just wait and see.

I take it from that answer that you're just going to stand here in the House today and you're going to read us your old lists again because you have no plan to help the families that have been devastated by these layoffs and you have no plan to help the people you have devastated with your taxes and charges. Worse than that, your own update—what it did show yesterday on page after page: GDP growth down 0.2%, exports down 1.4% since your last budget, retail sales down 0.9%, housing starts down 0.8%, personal income down 0.4%, wages and salaries down 0.7%, job creation down by 28,000 jobs, and the deficit up by \$800 million.

We've heard all of your old lists many times. What are you going to do about these disturbing current trends that are affecting people in this province today?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: That is the best example of Tory math I've heard since Ernie Eves sat in this House. Do you know what he's referring as the rate of growth? The rate of growth is up on all of those items next year. Have a closer look. Exports, GDP growth, retail sales, housing starts, corporate profits, personal income and job creation are all up. Unemployment is down; employment is up. What should be up is up and what should be down is down. We're undoing the mess that that member and his government created in this province throughout the last nine years.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): New question.

Mr. Tory: The rate of unemployment in Ontario was above the national average for several months this year for the first time since World War II. I notice you never mentioned that.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters issued a stark report on manufacturing and the economy in our country. The report says that manufacturers are facing the most dire prospects in a decade, and they blame higher energy costs, the higher dollar and high taxes. Alexandria Moulding in Cornwall added 45 more job losses last month to the more than 1,500 jobs that have disappeared around the Cornwall area in the last 18 months, according to the Cornwall Standard Freeholder; and 180 employees of Satisfied Brake Products were also told that by the end of this month they will have no paycheque.

Minister, why did you fail absolutely, completely and totally to address these 1,500 people who are losing their jobs around Cornwall and the 42,000 people who have lost their jobs across the province of Ontario in manufacturing so far this year? Why did you leave them out of your statement completely?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: In fact, we addressed the same concerns that the manufacturers did in our statement: specifically, the value of the US dollar, energy prices, the state of the US economy. The fact remains that those are challenges. We said that. What I'll say is this: that by investing in education and health care, we will improve the productivity of our economy and create jobs. We will attract new investment: Just like we attracted Toyota to Woodstock; just like the Bruce deal will create 1,500 new jobs; just like the recent GlaxoSmithKline announcement, a \$23-million expansion in Mississauga; just like Koei, a Japanese software entertainment company opening up 200 jobs within three years, 600 new jobs in Cornwall.

This government's policy is on track. It's meeting the challenge of the future, and it's doing it in a way that will ensure prosperity and protect working people from the kinds of situations they found themselves in as a result of the policy of his government—

The Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Tory: High energy costs and high taxes are key factors over which you have direct control. Last week, Bombardier confirmed it will spend \$235 million on a new plant in Mexico. Employees at the Downsview plant here in Toronto were told that their jobs will likely be outsourced. Imperial Tobacco announced last month they were closing their plants in Guelph and Aylmer, laying off 635 employees. Instead, jobs are being created in Mexico. Last month in Hamilton, Rheem Canada announced the closure of its plant. It will be shifting its production to Mexico. One hundred and fifty people will be without work. I hear that the Mexican Chamber of Commerce is giving consideration to you as Man of the Year.

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Why did you fail to outline any specific measures in your economic statement yesterday about the recent loss

of almost 800 jobs in Guelph, Aylmer and Hamilton, possibly more in Downsview, and the 42,000 jobs lost so far this year across this province? Why did you fail to address it?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: Let me remind the Leader of the Opposition that since we took office, there have been 193,000 new jobs in Ontario—77,000 this year alone. For the first time since the 1980s, a new automotive plant in Ontario is coming from Toyota. The list that I read off in my second supplementary about the investments that are happening—their party refused to interact with the investing community and the manufacturers. They repeatedly refused to do that. We've responded. Our actions this year have protected 18,000 jobs, leading to the creation of another 1,800. I'd stack this government's record up against his government's any day.

The economy is growing and the deficit is down. This government is on track and is serving the people well through its economic policies.

Mr. Tory: Again to the Minister of Finance: Your own economic statement pointed to worsening economic conditions in Ontario. Earlier, we recited trend after trend that is down, between your budget and the statement. You completely failed to address the burden that has been placed on hard-working taxpayers across this province, who are working harder and paying your fees.

It's no wonder 42,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost. In Corunna, Ontario, outside of Sarnia, 35 employees at the Glis plant were told that their jobs would be lost. On September 30, in St. Catharines, 212 people lost their jobs when the Ferranti-Packard Transformers plant closed for good. Last month, 89 employees at the Harrowsmith cheese plant outside of Kingston were told their factory was closing. This is the pattern we are seeing across Ontario under the watch of your government.

Why did you fail to outline any specific measures at all in your economic statement to address the job losses in Harrowsmith, St. Catharines, Sarnia, Hamilton and Cornwall, and the 42,000 others across this province? Why did you fail to do that?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: I believe 77,000 net new jobs in Ontario this year is a darned good record, and one that will stand up against—

Applause.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: He may want to put Ontarians down, but we're going to build Ontario up. We're building Ontario up with a \$6.2-billion investment in post-secondary education. That will improve productivity. He himself endorsed our economic plan last March when he said that it may take three or four years to balance the budget. That's what he said. One day he says one thing, another day he says another. The deficit is down; growth is up. Employment is up; unemployment is down. What should be up is up, what should be down is down. We're undoing the mess that your government left us with, and we're doing it well, by eliminating your \$5.5-billion deficit and creating 77,000 net new jobs this year in Ontario.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Acting Premier. The McGuinty government's budget plans for Ontario hospitals should be called the hidden hit list. Despite \$2 billion in new federal money for health care and \$2.4 billion of new money from your regressive and unfair health tax, reports suggest that the McGuinty government will force half of Ontario's underfunded hospitals to cut health services. Acting Premier, will the McGuinty government make your hospital budget plans public today so that ordinary families can see what important hospital services are at risk of being cut?

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): I think the member opposite evinces some confusion. He knows that in fact there has been an enormous investment of some 2.2 billion new dollars into our hospitals under this government. He knows that it stands in stark contrast with the record of his own government. What has happened is an orderly process across the province, where hospitals are working with Ministry of Health staff and local authorities to make sure that they can balance their budgets and meet the tough targets we have to improve health care.

That is being worked out on a community-by-community basis. For the first time, they have multi-year funding, some confidence in terms of projecting forward how they are going to be able to do that, and the hospitals are having to sign accountability agreements to make sure they are able to provide the services and stay within budget.

We would say that this is a reasonable approach. Some 60% of hospitals have already arrived at a successful conclusion; there is more work still to be done.

Mr. Hampton: The Acting Premier says this is an orderly approach. Here is what is facing Bluewater Health in Sarnia. This is what they have been told will be cut: 169 hospital workers and nurses to be laid off, operating room times slashed, palliative care eliminated. I wonder, does that sound like an orderly process to people?

Acting Premier, if you won't make your budget plans public, will the McGuinty government guarantee ordinary families that important hospital services like these will not be cut?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: The leader of the third party's list sounds like the kinds of things that happened under the NDP government. In fact, it sounds like what happened with the \$268-million cut to hospitals that the NDP government engineered. Some 11,000 beds were closed under that government. Those are the kinds of things they did.

In Sarnia, the palliative care unit is open, not surprisingly in contrast to what the member opposite is saying, and we're also opening a hospice unit.

There is an overall approach taken to health care, an approach that is credentialized by the fact that \$2.2 billion more is available to hospitals and being used to im-

prove services in the system. We're not afraid to make improvements; we're not afraid to make changes. We are doing that, working with local communities, and making sure that all of the health services add up to the highest-quality care possible. That will be true in Sarnia, and it is true in all the other—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: It will be a real revelation for the people of Sarnia to find that the McGuinty government calls eliminating palliative care and laying off 169 hospital workers orderly improvement of their health care system.

Here is the reality: Half of the hospitals in Ontario say that unless they get adequate funding from the McGuinty government, they will be forced to cut hospital services. For patients, that means fewer nurses, closed hospital wards, longer waits and reduced emergency services. Is this what you call orderly progress?

If the McGuinty government is determined to keep its hospital hit list secret, if the McGuinty government refuses to guarantee no cuts, would you at least tell people across Ontario what health care services the McGuinty government is telling hospitals to cut first?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: Quite the contrary; what we're saying to hospitals is that they have support to improve services. In fact, we're saying there is a 42% increase in MRI scans—some 116,000 more—an 8% increase in CT scans and a 20% increase in hip and knee surgeries provided by hospitals across this province. You wouldn't know that from what the member opposite is saying. You wouldn't know, as well, that there is a 17% increase in cardiac surgeries, a 16% increase in cataract surgeries and an 11% increase in cancer surgeries taking place in hospitals all across this province. It isn't the picture being portrayed by the member opposite, simply because the picture the member opposite portrays isn't the facts of what is taking place.

Sarnia still has its palliative care open. There are active discussions taking place, trying to find their best solutions for that community. They have already been found in 60% of the hospitals across the province and, for the first year, it's being done under multi-year, certain funding, increased funding—quite a contrast to the conditions the member opposite would remember when he served in cabinet.

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WATER QUALITY

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is to the Acting Premier. The people of Sarnia will be interested to know that you refer to these cuts as making the hospital system better in their community.

I wanted to ask the Acting Premier this: When did the McGuinty government announce a declaration of emergency over the tainted water crisis at Kashechewan First Nation?

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): The McGuinty government made its declaration in this

past week. I'm sorry I don't have the exact date and time here. I will endeavour to get it for the member opposite.

On October 15, Chief Friday announced an emergency, and he received support for that from the provincial government. As you're aware, an agreement arrived at under the NDP government and the federal government gave that authority and responsibility to the provincial government. It was exercised by this government in order to protect the citizens of Kashechewan.

Mr. Hampton: Well, for the record, your government didn't declare a state of emergency until October 25. That's when your minister responsible for aboriginal affairs looked into the camera and said, "We just found this out today." In fact, Chief Friday from Kashechewan First Nation faxed the following band council resolution to Emergency Measures Ontario on October 13. It reads:

"Whereas the Kashechewan First Nation chief and council decided to make a declaration of emergency....

"Whereas the Kashechewan First Nation community does not have any ... source of safe and clean consumable water ...

"Therefore be it resolved that individuals affected by water-related illnesses be medi-vaced out for immediate treatment and that Emergency Management Ontario ... officials be brought in to assess the crisis situation."

He asked you on October 13 for a declaration of emergency. You say you didn't find out about it until the 24th. What happened here, Minister?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: I think the people of Ontario and the people of Kashechewan are well aware that this government didn't dawdle like past governments did, didn't use the jurisdictional excuse, didn't try to slough off what was happening in terms of a real human condition in this particular community. Instead, the Premier of this province made a courageous decision in saying that he wouldn't worry about what was politic, he wouldn't worry about anything but the welfare and the well-being of these particular citizens of Ontario.

They received the respect that they deserve as citizens of this province, and right now, the emergency services commissioner, Fantino, and the Emergency Measures Organization are leading an orderly evacuation, ensuring that there are medical services, first of all, and school services. We're glad to report that children will be in school today and tomorrow, receiving the kinds of things that the Premier and this government decided had to happen. A state of emergency was declared as soon as we were aware that the conditions were met to require that and that the—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: Here is the quote from the 1992 memorandum of understanding. It says, "Ontario agrees to provide emergency assistance to First Nation communities within Ontario ... emergency preparedness will be provided when requested by a First Nation community."

On October 13, Chief Friday sent this very clear fax to Emergency Measures Ontario. On October 15, he sent a

follow-up, a very clear fax, "Declaration of Emergency," to Emergency Measures Ontario. Your minister responsible for aboriginal affairs went on television on October 24 and said, "Oh, we just found out about this now."

Acting Premier, who dropped the ball, Emergency Measures Ontario or the McGuinty government once again?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: Thankfully, no one has dropped the ball. In fact, we're carrying the ball exactly the way it should be carried. We're making sure that things are happening for the citizens of Kashechewan. After a long back-and-forth between the various authorities involved, we did declare a state of emergency. We did enact an evacuation. The citizens have been moved from a state that was hazardous to their health and well-being, and they are receiving the comfort and support that they should.

There's a five-point plan that the federal government has put together to advance them. It was triggered in part, I guess, by the decisions that were made by the provincial government. We accept that that is going to move forward what needs to be done. The state of emergency is what we were asked to do and what we did deliver. There is now a state of, I believe, improving conditions being worked on for those citizens, the way there should be and the way this province is pleased to have helped to facilitate.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, one of the strongest requirements, greatest requirements, for business, industry and people in the province of Ontario is a confidence in the reliability of their electricity supply.

In June 2004, the former minister announced with great fanfare an RFP process for 2,500 megawatts of electricity. In April and May of 2005, he announced the winners: Eastern Power, for 560 megawatts in Mississauga—two plants of 280 each in Mississauga; and St. Clair Power, for 570 megawatts in the Sarnia–Lambton area.

Minister, what is the status of these new plants?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy): Thank you for the question. I'm pleased to be able to respond, as I did yesterday, that as of October 17, 2005, St. Clair township approved the site plan for Calpine's 1,005-megawatt facility.

Mr. Yakabuski: It's apparent that the government's energy policy and their announcements have the shelf life of a quart of milk. You see currently, today, on November 4, the Sarnia plant is under an OMB hearing for rezoning because the township denied access, or a change of zoning, for that.

I did ask about the Mississauga plants but the minister did not touch them. We don't hear about the unannouncements; we only hear about the announcements. The northern power plant was nixed quietly in August, and

the southern power plant is under a great deal of opposition in the community.

I ask the minister again, what is happening with these plants? The people of Ontario need to know where we're going with our electricity policy.

Hon. Mrs. Cansfield: With Inver Energy, they are in the process of looking at two new sites with the township. We're pleased that they're continuing with that. In terms of Greenfield they're going through their EA process, which I know the honourable member supports and believes in.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins—James Bay): My question is for the Acting Premier as follow-up to the question put to you by my leader. I want to know, and more importantly, the people of Kashechewan First Nation want to know, when the band council passed a resolution and faxed the resolution to Emergency Measures Ontario, an agency of this provincial government, why you did not take seriously the declaration that was issued by that community and didn't immediately take action in order to medevac those people out of that community on October 14. Was it because you're uninterested or was it because they happen to be people of the First Nation community?

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): I won't dignify the allegation implied in that comment with a direct response; only to say that there has been a fully respectful response made to Kashechewan First Nation. When our Premier met with the chief and learned of the conditions, when the province became fully apprised of how things were that required the action of the province, this province acted. It acted in favour of the citizens of that reserve; it acted to make sure that positive things would happen for them. It happened in a fashion that I believe is appropriate and that this government believes is appropriate to exercise, notwithstanding other jurisdictional implications. We continue to provide health services. We are providing educational services in tandem with the teachers from Inet. We will continue through our actions—not through rhetoric, not through boisterous intervention after the fact, but rather through our actions—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Bisson: Acting Premier, that just doesn't cut it. The community is frustrated and the community is mad for a good reason. They feel they were not taken seriously. They knew that their citizens were getting sick. They contacted the federal government, which did nothing, and they sent you two faxes saying that they wanted a state of emergency declared in their community on October 14 and 15, and you did nothing. It wasn't until the chief showed up here, along with Grand Chief Stan Louttit, and had to show pictures of sick children that your government took action. I ask you again, why does it take the chief of a community to come down to

Queen's Park and show pictures of sick children to make this government act? And what happened for the first 13 days?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: I say to the member opposite, what does it take to change his tone, when he gets immediate reaction from ministers of this government who accompany him, when he thanks them publicly for what they have done, and then allows his comments to be used and turned around in a political fashion? Last week he said thanks to the province for having acted. This week he is trying to make political capital out of a situation that deserves none. I recognize the member opposite for having acted on behalf of his constituents, but he should recognize what he said last week. This government did the right thing in the right circumstances, and to play around, as he is doing today, is simply to make politics out of a situation that doesn't deserve it.

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CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre): My question is to the Minister of Health Promotion. As anyone in this House who has spent any time with me over the last few days knows, I recently had a baby that I can't stop talking about. Newborn babies are, of course, one of our province's most precious resources, and we have a duty to protect their health. As we speak, the Minister of Health is in Ottawa, the home town of the Minister of Health Promotion, making an important announcement that involves provincial newborn screening programs. I'm wondering if the Minister of Health Promotion can outline to the Legislature the implications of the announcement and its contents.

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion): I want to congratulate the honourable member from Kitchener Centre and Sara, and particularly welcome John Patrick Milloy to this province.

I'm very pleased to report that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is in fact in my home town making an important announcement to create a state-of-the-art provincial screening facility at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario—CHEO. It's a major victory for the health and well-being of young people in this province.

In September, we announced an increase in screening from two to 21 inherited metabolic disorders, the first improvement in screening in 27 years. This government pledged not too long ago that we would go from worst to first when it came to newborn screening in the province of Ontario, and we have delivered on that promise right at the wonderful, world-class Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario.

Mr. Milloy: I want to thank the minister and just tell him in passing that I plan to take advantage of the 15-day, money-back guarantee on the birth certificate.

On a serious note, these tests are very important and will bring peace of mind to a lot of parents and allow doctors to make early diagnoses in order to treat an array of life-altering diseases that might otherwise catch health

professionals and families of newborn children off guard. With so many health concerns related to preventable diseases, I was wondering if the minister could tell us how his ministry is addressing issues that are not revealed in these tests, but are just as important as children grow older.

Hon. Mr. Watson: One of the priorities of our ministry is working with Dr. Sheela Basrur, who just about a year ago put out a very good report called *Healthy Weights, Healthy Lives*. It talked about the challenge facing young people, and children in particular, with respect to obesity. There's been a 300% increase in obesity rates among children in Canada in the last 25 years. For the first time, kids are being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, which can add to some challenges with respect to heart failure and other debilitating diseases. So we're going to be announcing in the next couple of months an action plan to implement recommendations brought forward by Dr. Basrur, because we believe the epidemic of obesity among children is something we have to deal with in short order, quite frankly, because it is going to be an enormous strain on the individual children, but also on the health care system down the road.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): A question to the Minister of Finance: Minister, I'm sure you're aware of the vulnerability of taxpayers in Ontario. In 1997 the average person's loans, mortgage, credit card debt and financial liabilities equalled their entire annual after-tax income, plus an additional 6%. Today, in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, those debts are 124.5% of their income. They are extremely vulnerable to expected interest rate hikes in the oncoming year. That typical working family is also dealing with a big tax increase courtesy of Dalton McGuinty, a big hydro increase courtesy of Dalton McGuinty, higher gas prices and higher home heating prices. Minister, what hope was there in your economic statement to give these working families some sort of break?

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): The hope is that we have a strong economy that has grown in the last year and is going to continue to grow for the next three years. The hope is that unemployment is down. It is down to its lowest level since 2001. The hope is that employment is up, and the other hope is that real incomes are up. Finally, the hope is that this government is investing in post-secondary education, health care and economic infrastructure to undo the damage his government did when it threw away the most prosperous years this province has seen in many years.

Mr. Hudak: Minister, the answers you give—I know you don't have an answer and you resort to political bluster, but quite frankly, there is no solace there, no sense of comfort for working families in the province of Ontario.

I don't need to remind you that when you were energy minister, you increased energy hydro rates by some 28%,

with a big surprise coming in 2006 with another 30% increase in hydro prices. You're presiding over a budget with \$13 billion, awash in revenue since you've taken office—higher taxes, higher hydro, higher user fees and higher gas prices. Working families now have \$2,000 less in their pockets than they did when Dalton McGuinty took office, and on top of that, vulnerability on interest rates. Minister, if you're not going to cut them a break, what kind of advice can you give to working families that are struggling to make ends meet?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: The Tories left a legacy of mismanagement that's second only to the NDP between 1990 and 1995. Some 2,000 megawatts of electricity came offline while they were the government of Ontario, while they were asleep at the switch. We're cleaning up that mess every day. You know what? Expenses went up 21% under that government, while revenues didn't go up anywhere near that, and left us with a \$5.5-billion deficit. That's their record of mismanagement. They ran up a deficit. They starved health care and they starved education. We're reinvesting in those priorities. Our priorities are about education and health care. Unlike your leader, we will not cut \$2.4 billion from the health care system. We believe those investments are crucial to the future productivity of this province and to its future security, economically and socially.

CHEDOKE LONG-TERM-CARE FACILITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): In the absence of the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, I'll direct my question to the Acting Premier. Acting Premier, when your government decided to close the Chedoke complex continuing care centre and not build the long-promised new complex continuing care centre, patients and family members were promised there would be no change to their current fee structure and no additional costs would be levied against them and their families.

That promise has been broken. In addition to the serious concerns patients have over the level of care they're receiving, some are also being gouged as much as \$1,480 per month in residential fees. Will you take immediate action to withdraw these fees and ensure that all medical costs for these patients, including the rooms at their new facilities, remain as they were before the transfers, as promised?

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I think as the member knows, having asked the question before, that the Hamilton hospital officials came up with a plan. They're dealing with a surplus in their community of complex continuing care beds, and making sure that the cases that were at Chedoke, those people, have a place to go to. All the residents got a medical assessment. That assessment was worked out with the individuals and their families. The residents were either transferred to another complex continuing care facility at St. Peter's or St. Joseph's, or to a long-term-care home.

The transfer decision to go to a long-term-care home is voluntary, the decision of the resident and his or her family. Even there, they can change their minds; they're not obliged to do it. They can request a transfer to a complex continuing care unit, the same type of care under the same conditions they had at Chedoke. The member knows this. It is available to those families. That answer stands and is available to those families today.

1510

Ms. Horwath: Unfortunately, the Acting Premier was looking at the wrong briefing note, because I wasn't asking about the facilities in terms of the question I asked the other day. Now I'm asking about the fact that your government promised that they would not face any further fees. I'm going to read to you from a letter that was sent to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. It's a quote from one of these patients' family members:

"For the past 20 years that my husband has been at the Chedoke complex continuing care centre in Hamilton, the province has covered all expenses. What has changed? At one of our meetings of our family association members, when officials spoke to us it was stated that there would be no change in costs—whatever we had at Chedoke would stay the same at any facility."

Will this government fix the horrible situation that exists now and keep its promise to these families and patients that they would not suffer financially from these imposed transfers?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: There is a difference in what is put forward by the selection of the word "forced." These transfers have been offered up as choices, instead, that the families and the patients have. There is a difference, as the member opposite knows, in terms of those who chose to go to long-term-care facilities and those who went to continuing complex care. But I want to make it absolutely clear again. I believe the member is clear on this, but I want to make absolutely sure that the families and people in Ontario know that they are able to stay in complex continuing care where the kinds of fees that may apply in a long-term-care setting, which are then based on ability to pay, do not apply.

There are 13 families who have chosen long-term care and are waiting for placement. It was a choice that they made. If they change their minds, whether it's because of fees or other conditions, they're free to do so, and they will be facilitated into similar complex continuing care to that which they had before.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): My question is to the Minister of Finance. Let me begin by congratulating the minister on his first economic statement, a statement that clearly demonstrates that under the McGuinty government, there's no question that we're heading in the right direction here in Ontario.

While I realize the McGuinty government is doing an extraordinary job cleaning up the Tories' fiscal mess and putting the finances of the province back in order, there's no question that Ontario is facing a number of risks that

are beyond our control. These risks certainly have the potential to impact our economy: oil prices, the value of the Canadian dollar and the US economy all have a big impact. Can the minister outline how he has accounted for these risks in his fiscal plan to ensure that the great work the McGuinty government is doing to bring prosperity to Ontario can continue?

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): The member raised a valid point, and unlike the opposition, he's got his facts straight. It's true: the price of oil has gone up and the value of the Canadian dollar is higher. However, a prudent government makes provisions for these challenges. We have a \$1-billion reserve fund this year; we're increasing that reserve to \$1.5 billion next year. The deficit this year is down \$400 million from where we projected it would be in our spring budget. If we don't have to use the reserve, the deficit will be \$1.4 billion. We are on track to eliminate the deficit by 2008-09, and if we don't have to use the reserve in either of those two years, the deficit will be eliminated by 2007-08.

Mr. Duguid: None of us want to see any Ontarian lose their job. In my riding over the years, I've known some constituents who have experienced the pain of being laid off, and nobody wants to see that happen to anybody. At the same time, it's not a perfect world, and adjustments in the workplace have to be made due to the economy and other things. From time to time, that will lead to layoffs. While, unfortunately, some jobs have been lost, it must also be noted that many others have been created. The opposition is wrongly getting people to believe that there are only job losses and no such thing as job growth. That's simply not true. Can the minister explain, based on his economic update yesterday, what the province can expect in terms of job growth?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: We have created 193,000 net new jobs since we took office. The unemployment rate is currently 6.4%. I also want to add that the working men and women of this province and our small businesses have kicked in to improve Ontario's productivity. Under the Tories, productivity was among the lowest in North America. The gap between Ontario and the US doubled under the Tories. Thanks to our small businesses, thanks to the working men and women of this province, our productivity has improved.

Finally, members opposite may not know this, but Ontario has the second-highest number of manufacturing employees of any jurisdiction in North America, second only to California. And let's look at this: In 2003, the last year of the Tory government, Ontario ranked 16th in terms of overall manufacturing employment; in 2004, our first year of government, we moved up to third. That's a record I'd put up against theirs any day of the week.

NEWBORN SCREENING

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): I have a question I would have ordinarily directed to the Minister of Health Promotion, because he was answering on this earlier, but I'll instead direct it to the—

Interjection.

Mr. Tory: Is he on the precinct, Mr. Speaker? He was here.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Will you stop the clock for a moment and determine if he has just stepped out for a second?

Interjection.

The Speaker: He's not here? New question.

Mr. Tory: I'll direct the question to the Acting Premier. Can the Acting Premier confirm what I'm reading from the Minister of Health's press release from this afternoon concerning newborn screening: that the newborn screening program at CHEO will be in operation by March 2006, with all the tests for the different disorders being performed by the end of 2006? Is that the date on which these new tests, including, in particular, sickle-cell disorder, will be performed under the government's new program?

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): Yes, it is. The answer is yes.

Mr. Tory: In light of that fact, since the minister has confirmed the date is going to be at the end of 2006, I wonder if the minister might commit to this House, right here and now, on behalf of the government in his capacity as Acting Premier, that since there are babies being born today, in particular with sickle-cell anemia and some of these other disorders, who are not being screened in Ontario, and since it's a simple and relatively inexpensive matter to send those test samples out of Ontario, if necessary, to have it done elsewhere, as is done every day in other places, to have this government start now or within a reasonable period of time—to have a quick start, say, in 30 or 60 days—to get that testing going before the end of 2006, so more people aren't exposed to not being screened in the meantime.

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: I'm sure that the people of Ontario need to appreciate the context of the member opposite's question, that this is the first update to newborn screening in 27 years. In fact, Minister Smitherman announced 19 new tests in September, and today he's adding another six, which brings us up to 27, including sickle-cell anemia tests. We're also announcing \$18 million for a state-of-the-art newborn screening facility at CHEO. It will take time; it will be phased in.

What all new parents in the province, like my colleague Mr. Milloy, need to know is that they will be better protected from those foreseeable diseases, those foreseeable calamities, that could overtake their infants than ever before in the province of Ontario. We have in Minister Smitherman someone who has carefully invested both the dollars and the faith of the people of this province into making health care better. Infants will be better protected. We'll be implementing this program as quickly as possible to—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question?

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

I'm going to ask you the same question that I have repeatedly asked you—in fact, on October 25, 2004, on November 3, 2004, and on October 25, 2005—and for which I have yet to receive an answer. The tenants of Ontario want to know—in fact, I think everyone in this House wants to know—about the repeal of the Tenant Protection Act. You promised this would happen within one year of your taking office. You've missed that deadline by 14 months. The tenants are waiting, their advocates are waiting, and, quite simply, we need an answer. Will you stop listening to the landlord advocates and introduce real rent controls that will protect tenants from higher rents, rising eviction rates, poor maintenance and spiralling energy costs?

1520

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I will once again repeat to this member the statement I've made in this House on a number of occasions, and that is that we are still looking at the situation. We did go through an extensive consultation process a year or so ago, as he well knows, and we got an awful lot of valuable information during that period of time. We will be acting on that information and we will be changing the Tenant Protection Act.

But let's also talk about some of the programs that we have initiated since we became the government. The first program we initiated was the rent bank, which helps people who are in rental emergency situations. We started the Toronto pilot project, which made 400 housing units available, through housing allowances, for low-income individuals. We had historic low-rent guidelines introduced for both 2005 and 2006, in the range of 1.5% and 2.1%, which were the lowest on record. We have done a lot, and we will be doing a lot in the future—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Prue: For the fourth occasion in a row now, we have had a non-response. The question that is being asked is, what date are you going to introduce this legislation? Is Carol Goar correct when she assumes that you don't care about the 32% of Ontarians who rent because, as she put it, they don't vote in blocks and they move more often? Is that the reality? Or is your parliamentary assistant right when he says it's not on the agenda for the balance of this year? We want to know, do you have a date that you're going to introduce it? And, if so, what is that date?

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: I can tell the member this, because I know he has an interest in housing, and so do we on this side of the House: For the first time in almost 10 years the government of Ontario has taken a position with respect to the affordable housing program. We decided to match the \$301 million that the federal government put up with \$301 million of provincial monies, to make sure we have an affordable housing program that works. Through that program, we just recently announced 5,000 units of affordable housing through housing allowance programs for low-income individuals and another 5,000 new units that will be built as soon as they

are approved. Presently, the allocations are out across the entire province to the housing service providers.

We are doing something about the situation here in Ontario. We are very pleased to be back in the housing business again, and the people of Ontario will benefit from that. The member will be hearing on the issues that he's talking about very soon.

WORKPLACE SAFETY FOR STUDENTS

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe): My question is for the Minister of Labour. Young people like the ones who join us today in the gallery for Take Our Kids to Work Day are among those at greatest risk for the most severe workplace injuries, which can result in life-long disability or end their lives prematurely. According to the Institute for Work and Health in Ontario, workplace injuries to young and new workers are six times more likely to occur in their first month of employment than at any other time. Further, I understand that last year over 49,000 young workers were injured on the job. That seems like a large number, considering that not all young people are employed. Minister, can you tell our guests today, what is your strategy to protect our young children and kids?

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): We want to thank everybody up in the media gallery for participating in the program today: Jenny Shrewsbury-Gee, Anthony D'Elia, Neville Britto, Natalie Lolua and Joel Mundell, who are still here. We appreciate that they're here. We appreciate that employees have taken part in this as well.

Young worker health and safety should be a priority for every one of us in this room because, quite frankly, in 2004, seven workers under the age of 25 were killed and 49,000 workers under the age of 25 were injured on the job, and that's just not acceptable. There needs to be an onus on every employer in this province to make sure that they have a health and safety strategy in place, that they have a plan there for young workers, because these are our future employees. These are employees who are going to be able to take the skills that we can teach them today in their workplaces and carry that forward.

It's a huge priority for us as a government. It should be a priority for every employer in this province, and we encourage them.

Mr. Ramal: Our young people deserve the best start in life, and that includes a safe workplace. We want Ontarians to remember their first job positively. The initiatives you have listed are important to ensuring that. What information can I share with my constituents, young workers, parents and employers, to help build upon the important work the Ministry of Labour is doing?

Hon. Mr. Peters: There are a couple of great Web sites that we would encourage people to look to: worksmart.ca and youngworker.ca. As well, we're working very closely with the Ministry of Education on the curriculum from grades 9 to 12. We're teaching young workers the importance of health and safety.

We're also moving forward and hiring 200 new inspectors in this province. With these new inspectors, one of the things they are looking at when they go in to visit workplaces is what programs they have in place for orientation, training and supervision. It's extremely important for families in this room who are parents of children working in a workplace. Ask your child about the workplace and any hazards that may exist.

We need to make sure that it gets through to our young people that the Employment Standards Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act apply to them as well. When they begin a new job, they should ask for orientation so that they know they have the ability to say no to unsafe work in their workplace. It's incumbent on all of us: Employees, parents and young people all have a role to play in this.

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington): My question is also for the Minister of Labour. Last Saturday, it was reported in the Stratford Beacon Herald that there was a mid-morning house fire on October 20 in the community of Shakespeare in the riding of Perth–Middlesex, which caused major damage and killed a family pet.

According to the article, the local volunteer fire department had trouble mustering enough firefighters to meet minimum provincial response guidelines and had to ask for help from its Milverton affiliate, 20 minutes away. This emergency occurred while two double-hatter firefighters, who otherwise would have responded to this emergency, were forced to sit at home in Shakespeare with their pagers off because their union recently charged them with the so-called offence of serving as a volunteer firefighter on their time off.

In this same article, the Ontario fire marshal is quoted as saying, "I think there should be legislation," meaning legislation to uphold a double-hatter's right to volunteer. This is a public safety issue, but it's also a labour issue. When will the government demonstrate concern for public safety in rural Ontario, take the fire marshal's advice and—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The question has been asked. The Minister of Labour.

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): On behalf of the government, we express our condolences to the families involved in this situation.

As the government, we recognize and value the hard work and dedication of our firefighters in this province. We realize that fire services in our community are important, including the vital role that volunteer firefighters play. They are vital for the provision of services to many of our smaller communities. Firefighters, fire chiefs and municipalities need to work co-operatively to resolve this issue. We are confident that with that leadership, they're going to do exactly that. The Office of the Fire Marshal is continuing to monitor this situation, to ensure there are no serious threats to public safety.

Again, I remind the honourable member that he had the opportunity, when they were in government, to deal with this issue. We're moving forward on ensuring that open dialogue continues between the municipalities, the fire departments and the fire marshal's office.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): This is a huge problem in the Ottawa Valley. Just outside of the boundaries of the city of Ottawa, we have many volunteer firefighters who also have professional jobs in the city of Ottawa. This was found in the nearby town of Kemptville where they lost four volunteers and a senior captain with 22 years of experience because of this ruling.

The local union says that it really hasn't got a lot of objection to this, but it's the American control over the local fire union which is demanding this. Minister, do you believe that an American union boss should dictate to Canadian professional firefighters what they can do in their spare time?

Hon. Mr. Peters: Unlike what is being proposed right there and what the member from Leeds–Grenville failed to move this issue forward on, we're not about to interfere in a collective bargaining process in this province. I think you said it: We're going down an extremely dangerous path if he's advocating that we start to involve ourselves in collective bargaining. We're advocating to the fire associations in this province that we're not going to interfere in the collective bargaining process. But we remain confident that fire chiefs, volunteer firefighters and professional firefighters in this province are going to continue to work together independently, to continue their dialogue at moving forward to find a co-operative solution to this issue. We've asked the fire marshal's office, through the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, that if there are some serious community issues—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question.

1530

POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth): I have a question for the Acting Premier. In this post-Gomery world, people want politicians to clean up their act, especially when it comes to Liberals these days. Tonight, yet again, the Liberal Party of Ontario will be selling access to the Premier of Ontario for anyone with \$4,000 to spare. You've repeatedly claimed that the public has a right to know in real time who's donating to Ontario's political parties. Will you release today the list of movers and shakers who have coughed up the big bucks to dine with the Premier?

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): To the Minister Responsible for Democratic Renewal.

Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal): I thank the honourable member for my first real question since my new role. It's exactly because of

questions like this and the very perceptions that are out there these last couple of years about all of us, about politicians—we're all painted with the same brush—that this government has begun to take steps to address these perceptions and to win back the trust of the public. As the honourable member knows—she was at the committee hearings—we have introduced Bill 214, which went through clause-by-clause, where any donations of \$100 or more to political parties will be disclosed, after the amendments from the committee, to Elections Ontario after 10 days, and then will be on a Web site 10 days after that. This will address a lot of those questions the honourable member has raised.

PETITIONS

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford): I have a petition for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

“Whereas without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

“Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

“Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

I support the petition and affix my signature.

BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

Mr. Bill Mauro (Thunder Bay–Atikokan): “Whereas we, the visible minority of rural northwestern Ontario within the unorganized townships of Kaministiquia, require our basic inherited right to subdivide our land, along with immediate and continued government funding to ensure our roads and bridges are safe for our daily travels....

“Your immediate intervention is needed. The two bridges crossing the Dog River exemplify our heritage as a logging and farming community. Built by our ancestors, the bridges are a necessity. Our first bridge was replaced in 1977 with an inadequate narrow Bailey bridge with weight and width restrictions. The other bridge is currently closed, and slated for demolition. This

bridge was closed to vehicle traffic in 1985, but was used extensively for pedestrian, snowmobile, ATV, horse and bicycle traffic until March 2005. Now it is closed to all traffic.

“Please help reunite our rural community by allocating sufficient funds to repair the two community bridges to the capacity in which they were intended for, and reunite our rural community.”

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas gasoline prices have continued to increase at alarming rates in recent months; and

“Whereas the high and unstable gas prices across Ontario have caused confusion and unfair hardship to Ontario’s drivers while also impacting the Ontario economy in key sectors such as tourism and transportation;

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

“That the Parliament of Ontario consider an immediate gas price freeze for a temporary period until world oil prices moderate, and

“That the provincial government petition the federal Liberal government to step up to the plate and lower gas prices by removing the GST on gasoline products and fix the federal Competition Act to ensure consumers are protected and that the market operates in a fair and transparent manner.”

I affix my name in full support.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I have here a petition signed by a great many of the good residents of Oxford county, and it is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

“Whereas quality supports are dependent upon the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

“Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

I affix my signature to this petition, as I agree with it.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Petitions? The member for Durham.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. John O’Toole (Durham): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m somewhat disappointed that the member from Waterloo wasn’t recognized there.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas public transit is an important public good for Ontario which must be promoted;

“Whereas increased ridership of the public transit system will result in benefits such as the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the ease of traffic congestion and gridlock;

“Whereas it is important to provide incentives to commuters to choose public transit as an alternative,

“Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: That eligible residents for the taxation year living within the province of Ontario be able to claim on their income tax an expense credit of 50% for all public transit expenses incurred throughout the taxation year.”

This is part of Bill 137, and I’m pleased to endorse it on behalf of many constituents.

HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): I have here 15,000 names.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we, the residents of Sarnia–Lambton and surrounding area:

“Were told a peer review would be done, including both financial and clinical aspects;

“Were told publicly on numerous times that front-line staff would not be affected;

“Were told that the quality of care because of these cuts would not be affected;

“Our community is already listed as having the highest shortage rate for physicians, and our community is now losing a neurologist, an obstetrician, two radiologists and possibly more medical professionals; and

“As a result of cutbacks, our palliative care unit is scheduled to close.

“As patients, doctors, nursing staff and residents, we have voiced concerns to the board, upper administration, Ministry of Health and to the Premier—our concerns have not been heard or dealt with adequately; we are asking for an investigation regarding the spending of dollars at Bluewater Health and for these matters to be reopened as patient lives will be more at risk because of these cuts.”

I hereby affix my signature.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington): This is a petition to the Parliament of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario has an inconsistent policy for access to new cancer treatments while these drugs are under review for funding; and

“Whereas cancer patients taking oral chemotherapy may apply for a section 8 exception under the Ontario drug benefit plan with no such exception policy in place for intravenous cancer drugs administered in hospital; and

“Whereas this is an inequitable, inconsistent and unfair policy, creating two classes of cancer patients” in Ontario “with further inequities on the basis of personal wealth and the willingness of hospitals to risk budgetary deficits to provide new intravenous chemotherapy treatments; and

“Whereas cancer patients have the right to the most effective care recommended by their doctors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to provide immediate access to Velcade and other intravenous chemotherapy while these new cancer drugs are under review and provide a consistent policy for access to new cancer treatments that enables oncologists to apply for exceptions to meet the needs of patients.”

I’ve attached my signature in support, and I’m going to give that to Adam to hand over to the Clerk.

1540

MANDATORY RETIREMENT

Mr. Mario Sergio (York West): I have a petition that is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas existing legislation enforcing mandatory retirement is discriminatory; and

“Whereas it is the basic human right of Ontario citizens over the age of 65 to earn a living and contribute to society; and

“Whereas the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Yukon and the Northwest Territories have also abolished mandatory retirement in various forms; and

“Whereas ending mandatory retirement is a viable means of boosting the Ontario labour force and accommodating the growing need for skilled workers;

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

“The Ontario government should act by abolishing mandatory retirement in the province of Ontario. This is best achieved by passing Bill 211, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code and certain other Acts to end mandatory retirement.”

I’m in full agreement and I will affix my signature to it.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTING STANDARDS

Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

“Whereas Bill 213, Justice Statute Law Amendment Act, 2002, enacted the Limitations Act, 2002, which provides for a reduction in the legal limitation period from six to two years;

“Whereas the two-year limitation period in effect from January 1, 2004, is not long enough for investors seeking restitution after suffering serious financial damages due to the wrongdoing of the financial services industry; and

“Whereas the Attorney General’s position is that the plaintiff investor interests do not need further protection;

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

“That the provincial government immediately pass and implement an amendment to the Limitations Act, 2002, to provide an exemption for claim by victims of financial services industry wrongdoing so that no time limitation period applies to such claims.”

I support and sign the petition.

QUEENSWAY CARLETON HOSPITAL

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): The member from Nepean–Carleton.

Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean–Carleton): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Might I say what a great job you’re doing in your role, Mr. Speaker.

Interjections.

Mr. Baird: I’m trying to be non-partisan for a bit here.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Queensway Carleton Hospital is one of the most efficient hospitals in the country;

“Whereas the Queensway Carleton Hospital’s priority should be providing excellent patient care, not money for Paul Martin’s Liberal government;

“Whereas the number of senior citizens served by the Queensway Carleton Hospital is growing rapidly in the west end of Ottawa and Nepean;

“Whereas the federal Liberal government led by Paul Martin has a surplus potentially as high as \$10 billion;

“Whereas all provincial political parties in Ontario have acknowledged the significant fiscal imbalance;

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

“The Ontario Legislature call upon the federal Liberal government to immediately cancel its plans to dramatically increase the rent for the land now being used by the Queensway Carleton Hospital, and that the hospital be charged only \$1 rent per year.”

I’m very pleased to sign this petition because I am in complete agreement.

HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by a great number of my constituents.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current government has eliminated OHIP coverage for chiropractic services; and

“Whereas the current government has eliminated and reduced OHIP coverage for optometry services; and

“Whereas the current government has eliminated and reduced OHIP coverage for physiotherapy services; and

“Whereas the current government has refused to fund treatment for autistic children even after the courts and human rights commission ruled it should; and

“Whereas the current government has now decided to fund sex change operations even though the Canada Health Act deems it not an essential health service;

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

“That the government of Ontario does not fund sex change operations and reinstates funding for delisted health services.”

I affix my signature to the petition.

ONTARIO FARMERS

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): This petition is entitled, “Farmers Feed Cities’ Day.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the 60,000 farmers in Ontario are the foundation for 10.3% of provincial economic activity; and

“Whereas many citizens do not appreciate the role Ontario farmers play in putting food on their table; and

“Whereas the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is only 0.7% of the Ontario budget, despite Dalton McGuinty’s promise to make OMAF a ‘lead ministry’;

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

“Declare the Saturday prior to Thanksgiving Day as ‘Farmers Feed Cities Day.’”

I see this is signed by John Tory, Richard Blyleven from my riding, and I also sign this petition.

ILLEGAL SIGNS

Mr. John O’Toole (Durham): I’m pleased to present a petition on behalf of the city of Vaughan. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the city of Vaughan has witnessed the proliferation of illegal signs across the municipality; and

“Whereas the city of Vaughan has received numerous complaints from residents concerning the proliferation of illegal signs across the municipality; and

“Whereas the city of Vaughan bylaw department continually wastes time, money and resources in an attempt to stop the proliferation of illegal signs; and

“Whereas the current city of Vaughan sign bylaw limits the extent to which the proliferation of illegal signs can be stopped by prohibiting charges being laid against the party whose name is contained in the sign; and

“Whereas the city of Vaughan is requesting that the province provide the city with more authority and autonomy to address local issues;

“Therefore, be it resolved that the city of Vaughan requests that the province consider strengthening the Municipal Act, RSO 1990, in order to allow municipi-

palities to charge and recoup costs for illegal signs and those names on the sign, rather than the current law, which only permits charges to be laid unless replacement is witnessed by a party thereto.”

I’m pleased to sign this and endorse it on behalf of the municipality of Vaughan.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I have a petition that reads as follows:

“Whereas without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

“Whereas quality supports are dependent upon the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

“Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

I affix my name in full support.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. John O’Toole (Durham): I have a valid petition here that I’d like to present to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas children with autism who have reached the age of six years are no longer being discharged from their preschool autism program; and

“Whereas these children should be getting the best special education possible in the form of applied behaviour analysis (ABA) within the school system; and

“Whereas there are approximately 700 preschool children with autism across Ontario who are required to wait indefinitely for placement in the program, and there are also countless school-age children that are not receiving the support they require in the school system; and

“Whereas this situation has a negative impact on the families, extended families and friends of all of these children; and

“Whereas, as stated on the Web site for the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, ‘IBI can make a significant difference in the life of a child with autism. Its objective is to decrease the frequency of challenging behaviours, build social skills and promote language development’;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fund the treatment of IBI for all

preschool children awaiting services. We also petition the Legislature of Ontario to fund an educational program in the form of ABA in the school system.”

I'm pleased to sign this on behalf of the many families who are trembling under the crushing load of treating their child with autism.

OPPOSITION DAY

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): I move that the Legislative Assembly call upon the government:

To recognize that Ontario's businesses, farmers and hard-working families are being pushed to the financial breaking point by higher electricity prices, higher fuel prices and increased taxes; and

To recognize that the McGuinty Liberal government has presided over 42,000 manufacturing job losses in the past year alone, causing serious financial hardship for families and communities province-wide; and

To recognize that the current government's fiscal and energy policies are placing increased financial pressure on large and small job-creating businesses, creating an uncertain investment climate; and

To keep its promise to “balance the budget, keep taxes down, manage prudently, and invest in higher productivity and better quality of life.”

1550

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Debate. The leader of the official opposition.

Mr. Tory: We in this party have been trying to raise these matters during question period without any success at all in terms of getting an ounce, a line or a word of compassion or recognition from this government. It isn't just in question period. As we pointed out today during question period, when they had an opportunity yesterday to present an economic statement to the people of Ontario, there wasn't a line in here, not a letter that addressed the fate that is being experienced by an awful lot of people across this province, namely, the loss of manufacturing jobs, the impact it's having on communities across the province and the crushing load that people are having to bear in terms of the increased taxes and charges they are experiencing at the hands of this McGuinty Liberal government.

Again, we would argue that ignoring the problem, kind of saying, “Don't worry. Be happy,” not saying a word of empathy or compassion, not offering a single line of solution, is not going to make this problem go away, because the facts are the facts: 42,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in this province so far this year. For five months this year, the unemployment rate in Ontario has been above the national average, for the first time since World War II, and the average family is paying, as we speak, \$2,000 each in increased taxes, costs and other fees imposed on the watch of this government.

It's communities across the province. We talked about a number of them today and we talked about a number of them last week. We have Guelph and Aylmer, where Imperial Tobacco has announced the termination of 635 jobs, and the local Liberal member, Ms. Sandals, said, “It will cause disruption in the lives of those that will be laid off, but it does prove that government legislation is working.” Quite a statement indeed and, as far as we can tell, represents the policy and the views of the government, because not a word has been said to add to that, to take away from that or however the case may be, since those words were spoken just a few days ago.

In Windsor and St. Catharines, the Big Three auto companies have indicated they're going to be terminating 2,600 jobs across the province among auto workers. In Chesterville, Nestlé, which I believe has been in operation there since 1918, 300 jobs to be lost; Niagara Falls, ConAgra, 240 jobs to be lost; Sears, Toronto, 800 jobs to be lost; in Collingwood, Simcoe-Grey, 420 jobs announced to be at risk because of the energy crisis, concurred in, announced and implemented by this government; Backyard Products, 230 jobs lost; Blue Mountain Pottery, 37 jobs lost; Nacan Products, 87 jobs lost; Kaufman Furniture, 150 jobs lost.

What did we ask this government to do as a starter? The member for Simcoe-Grey and the local officials there asked if it would be possible that the Premier of this province, in light of these hundreds and hundreds of jobs in Simcoe-Grey and Collingwood, might agree to hold a round table. It wasn't to have a big, multi-million-dollar program. It wasn't to guarantee all the jobs would be saved. Could the Premier just spend a little bit of his time coming to have a discussion with the local people, the local member and some of the people up there about this? What we got back when I asked the Premier if he'd be willing to have that discussion was the usual old rehash of talking points from a briefing book that had nothing to do with the hardship and the heartache being faced by these people, these families and these communities losing those jobs.

It gets no better when it comes to the farmers of Ontario. We ask questions about the farmers and all we get back, again, is the same rehash from the briefing book. The farmers were in my office two days ago. The stuff that's in the briefing book they have clearly declared is not good enough, just like the forestry industry. It is not helping them. Most of it is not new and most of it is not helping. As a result, those people are saying, “It is not helping me, it is not helping my family,” and it is not helping the communities in which those people live. I represent some of those communities, and the businesses in those towns are hurting because of the fact that this government has completely, absolutely and utterly turned its back, not only on the manufacturing economy, not only on Ontario families who are paying \$2,000 more each in McGuinty Liberal charges, taxes and fees, but also completely and absolutely on rural Ontario and on the farm economy in this province.

Ontario needs jobs. Jobs are the lifeblood of every single community in this province, especially a city as

big as Toronto, but also just as importantly the smallest town in Ontario. It is those jobs that allow new Canadians to pursue their dreams and opportunities when they come here. It is those jobs that allow parents to save for their children's education. It is those jobs that allow young Ontarians to build a life close to home. It's also those jobs that provide the money that this government spends so freely that is needed for health care, education and programs to help kids and families in some of the neighbourhoods that have had a tough problem with crime this year and before.

If you look at what would be produced by one percentage point more in growth—or, put another way, if you could stop some of those jobs from being lost in Ontario through the actions, policies and regulations of this government—just one percentage point more in growth would produce \$615 million in government revenues in the first year. That number grows as you go into the out year, so you would have that money available for purposes of health care and other services.

The 42,000 manufacturing jobs, about which we can't get a word of acknowledgement or interest out of this government, by themselves would, and do, produce approximately \$100 million in government revenues. So the government will lose that revenue when those people lose their jobs.

I think it's actually more important and more worthy of discussion that the people lose their jobs and end up without the dignity—the necessities and the support that they can provide to their families—of having a job. But it shouldn't be going without comment that the government loses \$100 million that is not available to finance health care, education and programs for kids and families, and so on.

Doug Porter, senior economist at BMO Nesbitt Burns: "I think we could start to see the impact really soon—as early as the fourth quarter of this year.... As the negatives keep stacking up for the province, we will see growth weaken ... and begin to dig into the province's revenues."

I'm not standing up and quoting this man because I hope that will happen or because I take pleasure in seeing it happen. I am standing up and talking about it because the people of Ontario want to have hope. They want to know there's an opportunity, and they want to know that the government is going to be there for them in their corner when their town is hard hit by a layoff, when their families are hard hit by a layoff, or when they are being crushed under the burden of taxes and charges they're having to pay to these McGuinty Liberals when they're getting 1.5% or 2% at work and finding the load imposed by this McGuinty Liberal government is so much higher.

If the revenues start to go down—to speak to the other point I was mentioning a moment ago—what happens next? Which promises get broken next? These people are up to 50 broken promises now. It's got to be a world record; it's absolutely got to be a world record. As the revenues of the government start to go down, as we lose jobs, what happens next? Which promise is the next to go? The consistent pattern of this government and Mr.

McGuinty, I would argue, is to break the promises, refuse responsibility or accountability for ever having made the promises, and then have no accountability and leave the taxpayer, quite frankly, holding the bill and without whatever it was they were promised they would have when it came time to vote in the last election.

The tax promise has been broken. The deficit and financial management promise has been broken. The police officer and nursing promises are so far from being kept that it's almost an impossibility that they will be kept. They're dragging them out to the last minute, if indeed they're kept at all. We've seen no real sense of accountability on the part of this government that indicates it wants to be held responsible for the actions of its own minister, including the most recent fiasco of the Minister of Finance of this province, the man in charge of economic policy, of empathy, of doing something, of managing the provincial finances. We see what he did when he was given the chance on the public trust, on the public money, to go over to Europe.

It's interesting: It's not really an option to conduct yourself this way when you're in private life. If you're an individual family, you don't have the option, when the bank calls to say your credit cards are maxed out, just to say, "Well, I'm going to appoint a committee to look into it and we'll get back to you in a year." You don't have the option if you're in business and you've got a problem, and your bank manager calls and says they're calling the loan, to say, "We're going to have a royal commission and we'll get back to you," and perhaps you could have a lawyer come down and make some submissions.

When businesses are losing money, they don't have the option of shaking down their shareholders for the money to solve the problem, and that's all these people know how to do: When there's a problem, shake the shareholders down; shake the citizens and taxpayers of Ontario down. They don't have anything more to be shaken up for. They don't have anything left. They're falling further behind, the harder they work.

1600

You need to be accountable. Only government—especially this government—can afford to ignore that principle.

We hear it over and over again: Taxpayers who are getting the 1% or 2% at work are facing electricity prices that are up close to double digits. Eye exams: They have to pay for them now; they didn't before. Chiropractic services: They have to completely pay for them now; they didn't before. The health tax: They have to pay that and were promised they wouldn't have to. Home heating costs are up, gasoline prices are up and so forth.

Take it from Gavin Graham, director of investments at Guardian Group, when he was talking this way about home heating: "This even before the real hit, which is going to be your heating bill, with a 60% increase estimated on the way for winter.... Unlike, 'No let's not go to Wal-Mart this week or let's not go for the drive in the country,' heating your house in February is not some-

thing about which you have a choice.” The point he’s making is that people are already saying, “Let’s not go out to the restaurant,” or “Let’s not go to Wal-Mart,” and that too is having its impact.

You saw in the minister’s economic statement that all those indicators are down from the beginning of this year, when we saw the budget. They’re saying that they’re expecting less activity in the economy than we were going to see before. With the heating prices coming on, the gas prices still being as they are, the hydro prices, the health tax, the eye examinations, the chiropractic examinations, the property taxes and everything else directly attributable to the policies of this government, people can’t take any more. They’re paying \$2,000 more in taxes and charges courtesy of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal Party.

Consumer confidence: down seven points in August and another six in September. Only these guys, only this Minister of Finance and this Premier, would have the gall to stand up and say, “That’s got to be an indication that things are really going well. Boy, the results are great. Things are just super for the people,” and consumer confidence is down 15 points in two months.

Charles Feaver, vice-president of research at Investors Group: “More consumers say they are worse off now than a year ago—a logical consequence of rising oil and gasoline prices.”

Retail trade: down 1.2% last quarter.

Gavin Graham, again: “If it’s a major purchase such as a car, or should you buy that house or that consumer durable, or maybe even, should we go out for a meal—at the least maybe you will trade down, maybe eat more cheaply—not do that additional spending.”

We don’t hope that happens, but if these people don’t do something soon to help these taxpayers who are too hard pressed and to help these people who are losing their jobs and these communities that are affected by the loss of those jobs, that is what is going to happen. I’m not hoping it’s going to be so; I am predicting it will be so if they don’t take some action and indicate some caring and some empathy about this.

It is time for action. The last thing this Minister of Finance and this Premier should have been standing up and doing in this House when they did the last couple of days—the Premier the day before and Mr. Duncan yesterday—was to get up to boast and brag, and not demonstrate a word of caring or concern about what’s going on in this province and how hard pressed these taxpayers are and how hard hit these communities are.

People need someone to speak up for them. They think and hope that their government is going to do that. In the case of this McGuinty Liberal government, especially Premier McGuinty, the biggest buck passer of all times, and especially Mr. Duncan, the biggest boaster of all times, when it comes to coming in here and talking about the economy, they’re being let down. They can’t hire a lobbyist. They don’t have time, when they’re unemployed or working so hard at two jobs to try and keep up, to come down here and demonstrate. They expect their gov-

ernment, especially a majority government sitting over there with all the power in the world to do whatever they want, to speak up for them, and it’s not happening.

Those families are falling further and further behind and they need our help. They need the help and the attention of Mr. McGuinty, Mr. Duncan and this government, who have absolutely failed to step forward to help them at all.

I would only say to you that we are there for them. That is why we have moved this motion, that is why I am proud to move this motion and to have this discussion in this House today about these people and the challenges they face, because no one on the government side of the House, I say with respect and with regret, is speaking up for them. We are going to do it; we’re going to continue to do it. This will not be the last day; it will be the first day of many more.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce): It certainly is my privilege to rise today to speak to the motion that has been put forward by the official opposition. One of the things I’d like to start with is what the leader of the official opposition started with, that he has no success at question period. You would have to ask yourself, why is he not having success at question period? Could it be that the questions aren’t relevant? Could it be the style in which one asks the questions? It could be all of those things. So one has to wonder, when one puts a motion forward, when we are here to speak about what this means to the people of Ontario, why the member who brought that forward then talks about why he doesn’t have success at question period. I do just want to add that.

Then we go on to say that part of the conversation that happened was how the McGuinty government has turned their back on rural Ontario. I must say that I’m very pleased that the member has found out where rural Ontario is. I’m so pleased and so happy that he has found us. I’m sure that he didn’t even know where we were. But we know where we are, and we know what you’ve done in the past, what the Harris-Eves government did to rural communities. For a member of that previous government to stand up and talk about what we have done for our rural communities—I’m absolutely taken aback. You ripped the heart out of our rural communities. You did not take into consideration at any time the difference between urban and rural. So when I see him come forward and say that he’s found rural communities, we’re absolutely delighted to be found, but we know where we are. We know that we have a part in the McGuinty government, that the McGuinty government has come to the table, and we recognize the respect for our communities that he brings to the table.

One of the things that I want to talk about is energy costs. It would behoove me to bring forward what has happened in the past. Between 1995 and 2003, the energy capacity under the previous government—and you’ll find these numbers fascinating—fell by 6%; the demand grew by 8.5%. You talk about the shareholders, who are the

people of Ontario. The energy flip-flop that happened with Ernie Eves—

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): Flip-flop.

Mrs. Mitchell: Yes. Then, when he kept changing his mind when deregulation was imposed—he pulled back and a cap was put in place—that cost Ontario taxpayers \$1 billion. So when we talk about what's appropriate behaviour for the shareholders of the province of Ontario, it certainly strikes me as passing strange that that member would bring it forward. Ernie Eves flip-flopped 11 times on selling Hydro One. That's got to be a record. We talk about complete mismanagement. I have said it; it's here. That is on the record.

One of the things that I do want to talk about is what we have done with energy. As many of the members know, I come from the riding of Huron–Bruce. Our government has made a tremendous difference in the riding of Huron–Bruce: 1,500 jobs in my riding. Do you know what this means to my riding? We have been besieged by BSE, low commodity prices—1,500 jobs in construction; 1,000 new permanent jobs. I can tell you that our riding believes the McGuinty government has made a commitment to the industry and is filling the gap in the capacity that is required.

But it's also about the turbines. When the cap was placed by the previous government, you would laud yourselves as being the great representatives of rural communities. We'll get on to what happened with agriculture. But I just want to talk about what happened amongst the agricultural community when that cap was imposed. That stopped the renewables from moving forward. The agricultural community was ready. They were excited. They saw themselves being a part of the energy capacity providers in the province of Ontario. When that cap was imposed, that door was slammed shut.

1610

We move forward, and have made over \$1 million in commitment to anaerobic digestion with Lynn Cattle, and the wind turbines are going up. We in rural Ontario support these initiatives. We know how important they are. We talk about when you need to diversify your income. The agricultural community sees this as a way of strengthening our rural community. So it was what we felt was a very regressive move. And then, for it to have cost us \$1 billion, not only was it regressive but a \$1-billion price tag—probably to the member, the leader of the official opposition, with \$1 billion now we are starting to talk about real change, but where I come from, \$1 billion is something the people from my riding won't see. They understand the value of a dollar. They understand how hard you have to work to make a dollar and save a dollar.

I know it's difficult, when you only talk about shareholders, to understand that, but we talk about an additional \$400 million added to protect manufacturing, 77,000 new net jobs, the unemployment rate at 6.4% in June—that is the lowest since 2001—and retail sales up 4.8%. We're ahead of last year. Ontario car sales jumped 10.2%. Ontario businesses plan to increase spending on

machinery and equipment. That's what working families are talking about. They're talking about what we're providing. We're investing in the people of Ontario. We understand that. We talk about, what do the people of Ontario want? They want better health care. They want better education. The future is in our young people. Clearly that is what we have heard. We are investing in the people of Ontario.

With the McGuinty government, we know the strength is with the Ontario people. Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition doesn't seem to clearly understand that we know it's there. They're waiting for us to come forward. We look forward to moving this province forward. We have the plan in place. We're ready, and we will move forward.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton): It's disappointing that over the past two years we've had a tremendous opportunity in this province, and this opportunity has been lost. In the last two years we've had strong growth left over from the growth our government created in this province when we produced a million new jobs. For that future, we could have built toward a stronger future, but this government didn't do that. In fact, they did exactly the opposite: They increased taxes—they increased taxes on small business; they increased taxes on large business.

When you take away dollars from a business, large or small, it reduces their ability to reinvest in their plant, and that's exactly what happened. Last month we saw Canada drop from number three in productivity as measured by the OECD. In 2003 we were number three in the world; today, in 2005, we are number 12 in the world after two years of this government, on their watch. These are national figures: Ontario has about half of manufacturing jobs. That tax hike they brought in in their first budget in the spring of 2004 set in motion the downward spiral and resulted in 42,000 lost manufacturing jobs.

Now you have this unexpected surplus of revenue that appeared this fall. If your plan for Ontario was any good, your estimates for revenue would be much stronger and much better. In fact, if you had accurate estimates of what your revenue might be, as it turned out, you may not have needed that tax increase you put through. You wouldn't have had to kill off 42,000 jobs in Ontario. Ontario would be in better financial shape to withstand the coming economic downturn if you hadn't introduced those huge, massive tax increases that killed jobs in this province. Your government would have had even more revenue to pay for the important services of health care and of education in Ontario. You may even have been able to implement the 1,000 new police officers that you promised in this province—we haven't seen one police officer yet. And you may have been able to implement source water protection in the environment. Yes, probably you could even have bought more napkins, done more planning and had better plans and more of them if you hadn't introduced that massive tax.

But because you had no plan, or at least you had one that you hadn't thought through, we now stand on the

edge. Your flexibility has disappeared at the worst time. Interest rates are rising, housing starts are down and auto sales in the United States hit a seven-month low. As the new models are being introduced, they should be growing, not receding.

As we enter an economic downturn, the idea is to be the last in and the first out. Our opportunity to achieve this goal, being the last in and the first out, was squandered by two years of wandering by this government, going through two, three, four different economic plans; none of them thought through, none of them planned very well. The result is a litany of plant closures, 42,000 lost manufacturing jobs and disaster and dislocation to many Ontario families.

Your member from Guelph thinks your plan is working. Well, I can tell you, I don't think it's working. Many Ontarians would not agree with her. It's time for a napkin, time for a new plan; soon it will be time for a new government.

Mr. Bisson: I'm so glad to participate in this motion today because it gives me a chance to raise an issue that is important not only to the people of Timmins-James Bay but to people across this province, and that is what's happening in the forestry sector. Mr. Speaker, you've heard not only myself but my colleague Howard Hampton and others in this Legislature raise this issue time and time again, and we're going to keep on raising it until the government figures out that they have a problem on their hands that they've got to deal with.

Just yesterday, the Ontario Forest Industries Association, along with the municipalities of northwestern Ontario, came to visit us here at Queen's Park. As far as I know, they met all of the three caucuses. I know they met with us, I know they met with the Conservatives; I have to believe they met with the Liberals. They were very clear. They said, "We have a made-in-Ontario problem." The forestry industry in Ontario, when it comes to being competitive with other jurisdictions, is having a really big problem. Why? Fibre costs, as far as transporting fibre into the mills, are much more expensive in Ontario than anywhere else—as a result of government policy, as they put it.

The big kicker is electricity prices. They were pointing out, for example, that a paper mill operating in Kenora or Kapuskasing will operate at an electricity cost of about \$2.2 million to \$2.5 million per month. That is what they pay in electricity. If you operate that same mill in Manitoba, it's \$800,000 to \$900,000. They're saying they just can't afford those kinds of high costs in this province to be able to operate and stay in business and do what they need to do to remain competitive within the world market for paper and other products.

They have come to Queen's Park to be very clear. They want the government to move on a number of key issues. They say, "You can throw money at this, and it ain't going to fix the problem." Yes, last September the government announced a package and that package said, "If you want to go out and borrow money, the province of Ontario will guarantee your loan and will help you

secure financing to do whatever it is you need to do in your plant." Well, the problem with that is the following: These mills don't need that investment at this point, quite frankly. The message is that these are the most competitive, the most modern mills in North America. Go into Kapuskasing, Red Rock, Kenora and Thunder Bay, walk into all of these mills—either saw mills, paper mills or kraft mills—and you will find that the technology in Ontario is second to none. So they're saying, "Listen, we don't need government to tell us to invest in our mills. We don't need government to help us invest in our mills. That's not the issue. We understand that we have to be competitive. The way you do that is by being up on technology and making sure you use the latest technologies to be as efficient as possible when it comes to running your mill." They're saying, "Thanks a lot for the package you announced in September, much appreciated, but it won't do a heck of beans, because that's not our problem. What we need you to do is to deal with electricity prices."

1620

Now, they asked us the question in the meeting we were at yesterday: "Why is it that the government won't come off of the position they've taken on electricity?" I think, quite simply, the government have put themselves in a box, and they don't know how to get out of it. It's as simple as that.

The government didn't have, in opposition, a plan when it came to electricity. They basically criticized the Conservatives for having moved toward privatization and deregulation. They stood in the opposition benches, along with New Democrats, in condemning the Conservative government for having moved in that direction, and then basically got elected, realized they didn't have a plan, didn't know how to deal with the issue, so adopted the Conservative plan of hydro privatization and deregulation.

They've put themselves in a box. So where do they go from there? Do they all of a sudden admit that they were wrong and try to undo the box? Trying to undo the box would be difficult. I'm the first one to admit it.

Interjection.

Mr. Bisson: Well, that's exactly where I'm going. Because the government won't admit they're wrong, they're going to end up basically putting down the forestry industry to the point that we figure about 12 to 15 mills will probably go down in northern Ontario.

So I say to the government—

Interjection.

Mr. Bisson: I'm going to take half of the time.

Interjection: Half?

Mr. Bisson: Yes, half of our time.

Very good. I always want to be helpful to my friends in the Conservative caucus in letting them know how much time I will be taking.

I want to say to the government, you need to get out of the box you've created for yourself on electricity prices. If you get out of that box, you have a chance, and there are a couple of things that we suggest you're able to do that would help you deal with your electricity costs.

One of those things, for example, is that if you take a look—and Howard Hampton has pointed this out a number of times, and many people in the industry are agreeing with him and saying, “Why is it you can operate a pulp and paper mill somewhere in northern Ontario that’s maybe five, 10, 15 or 20 miles from a power generation facility on a river, and it costs about four cents or 4.5 cents per kilowatt to generate the power, and we’re having to pay as much as 11 cents?” They’re saying, “Why don’t we have a policy where we make that electricity available to that industry in recognition of the fact that they are the industry that uses the most electricity, other than smelters and the mining industry, and have a system of electricity that is based on the reality of Ontario, basically recognizing that?”

Now, the government will argue—and I’ve watched this argument, where they say, “Oh, well, we have a pool price of electricity in Ontario, and we can’t move off the pool price issue.” For those people who are wondering what that means, “pool price” means to say what you pay in Kenora is what you pay in Cornwall. Well, that isn’t the case, and I think people need to recognize there is a two-tier system of electricity pricing, depending on where you are.

I’ll give you an example: If this apartment building or office high-rise in the city of Toronto clicks on all of the air conditioners in the summer or cranks up the electric heat in the winter, and all the windows are left open, they’re going to pay virtually the same price for electricity no matter how much they utilize because of the amount of electricity they use in comparison to other places. But if a paper mill in northern Ontario that runs a thermal mechanical pulping system uses electricity in the way that they do, they don’t just pay for base-load power price at 11.5 cents per kilowatt hour. They pay for demand peak-load price based on what the demand is in other places.

So here’s the scenario: It’s a hot, humid, muggy day in downtown Toronto. Everybody turns on their air conditioner. Electricity load is basically drawn from the power lines from our hydroelectric plants, our cogeneration stations, our coal-fired plants and our nuclear stations, and that electricity is being drawn in to where people have their air conditioners on. What happens is that in northern Ontario, for mining and people in the forestry sector, they end up having to pay what’s called peak-load price.

For example, two weeks ago in Kapuskasing, they were paying \$2,000 per megawatt hour to operate their mill. They can’t operate at that price, so they shut it down and waited until the electricity price went back down again. So we don’t have a pool price.

I can draw as much electricity as I want in the city of Toronto in a high-rise and pay the base-load price, but if I operate a paper mill in Kapuskasing, Ontario, or in Red Rock, and all of a sudden there’s a huge demand for electricity in southern Ontario, I’ve got to pay for what is called peak-load price when it comes to purchasing hydro.

There is no pool price for electricity, so why not have a policy that says, “Let’s recognize that not all hydro utility customers are the same”? You have the residential sector, you have the business sector and you have other sectors like forestry and mining that use large amounts of electricity, not because they waste the power but because the process they’re involved in utilizes a heavy amount of electricity. We need to recognize that there needs to be a special price for that particular industry.

That’s something you see in the private sector. I’ll give you a good example: Wal-Mart says, “Listen, I’m going to buy a million of your products to be sold in my stores across North America.” They get a better price than if I buy five of them and try to sell them out of my mom-and-pop store in downtown Timmins. That principle is recognized everywhere else: Those who use the most get a better price based on how much they use. There’s an opportunity for this government to take a look at that as one possible solution.

The other one is that you need to move off of this concept that we need to privatize and deregulate the electricity sector. It hasn’t worked anywhere else: Why are we doing that in Ontario? We’re driving a death nail into a number of industries, specifically in the north, but at the end of the day it will affect all of this province.

I want to repeat what Jamie Lim said, who is the president of the Ontario Forest Industries Association, words that need to be listened to. Think about it. “If one of these companies goes down, the purchasing power they have in supplying their material needs, their technical needs, the financial needs of those companies are services that are taken, by and large, from southern Ontario. We’ve looked at some of the figures in one company’s case alone. If they were to shut down, \$250 million worth of purchasing would disappear from the city of Toronto.” That’s a lot of money; that’s a lot of jobs. It’s not just about a mill in Kapuskasing, Red Rock or Kenora; it’s about the entire economy of northern Ontario, and Ontario in general. The forestry sector is the second-largest industry in Ontario. Imagine if we had this problem in the auto sector: We’d be running in spades to try to figure out a solution. It’s beyond me why both the federal and provincial governments don’t respond to the degree that they need to in order to fix this problem.

That brings me to another issue that the OFIA has raised, which is a good idea that I hope will not fall on deaf ears with the federal government. I do know that the OFIA, the Ontario Forest Industries Association, met with the NDP caucus federally, with Jack Layton and my colleague Charlie Angus. I believe it was last night. What they were talking to them about, and will be talking to the government members about as well, is this concept of putting together a loan program. It would be like a pool of dollars that industry is able to draw on when they’re exporting lumber into the United States, because we all know that Canada has won the appeal on NAFTA when it comes to the CSV. But still the Americans refuse to relent in charging the 24% tax when our exports, their imports, go into the American market. The industry is

saying, "Have the federal government set up a fund. Those who are cash-strapped and need to do this would be able to recoup the 24% or 22%, depending on your case, from this federal fund, and they would continue to operate."

It would send a very strong message to the Americans: "You can do what the heck you want. At the end of the day, we will stand squarely behind our industry." What it will do at one point is to force the Americans to settle with the Canadian government, and when the Canadians recover the money that the Americans have taken that is rightfully ours, the Canadian government can repay itself. It is a way that we're able to assist the industry by making available to them the dollars they are losing on CSV, and being in a position to stabilize the industry so that they can start breathing again and do what they need to do to operate their plants wherever they might be in Ontario. It is not strictly northern Ontario, as you know; we have a number of plants in the south as well. I say to our friends in the Liberal caucus on the provincial side that you should be talking to your federal colleagues and looking at the whole issue of trying to get some support from the federal Liberal caucus in Ottawa to respond to this.

I can tell you that federal New Democrats Jack Layton, Charlie Angus and others have supported this initiative, and it's something that we support on the provincial side. I think all three parties support the idea, and we should do what we can in order to get the feds to recover.

1630

I also want to talk about the economy from the perspective of the First Nations communities of James Bay, NAN, Treaty 3 and others. One of the things we really need to turn our attention to is finding a way to engage the province and the federal government in working in partnership with our First Nations brothers and sisters so that they're able to participate in the economy of Ontario. The crisis that we see in Kashechewan today: I think we can all recognize that the social infrastructure lacking in those communities, basically caused by the lack of economic opportunity, is part of the problem.

What we need to do is to engage ourselves in thinking outside of the box, so that we can find ways of being able to assist First Nations to develop their own economies. There are some quite simple ways of doing that right now. For example, all of us have heard about the community of Attawapiskat. Attawapiskat will be the host community of the first diamond mine in Ontario history. De Beers are going to be spending \$1 billion over the next couple of years to develop this diamond mine.

Let me tell you—I'm out of the mining industry—nobody spends \$1 billion unless they know there's more than \$1 billion to be gotten out of the ground, so we know this is a rich deposit. It will probably outlive just De Beers. I would imagine that there are diamond pipes in the area that are as good as what they found in the De Beers Victor Project.

What we need to do is not do what federal and provincial governments have done up to now, which is to

basically say to First Nations, "Go and negotiate for yourselves a benefit impact agreement with De Beers." What we need to do is engage ourselves in working with De Beers and the First Nations and say what role the federal and provincial governments can play to assist the First Nations communities to benefit from these projects.

For example, in the community of Attawapiskat they're going to need electricians at that mine. They're going to need mechanics, millwrights, miners, all kinds of skilled tradespeople, technologists etc. to construct and run that mine. Part of the problem, if you look across James Bay within our particular communities, is that there isn't the kind of capacity when it comes to people able to do those jobs to the degree that we need. Sure, we have some electricians, some mechanics, but by and large we don't have enough to supply the needs of that mine.

We've known this mine is coming for a while. We know it's going to be in production in about three or four years. Why don't we as a province, the one that's responsible for training, partner with De Beers in Attawapiskat and say, "We will work with you to develop training specific to First Nations to assist in giving people the opportunity to do what needs to be done to get ready for whatever training is needed to do that job"?

Some of that is happening individually through organizations like Northern College. Northern College has a program where they're doing pre-apprenticeship training for people who want to go into the electrical trade. Why do I know that? My own brother-in-law, George Beauchamp, is actually teaching that particular program, and I've gone in to speak to his class. These are First Nations people from the Fort Albany-Kashechewan-Attawapiskat area who are interested in becoming electrical apprentices so that when the mine starts up, they will have what is necessary as the basis to be hired as apprentices, get jobs inside that company and eventually become journeyman electricians.

We could follow on the lead of Northern College and not say, "Northern College, you're on your own." Thank God for Michael Hill and his staff at Northern College, who are doing this and are proactive in our northern communities. They're really demonstrating what a community college is all about. But we need the support of our provincial government to say that we have a provincial strategy to assist our colleges—Collège Boréal, Northern College, l'Université de Hearst, Laurentian University or Canadore—to do what needs to be done to put in place the mechanisms and training programs to help qualify people for the types of jobs they are going to need when that mine runs in three years.

If we don't do that, here's what is going to happen. There's going to be a mine opening three years from now, and you're going to see an ad in the papers across Ontario, saying, "Needed: 25 electricians. Apply: Victor Project, Attawapiskat, Ontario." And 25 people from somewhere outside Attawapiskat will work as electricians on that project. What does that do for the community of Attawapiskat? It doesn't lower their unemployment rate; it doesn't give people dollars in their pockets so that

they then can have that money circulate inside their local economies. It does nothing. So we need to be proactive as a provincial government in assisting that to happen.

Other things that we need to do: We need to put in place resource management protocols in northern Ontario so that when we go on to traditional lands north of 51 and in other places, there are clear rules about what has to be done on the part of those who are proponents of exploration or development of new projects and whatever it might be—forestry, mining; you name it—so that there are protocols about what you are supposed to do as the entrepreneur and what your obligations are toward the First Nation when it comes to helping develop that project. I think that's something the province can do that would be very beneficial and would outlast all of us in this Legislature as a legacy to the First Nations, so that 25 years from now we end up—

Interjection.

Mr. Bisson: Really? I didn't expect you to say that. I have a little note from my friend, saying, "Take as much time as you need." I would say, "You know me: I'll take it all." I better not do that.

We would be able to have a legacy 25 years from now so that people would be able to say that back in 2005 the Ontario Legislature put in place resource management protocols that have led to employment in those communities. I guarantee you that 25 years from now, if you go into those communities, you won't see the Kashechewan of today. I know my good friend Dave Levac, who represents the area of the Six Nations in the Brantford area, understands exactly what I am talking about. I need to say to my friends that we need to find a way to challenge ourselves as to how we're able to develop a local economy.

In the last couple of minutes, because I want to leave some time for my good friend Andrea Horwath, who will say something on this, there is a last point I want to make. We were at the estimates of the Ministry of Agriculture not long ago. I said to the ministry, "Why don't we, as a pilot project, look at doing something to assist a community that is interested in growing their own vegetables, and maybe having some dairy cattle in those communities so they can sustain themselves?"

Let me explain. If you're in Fort Albany and go to the Northern Store to buy a quart of milk, be prepared to pay three times the price you pay in downtown Timmins or Toronto. How does a family who's trying to live on welfare afford to give their children the milk they need to grow up strong and healthy? It's pretty hard to do. People are having to make choices: Buy food or pay the rent. When you don't pay the rent, the community doesn't have money to keep the housing stock in order. When you've got that, you have a housing situation that becomes deplorable.

One of the things we could do is an idea that was raised to me by one of the public health nurses in Fort Albany at the Peetabeck Health Centre, who said, "I would really like to have some assistance to start up a pilot project, so that we're able to develop a community

garden where we can look in the community for those people who are interested in being able to do what needs to be done to prepare a plot of land, and possibly have to build some sort of fundamental greenhouse so we can extend the season a little bit, where we can grow our own potatoes, beets, carrots, lettuce, whatever it is that might be done so that we can supplement our diet over the years so that we can have fresh vegetables when it comes to feeding our own people."

Why not look at the issue of how agriculture can play a more important role in those communities so that they can become more self-sufficient? We know they are hunter-gatherers, the Mushkegowuk Cree people. We need to find ways to complement what they've done traditionally, maybe in a non-traditional way, so that they are able to become much more sustaining when it comes to a community.

I say to my friends the Conservatives, I support the motion they bring forward. I think this government could be doing a lot more when it comes to economic development. I very much look forward to the comments of my friend Andrea Horwath, the member from Hamilton East.

1640

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): I am more than happy to join in the debate today on the opposition day motion. I'm not surprised by that motion. I think they've been very clear on the record about what they feel.

The first thing I want to talk about—especially since this is Advocis Day and we have a lot of people around this place who know something about math—is that there seems to be in the premise of the opposition day motion that there have been 42,000 manufacturing jobs lost. I know that since we took office, there have been 193,000 net new jobs. What that means, of course, is that over time new jobs are created, and over time some jobs are lost. It is the natural place of the marketplace, the marketplace the Leader of the Opposition comes from, I might add. What we find is that what is important for people overall, for the province, is the number of total new jobs minus jobs lost, increasing or decreasing. I'm very proud of the fact that 193,000 net new jobs have been created in Ontario.

I want to put on the record—I've been very clear in my entire political career—that it is not the government of Ontario that created the jobs. We didn't add 193,000 more people to the public service. It was to hard-working business people right across this province, entrepreneurs, particularly small business, that the credit should be given. It's important, though, for the government itself to provide the framework that allows the economy to grow.

Specifically, what I want to talk about is the situation on the farms. I represent, as I've said many times, the most productive agricultural riding in the entire country. That is a fact. Sometimes the member from Huron–Bruce disagrees with me, because hers is also a very productive riding, as is Oxford, for example. We really live in the breadbasket, the heartland of this great province. But what I find interesting is that there seems to be this old

kind of Common Sense Revolution idea that one can, at the same time, cut taxes, improve services and balance the budget.

We found in the last three years that there was a total mismatch between the rise in revenue and the rise of expenses in the previous government. That left us with a structural deficit, a deficit that was not revealed in the Magna budget. I think the reason it wasn't in this Legislature, the reason there was disrespect shown to the great constitutional and democratic tradition of this place going back, really, to the Magna Carta, was so that we would bypass the ability of the opposition to do that. I know it's why this government has said that will never happen again, and we've taken steps to make sure that hasn't happened and can never happen again. But faced with that, we had to deal with the reality as it was received.

The Premier said many times that you oppose in poetry and you govern in prose, and we had to govern in prose; we had to take steps. We had to make sure that the government itself would get back to the position where we all agree it should be: with the ability to live within its means. That is a challenge; it always is for any government of any stripe. I think what we're finding is the progress that needs to be made so that the investments in health care, in education, in the economy, particularly in the automotive sector, in pharmaceutical and in agriculture are there.

There is a great sense across the land, I find, in rural Ontario where farm leaders themselves have realized that together, united, they present a stronger, more powerful voice to us here at Queen's Park, and strengthen the position of rural members who represent them as we argue on their behalf for their issues, just like my colleagues from the north do, just like my colleagues from the GTA do. But it is incumbent—and it's the theme I have had since I have been elected. How do we harness the great common sense of rural Ontario, the great love of the land, and transfer that into deliverables right here at Queen's Park? That united front, that united voice, I think, is working its way to actually having a sustainable, long-term solution that will address the crisis of farm income, not as some mere Band-Aid, but in a long-term sustainable way.

I know the Premier himself has a commitment to this that is unparalleled. The farm leaders have told me that the Premier's agri-food summit is something they agree with. Farmers have told me that the personal commitment of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, a member of the priority and planning committee of cabinet, a commitment backed up by her rural caucus who are echoing the strong voice of rural Ontario, is coming together like it never has before; it allows us to be in that position.

This government would be impotent to listen to the voice of agriculture, and respond to it, if we were being so rash as to say, as we struggle to get out of deficit, that somehow we have a plan to cut taxes but that we're going to be there for the farmers. I know the good people in Stratford want their hospital. I know the people in Listowel want that hospital. That money is coming from

the taxpayers. They want their services, and that's why it's so important.

I can assure you that, given this, I will be voting against the motion.

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): It's my pleasure to add my vote of support and voice of support to our leader's opposition motion today.

One of the things that will concern business the most, if they want to ensure that they will be successful, is to make sure that they have a plan in place, that they have a goal and can evaluate themselves against that goal as they move forward. This is one of the serious problems that Ontario is facing today with regard to the energy policies of this government and how they have whacked this economy. You see, they have no plan.

I'm sure many people in this House and a lot of people out there in TV land have come up with the idea that they are going to do some repairs to their bathroom, for example, in their home. They start to do a little ripping and tearing, and do you know what happens? All of a sudden they come across all of this stuff they didn't expect. It's like a dog's breakfast. First, they lift up the toilet and the floor is rotten. So they go into the pipes and all of the pipes are corroded. The next thing you know, a small job in the bathroom becomes a real mess.

That's what's happened with this government's energy policy. They had no plan and no idea how they were going to get there. All they wanted to do was make this promise that they were going to eliminate 20% to 25% of the generation capacity in this province. What did they do? One of the things they did was put out this RFP process. Eastern Power, St. Clair Power—they awarded them contracts and deals, and they're having to backtrack on all of these because they had no plan in place. None of the situations that they expected would be there are in place. So what do we do? It's a disjointed policy. Now they have to go back and start the processes over, and this is costing time and money.

If you're a business and you have to have confidence in what's happening in the province of Ontario, how confident would you be if the government of the day could not tell you from one day to the next what their energy policy was and whether or not an announcement made is a commitment? Every day, you turn around and they've got something new. There is no confidence. Confidence in the economy of this province is dropping rapidly and is at staggeringly low levels, and the energy policy of this government is one of the prime components of that lack of confidence.

I think if I have to encapsulate this in a very short period of time, I could describe the energy policy of this government as Dalton's, Dwight's and Donna's desperate dance—a deplorably dangerous debacle.

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): Although I have an affinity for that kind of alliteration, I certainly don't have that kind of skill, but it was quite amusing to hear that.

I have to say that my colleague Gilles Bisson, the member for Timmins–James Bay, spent most of his time

talking about the issue that he has been working on very diligently with our leader, Howard Hampton, and that is the issue of the forestry sector and the way this government has failed the forestry sector, particularly in their energy policy.

As Gilles mentioned, yesterday we did meet with a number of people from the north, from the forestry sector, some of the mayors, and they were clear in their criticism of the government. They were clear in their fear that we will lose this sector completely from our economy if immediate action is not taken by the government. I thought it was important to get that said in a very clear and concise way, because I'm not going to spend much more time on that issue. But if they were that clear with us in our caucus discussion with them yesterday, then I suspect they were as clear with the Conservative caucus and with the Liberal caucus. It is now in the court of the government to fix this problem and to address the real likelihood that if they don't fix the problem, we will lose the entire forestry sector.

In talking about this over the last while, it's become clear that forestry sector concerns are not isolated to the north. We have all heard people in this House drawing the lines, the relationship between industry in the south and how it serves or provides products and services to the northern forestry sector, and how there are some manufacturers and plants in southern Ontario that will be directly affected by the growing crisis in the forestry sector. The figure, I think, if I'm not mistaken, ranges around the \$250-million mark in terms of the value of that southern Ontario economic impact. It is unthinkable that this government would be inactive in trying to address the crisis that is—it's not looming; it's upon us. It's happening. It's underway right now in northern Ontario.

1650

I spoke to one of the leaders of industry in my community at a recent function that took place in Hamilton. One of the things he was telling me was that the hydro issue is like the front car of the train, but the train is going off the track and there's a huge wreck ahead of us in terms of the economy, mostly because, almost entirely because, of this government's refusal to back away from its current direction on the hydro file. This very well respected, top leader in Hamilton alone, but also worldwide in his industry, is worried. He's worried about the government's lack of response to his concerns and the concerns of his industry on the hydro issues. What he said to me was quite plain: "It's hydro now. They are the front car in this train wreck, but every car behind it is going off on the same track. It's hitting the forestry sector first; next is the chemical sector. Equally being hit is the steel sector, and all of the other manufacturing sectors are going to be in a crisis fairly soon if this government does not change its ways." That's a pretty condemning description from a leader of industry in regard to the government's energy policies.

I have to bring to mind some of the questions that I've asked in this House around our economy, but particularly

around the steel sector, because of course I'm from Hamilton East and steel is a big part of Hamilton's current economy. It has been a part of Hamilton's economy since Hamilton was on the map. In fact, for many years the Hamilton steel industry fuelled the entire nation's economy. So it's an extremely important piece of our local economy. And of course steel jobs are well-paying jobs. So that industry has in many ways been the backbone of the city of Hamilton.

I've mentioned in this House a couple of times the crisis being faced by one particular manufacturer called Hamilton Specialty Bar. Hamilton Specialty Bar was a company, and is still a company, that is facing significant challenges in terms of hydro prices. What that has meant for them—and it's interesting, because it first came to my attention from people who work there, from some of the workers, who called my office and said, "I think there's something happening with our company." I said, "What do you mean?" The fellow said, "Well, through the history of this company, we have often gone through these little shutdowns from time to time; not big shutdowns, but if the energy prices spike too high, we just shut down for a couple of hours. Everybody is asked to go home. Then the next day, we come back in and continue on with production." But as a worker on the shop floor, he was sensing—and was actually being stuck with the results—that the number of times the shutdowns were occurring seemed to be more frequent and more lengthy.

As a result of some of the questions I asked in this House, I did receive some further information from the company, which I must say was extremely pleased by the fact that I did raise this issue in the House. Not unlike one of the other captains of industry, if you want to call them that, I was talking about earlier, he also indicated to me that he had a sense that the government simply was not listening to the voices of industry that were calling out for some help and calling out for some acknowledgment and some action on the hydro file.

In fact, this company was forced to stop production for a full 24 hours, which had never happened or had happened very rarely. In the past six months, and this was as of October 20, the furnace had been off for 214 hours, which was a 500% increase over 2002 and 2003. That is not only lost production time for the company in a very competitive industry, the steel industry, but also lost time and lost wages for the workers.

So I think those two examples really clearly indicate that there is a crisis in the hydro situation, that the government doesn't have a handle on that file and is not hearing the concerns that our industrial and forestry sectors are sending. They just don't hear the message.

But do you know what? It's not just about that. I think sometimes about the workers who are losing their jobs in that sector. I mean, it's nice for the government to get up and make all these claims, but what we do know is that we lost 42,000 manufacturing jobs, and I go back to the point I made earlier. Those manufacturing jobs are often very well paid jobs, with decent benefits, with an opportunity for people to actually raise families and have a

decent standard of living in today's economy. Those are the kinds of jobs that we're losing. Those are the kinds of jobs that the Liberals are chasing away. That's simply not acceptable. Those are the kinds of jobs that we should be protecting dearly. Those are the kinds of jobs that we should be making sure we are maintaining and growing in our economy, not simply allowing them to walk away to other parts of the world. It is an unacceptable loss for community after community when any one of those manufacturing plants closes and any one of those tens of thousands of workers is then without work.

What happens then? What happens after those people lose their jobs? Well, I can tell you what happens. Then they're faced with all kinds of bills and all kinds of cost-of-living increases that have been foisted upon them by their government, by this very government. So now they've lost their job because the government didn't care about their manufacturing job that went down to some other location in the world, and they're faced with rising household hydro prices. They have gas prices that they cannot afford. They have regressive health taxes that they didn't have before—and, of course, we were told by the government when they were running that they weren't going to have any new taxes. But no, we also have health taxes. They have health costs that they didn't have before because of the delisting of several services by this McGuinty Liberal government, like chiropractic and vision care.

What else? Well, those are people who have lost their jobs. They're going to have extreme difficulty in being able to deal with those kinds of rising costs and the kinds of new fees and removed opportunities from health care that this government has foisted on them. But do you know what? There's a whole other group of people. There's a group of people who are still working, but they're working at jobs that simply don't pay enough for them to be able to maintain a decent level of quality of life for their families. Sometimes they have to work two jobs, sometimes three jobs, just to be able to make ends meet. I can tell you that those people are even worse off than the ones who have had all of these Liberal policies hitting them in the pocketbook but they're still working at decent jobs. But there are so many more people whose income is simply not keeping up because their jobs are not paying a decent rate. The government really needs to look at what kind of standard of living we expect to have in a place like the province of Ontario if we maintain a minimum wage that does not provide a decent standard of living for the people who live in our communities.

It's those people who then end up, by sometimes the most unfortunate of events—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Horwath: As a result of some of the most unfortunate events—Mr. Speaker, I can't hear myself think.

The Acting Speaker: I've called for order once. I call for it again, please. I'm having difficulty hearing the debate.

1700

The member from Hamilton East.

Ms. Horwath: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I only have a few minutes left, guys, so you can get back to your little get-together there in a minute or two.

The issue is that oftentimes, by unforeseen circumstances, people end up losing their jobs. What happens to those people? Well, it's obvious that their McGuinty Liberal government doesn't care about them either, because those people are losing the battle to have a decent quality of life. For example, they are people who are recipients of the Ontario disability support plan. Perhaps they are on a cycle and have had a job loss and are now relying on social assistance. But this government, notwithstanding the way they railed against the previous government for the way they treated people living in poverty—well, lo and behold, now we're stuck with this government that doesn't seem to care either about people who are living in poverty. That's just not acceptable.

We all know that a paltry 3% increase into your third year is simply not enough to be able to redress some of that extremely deep and debilitating poverty that exists in community after community all over this province. It's the social assistance rates; it's the ODSP rates. It's the fact that this government, notwithstanding a direct and straightforward promise in their election campaign, has not done the one thing that could immediately, just like that, affect the lives of so many hundreds of thousands of children in this province, and that is to stop the clawback. But they won't do it. They said they were going to do it and they still haven't done it. It's a disgrace, a shame on all of the government members who sit here in this House, that they have not done that one thing that would significantly alleviate child poverty in the province of Ontario.

I have to tell you that when you look at that income security piece, if you want to call it that, that piece of the provincial responsibility that deals with people who are extremely vulnerable and have income challenges, and then you look at their lack of action on the Tenant Protection Act file and their lack of action on a campaign commitment of building more affordable housing in this province, you've got to shake your head and wonder exactly why they wanted to become the government in the first place, because they're certainly not fulfilling any of the promises they made of the changes they said they were going to undertake when they became government.

You look around and you see manufacturing jobs going, you see poverty deepening, you see still the numbers of children living in poverty growing after over two years with this government in place, and then you also see the other things that that creates and another broken promise, another lack of commitment from this government, and that is the fact that these issues all have a bearing on what's happening in our cities. We're watching our cities in crisis. We watched Toronto in crisis all through the summer and continuing this week. Hamilton is in crisis as well. We're just waiting to see

when the next city is going to have to face some of the terrible things that are happening in the city of Toronto and in the city of Hamilton. We're having gun crimes occurring in the last couple of weeks in Hamilton at a rate that we've never seen. We see young people who are turning to street youth gangs because they don't have any options, because they don't have any hope, and they don't have support from their family groups and their government to be able to overcome some of the challenges they face.

We see city infrastructure falling apart. Guess what else we see? At the same time as we see all of those things happening, we see property taxes going up at the municipal level in unsustainable segments. When I talk to my previous council colleagues in the city of Hamilton, they're telling me that the people of Hamilton are just fed up. They're fed up with all of these broken promises. They're fed up with all of these new provincial taxes, provincial expenditures and the lack of problem-solving that they're seeing from their government. They're now getting their property tax bills and they're just shaking their heads. They're watching the lack of progress on infrastructure projects and they're watching the lack of movement around fixing the assessment system, and people are just besides themselves.

I have to say, I'm really going to be looking forward to voting in favour of this motion, because it speaks to the real issues that are facing the people of Ontario.

Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph–Wellington): The recent plant closure of Imperial Tobacco has been mentioned a number of times in the debate, so I thought it would be helpful if I read into the record what the local newspaper, the Guelph Mercury, had to say about the issue. I would like to note that this is not Liz Sandals speaking; this is an editorial in the local newspaper. It's entitled, "Liberals Shouldn't Fix Plant Closure."

Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford): Please read it.

Mrs. Sandals: I am going to, thank you.

"Attempts by provincial Conservative leader John Tory and Waterloo–Wellington MPP Ted Arnott to pin the decision by Imperial Tobacco to close its Guelph operations on the Liberal government smack of political opportunism. The pair have resorted to taking political potshots without offering anything that resembles concrete solutions to help the over 550 employees soon to be out of work.

"Here is the question Arnott posed in the Legislature earlier this week: 'Will the Premier inform the House what his government is prepared to do to help the 550 workers at Imperial Tobacco in Guelph who are losing their jobs next year because of his government's policies?'

"Government policies—federal, provincial and municipal—have impacted Imperial Tobacco: Higher taxes and increased restrictions on smoking have hurt sales. But that's a good thing—we want people smoking less, and the savings to our health care system will be measured in the billions. Guelph–Wellington MPP Liz

Sandals was bold enough to admit as much on the day the closure announcement was made.

"But there are also a number of other factors, including globalization and the company's desire for a better bottom line that also played a significant role in Imperial Tobacco's demise, including free trade—a Conservative innovation in Canada—and the company's desire for a stronger bottom line—certainly not something a Conservative would protest.

"Here's what the provincial government should be doing for Imperial Tobacco and its workers: nothing." This is the hometown newspaper.

"The workers should be entitled to the same benefits any laid-off worker in this country gets, and after earning an average wage of \$84,000 a year, and with severance packages expected in the six figures a possibility, they should be fine.

"And any additional retraining costs should be borne by the company, not the government, especially given that Imperial Tobacco's parent company, British American Tobacco, announced yesterday that third-quarter earnings were up 23%.

"It's going to be a vintage year,' chief executive Paul Adams told the Bloomberg News.

"Given that rosy outlook, it goes without saying that no government should be considering a bailout. The political consequences of offering financial assistance to a multinational tobacco company would be both swift and unusually harsh.

"So what are the provincial Conservative brain trust of Tory and Arnott suggesting that the government actually do? Not much. Arnott wants the government to launch an 'investigation into Ontario's industrial and economic competitiveness.'

"In other words, another expensive, time-killing government study.

"The Conservatives need to butt out on the Imperial Tobacco issue: this is one mess that can't be blamed on the Liberals."

That's what the local newspaper has to say on the issue.

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington): This important motion on Ontario's economy recognizes the hardships currently being endured by many families, including those who work for Imperial Tobacco, and of course our farm families and our businesses, large and small. It speaks to the factors that are threatening Ontario's present economic standing. This motion demonstrates something that we, all of us in this House, should demonstrate, and that is the utmost concern when jobs are being lost and hope diminished in Ontario.

We in this House have to be prepared to do something about it. I want to thank our leader for doing just that on issues concerning jobs and the economy in the province of Ontario.

The government should heed the substance of this motion. They should vote for it and give serious consideration to the urgent warning inherent in it.

1710

I also want to take this opportunity to publicly compliment our party's critic for economic development, the member for Halton. He has a breadth and depth of experience that he brings to this House and this debate. The member for Halton has been a very effective advocate for the kind of constructive economic policies that our government employed, and which were so successful during the years 1995 to 2003. During these halcyon days, when the provincial government's policies focused like a laser beam on the creation of new jobs, our economic and fiscal policies worked, and worked together. The economy grew at phenomenal rates, and we supported the creation of a million net new jobs right here in the province of Ontario.

At the mid-term point of this Liberal government, in contrast, we are seeing something very different to what happened under our tenure, but something that is very similar to the Peterson Liberal governments of 1985 to 1990. The current crop of Liberal MPPs in this House, members of the government side, are repeating the mistakes of recent Liberal history by taking job creation in the province of Ontario for granted, because they assume that somehow, perhaps by magic and the luck of geography and history, Ontario will always be an industrial and economic engine. They naively believe that job numbers will keep growing somehow without the policies to nurture and support that growth.

Look at the factors working against jobs and growth in this province today: higher provincial taxes; higher gasoline taxes; a higher dollar; higher natural gas prices; cancelled tax relief for small business; major increases in hydro bills; higher interest rates; and massive job losses in the manufacturing sector in Ontario, the province that should be the driving industrial force in Canada and throughout the global marketplace.

Last May, I tabled a resolution in this House focusing attention on the job creation challenges of our economy faced by our industries competing with and in dynamic economies like those of China and India. My resolution reads as follows:

"That, in the opinion of this House, the standing committee on finance and economic affairs should immediately begin an investigation into Ontario's industrial and economic competitiveness, to develop an action plan to maintain and expand our domestic and international markets in the coming years."

I've received support from a number of groups across the province. I would commend my motion to members of the government and ask them to act upon it and start by supporting this motion today.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West): I'm happy to join the debate today.

I want to pick up on a couple of things that have been said by previous speakers, the first one being from the member for Perth-Middlesex. I think the idea that what we're trying to do is create a framework for the economy to grow is a really important one. The reason that a lot of us ran, especially the new members, was that we saw the

fundamentals in this province crumbling because of what had happened with the previous government. So we know what we have to do is rebuild those fundamentals and put that framework in place.

The second comment I wanted to pick up on was from Mr. Yakabuski. He talked about the analogy of a renovation, and how when you start on a renovation, you think you're going to repair a certain number of things, and you realize as you go that the wiring isn't working or there is mould behind that wall. It's an interesting analogy, but it's a dangerous one for someone from that party, because I would contend—and I've actually talked about this with constituents—that every time we turn around, there's something else that needs to be fixed in this province because of what happened in the previous government. So I think the members opposite need to be a little bit careful about those analogies, but we'll certainly take that image. It's true that in every sector we look at, there's a mess that has been created that we're trying to unravel, whether it's energy, whether it's social services, whether it's education. We're trying to rebuild the fundamentals, put a plan in place and rebuild the public service, which was thrown into crisis. Of course, it was a previous member, Mr. Snobelen, when he was the Minister of Education, who talked about creating a crisis. That's exactly what happened. So here we are now in the position of having to rebuild.

I want to talk about the things that we are doing. There is no doubt, there is nobody on this side of the House who would argue that it's not important to support the working families of this province. There's a long list of enhancements we've put in place to do exactly what I said, which is to put that framework in place, rebuild our public services and create an environment that has been the tradition in this province, of civil society, the fundamentals of which were attacked under the previous government.

When we talk about rebuilding, I'm talking about things like the \$58 million for 4,000 new daycare spaces, for child care spaces. I'm talking about \$24.9 million for community support for services like Meals on Wheels. Those are some of the smaller investments we don't always talk about, but they are the things that affect people's lives on a day-to-day basis. Of course, there are the large investments, like our investment in post-secondary education, where we will have grants in place for students in need for the first time in years, where debt loads have gone up for middle-income and lower-income students. We recognize that we need a grant structure in place, and that that's a fundamental that needs to be rebuilt.

We talk about the \$360 million for medication for seniors and for people with high drug costs. We can talk about more teachers, about more repairs in our schools around the province, the teachers to deal with class size but also to deal with restoring music programs and phys ed programs, and to have librarians and guidance counsellors in place, all of those things, along with, if we look at the agriculture sector—I know previous members

have talked about this—the \$15-million increase to OMAF in the 2005-06 budget; a \$520-million investment in the ethanol growth fund; \$79 million to the grain and oilseed producers.

We can go through a long list of those huge investments we've made in this province, but the overall tone and direction we're going in is that we are making inclusive rather than divisive decisions. We are putting in place investments that bring people together, that build consensus around what this province is about. That is exactly why many of us ran, in order to do that, and that's what's happening. We're sorting those things out.

We have to look at what Mr. Tory says he will do. He says he will take \$2.4 billion out of our health care system, and that he will increase spending. That's exactly the formula that led us to a \$5.5-billion deficit and led us to the situation where we're having to rebuild. We have a plan to deal with that deficit, but I think the people of Ontario need to be very clear what the plan of the members opposite would be, which is to take \$2.4 billion out and invest. That leads to deficit, and that's exactly what we're trying to climb out of right now.

I think the other thing we really have to ask about is, where was this member, the Leader of the Opposition—who is now an advocate for the people of Ontario and for the people who are struggling in this province, for whom we're trying to create better conditions—when the previous government was tearing apart the fundamentals of this province?

I am a Toronto citizen. I have lived in this city for more than 20 years; I've lived in this region all my life. I was a citizen activist when that previous government was tearing this province apart. This member, who was a citizen of this province, of this city, working at Rogers Communication, was not to be seen. He was not an advocate for people. He was not an advocate against the damage that was being done. He was silent. He was not on the record. Maybe he was in the backrooms, but maybe he was in the backrooms supporting what was being done. So we have to ask whether people can change their stripes so entirely and all of a sudden be advocates for people for whom there was no support previously.

I am proud of our record. There's lots more to be done. I'm the first to admit there's a lot more to be done, and I look forward to doing it with this government.

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I wish to address this motion with a focus on the slow burn that is devastating our manufacturing, our farm and our rural economies. Just to provide some perspective, when I worked in tobacco in the 1970s, there were 2,500 local tobacco farmers. Now we're sitting at about 650, and growing smaller. There is much more at stake than this. I'll make mention of the tobacco auction exchange in Delhi. It currently employs 140 people. I don't think I need to paint a picture of what's going to happen when this and other tobacco-dependent employment leave a community like Delhi. Delhi has already lost all three of its new car dealerships.

1720

As this government jacks up taxes and forces those who smoke or those who will continue to smoke away from regulated tobacco, essentially this government is propping up the underground economy, the contraband economy. It's really quite simple: If you jack up taxes, you jack up illegal consumption. You force legal producers and legal manufacturers to leave the country. We saw this equation at work in the recent Imperial Tobacco announcement to close their Guelph and Aylmer operations, to close the door on 600 jobs by heading south to Monterrey, Mexico. This is because of the McGuinty tobacco tax policy. I blame the Liberals. In many quarters, this is considered a Liberal scandal.

This also adds insult to injury in tobacco communities like Aylmer, where employment at the Aylmer threshing plant was once 450 strong. It declined over the years. Two years ago they lost 260 jobs. Fred Neukamm, chair of the tobacco board, has indicated very recently in the media, "We hope this is a wake-up call for government."

Clearly, for my tobacco farmers and the countless other jobs they support, it's time for this issue to be addressed by everyone involved in the industry, including the growers, manufacturers, exporters, the federal and this provincial government. Governments need to help. They need to help prepare a long-term plan for tobacco farmers and other industry sectors to exit from the industry. After all, this government and governments across Canada accrue something like \$9 billion a year in taxes from tobacco.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): For a couple of moments I want to address the opposition day motion that Mr. Tory moved, which is trying to suggest that the Liberal government is not working well with the economy. I'm reminded of what Bill Clinton said back in 1992, or it was told to him when he was campaigning. The famous words were, "It's the economy, stupid." Well, perhaps today we could say to ourselves, "It's the facts, stupid." I mean that as a general term. I'm not calling anyone stupid.

What are the facts? In June 2001, the unemployment rate—

Mr. Tascona: What are you talking about?

Mr. Berardinetti: The facts are the facts. The unemployment rate is currently 6.4%, the lowest it's been since June 2001. Ontario's economy is doing extremely well. In Woodstock, we've put in a brand new plant. Toyota is putting a plant there, which obviously means that they have confidence in the Ontario economy.

On top of that, if you go into other areas, retail sales are 4.8% ahead of what they were last year. Ontario car sales jumped 10.2% in July, 3.7% ahead of last year's pace. Solid profit growth is encouraging. Business investment: Ontario businesses plan to increase spending on machinery and equipment by 9.5% in 2005, the biggest increase since 1997.

The list goes on and on in terms of facts that I have in front of me. These are not skewed opinions. These are

facts that we've obtained from economists, that are available, that are public information.

While we're doing that, we're creating a better health care system and a better education system, which will attract new businesses because, in the end, what do new businesses want? They want to be located in a place where there's an educated workforce, a healthy workforce and an environment that will induce growth and produce more jobs. We're doing that. We're on track. I am convinced that the plan put forward by the Minister of Finance and our Premier is the right plan to keep Ontario moving.

We are now number one when it comes to auto manufacturing in North America. It's no longer Michigan, it's Ontario, and Ontario is continuing to move forward and become an economic power in Canada and in North America.

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): I'm pleased to be able to join with my colleagues in support of our party leader's motion.

Many of my colleagues have spoken of losses in manufacturing industries in their own ridings and the effects that these losses are having on their constituents. Jobs are at risk in my riding and throughout York region, like everywhere else, because of the increased taxes, the regulatory burden and the hydro increases of this Liberal government.

The cost of housing is continuing to go up, endangering housing starts and putting a first home out of reach of many first-time homeowners, particularly young families. What is most disturbing is that much of this increase in cost comes from government policy. Government policies are restricting the land supply for housing, increasing development charges and delaying approvals for housing projects.

According to the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association, between September 2003 and July 2005 development charges in the GTA have increased by 27%. Charges for new apartments, the most affordable type of housing, have increased by almost 55%. Fear of the greenbelt has encouraged lot prices to skyrocket, increasing by 66% in three years.

Lloyd Martin, head of the Trimart group, said, "The greenbelt has created an illusionary shortage rather than a real shortage at this time. But it gives people who are landholders the idea that there's a shortage, so they can ask more for their lots. Some builders are buying at those prices just to stay in business, and keep their people employed."

Wait until the greenbelt starts creating a real shortage, when the supply of land completely runs out.

All of these government-inspired price increases will hurt housing starts, and they threaten jobs in our construction industry. With all our manufacturing job losses, we cannot afford to lose construction jobs as well.

The Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association, from a study by economist Will Dunning, calculated that every \$1,000 added to the average cost of a new home means 1,015 fewer jobs; 284 fewer housing starts;

\$20 million less per year in government revenue; and \$2 million less a year in realty taxes.

It is time for this government to stop overtaxing and over-regulating home construction in Ontario. The government has the power to help our construction industry. It has the power to make it possible for young families to afford to buy their first home. All it needs is the will to act. It needs to recognize that its own policies are a major threat to the health of our housing industry.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate? Is there any further debate?

Mr. Tascona: A shy guy.

1730

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm certainly not shy. I just wanted to hear if there were more comments coming from the opposition, to listen carefully to the debate today, as we all are here.

When I look at the motion, it's suggested from the opposition that we should be looking at balancing the budget, keeping taxes down, managing prudently, and investing in higher productivity and a better quality of life.

I guess my question is, what the heck would they know about any of that stuff? You look at something like balancing the budget. Who are the official opposition to tell us about balancing budgets? We all know the mess this province was left in when we inherited a \$5.6-billion deficit, and you know, that's not just us saying that. That's not just a number that's been pulled out of thin air. That's a number that was verified by the Auditor General of the province. It's a number that was verified by the very Auditor General that that previous government appointed. So we're not talking about pulling numbers out of thin air here. The fact of the matter is—

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like the member to confirm that it was not the auditor; it was a private consultant who was the previous auditor.

The Acting Speaker: That is not a point of order. Member, continue.

Mr. Duguid: If the member wants to quibble with that, I'm more than happy to agree with him. It was the auditor that their government originally appointed, that they had confidence in, obviously, because they appointed him. After his time at the province, he was hired as a consultant from the government to provide an accounting for what the deficit was at. I know the opposition doesn't want to admit it, because it's going to be their Achilles heel for many years to come. The previous government left this province in an absolute fiscal mess, and yet they're here today telling us that we should be working on balancing our budgets.

We had the announcement yesterday, the fiscal statement, and I can tell you, we are well on the way to cleaning up that Tory fiscal mess. We're very proud of the progress we've made to date. Their deficit's been cut more than in half, which is a significant benefit to the people of this province and a significant indication as to

what a government that's in office, that is managing well, can do.

In fact, that wasn't the only deficit they left us in. They also left us in an infrastructure deficit. The Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal is here today, and he's doing an incredible job, investing in hospitals, investing in roads, investing in public transit, in record amounts of money. Despite the fiscal mess we inherited, we're still finding the money to move forward with these very, very important programs—programs that, frankly, the economic future of our province depends on, programs that went completely lacking under the previous government.

I look at other areas that they've talked about in here. They talk about quality of life, and we think, what did they do when they were in power to improve our quality of life? Well, they cut the welfare rates by 21%, and they celebrated that as a great thing to do. I remember, at the time when that was done, I was chairing community services in the city of Toronto. When has there ever been a time when we saw homelessness in the city of Toronto or across the province increase more than when they were in office?

It's a shame what they did when they were in office: cutbacks for homelessness, cutbacks to housing, abandoning building affordable housing in this province, absolutely forgetting about the importance of building affordable housing. When you think about what we've done in the short 24 months—5,230-some-odd housing units that are now being built in partnership with the province. That's 5,230-some-odd housing units more than what they did in their eight years—an incredible achievement.

I look back and think, what did they do in terms of helping people who needed to get those extra dollars to get into the few units that were available for those tenants under their administration? There was barely anything coming forward when it came to housing allowances. This government is moving forward with 5,000 housing allowances. Some 5,000 families are going to get access to some of those units that, under our government, are becoming available as we see the vacancy rates starting to go up in the rental housing market, starting to improve across this province.

When I think of all those families that were suffering in terms of trying to make ends meet, losing a job and maybe being \$200 or \$300 short on their rent and, because of the policies of this government, being put out on the street and evicted because they couldn't afford another \$200 or \$300 to catch up to their rent, I think of one of the first things we did when we got into office: a \$10-million rent bank that has helped tenants across the province stay in their homes until they can recover and get back to work, or recover from whatever illness put them out of their homes in the first place. That is progress. It contrasts greatly with what we've seen in the past from the previous government.

We hear the previous government talk about crime. We hear them talk about how tough they were on crime when they were in office. All I remember when it comes

to that—and that is a very important part of quality neighbourhoods, ensuring we are doing everything we can to reduce crime. All I remember from them is a bunch of guys walking around in those suits—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Mr. Duguid: What do you call them, those suits that they used to wear?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): The crime commission.

Mr. Duguid: The crime commission guys; a few of them are even friends of mine. They talked a mean game but they did very little to bring crime down.

I think of what the Attorney General announced just last week when it became apparent that the justice system they left behind here in the province—that in fact a number of people who had been arrested a couple of years ago in busts were going to be let out. A number of gang members were going to be let out because they didn't provide enough resources in the system for enough crowns to be able to take them through the system. I think how quickly our Attorney General acted to ensure that 32 more crowns are going to be put in place; to bring in and beef up more police officers for our guns and gangs unit—something that is going to have a very, very significant impact in our communities in Toronto—to ensure that we will get a handle on this guns and gangs problem, a problem that they ignored for eight years. They talked a mean game, went around and talked about crime commissions, but did barely anything to really try to resolve these particular serious problems.

In fact, I would suggest they exacerbated the problems, when I think back to what they did to our schools, community use of schools: one of the few places where our young people could go to and rely on for community programs. They decimated those community resources, in ensuring that schools were no longer going to be available for—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. Order. I'm having a very difficult time. The heckling going around this speaker is enormous.

Please continue.

Mr. Duguid: I fully understand why they'd be very sensitive to these issues, because that's the legacy they left in our communities. We have young people now who are finally going to get access to recreation because of the \$20 million we're spending across this province in reopening up our schools, the schools that they closed down to our young people.

When I look at them talking about balancing the budget, when I look at them talking about managing prudently, when I look at them talking about us ensuring that we have productivity to improve quality of life across our province I've got to tell you, I can't take what they are saying today seriously at all. We're doing all of that, in spite of the problems that they created for us, in spite of the roadblocks that they put up in our way.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Tascona: I'm very pleased to join in the debate on this motion. Can you set the time properly?

OK. I think the gist of this motion is basically that Liberal times are hard times. There is no doubt that what they're doing to this economy is causing great problems throughout.

I want to comment about the member across the way, who was saying, "Where was John Tory?" John Tory was chairing United Way campaigns, raising major funds for the United Way for five years. John Tory was chairing two campaigns for the inner city health centre for St. Mike's hospital. John Tory was recognized as the leading volunteer in the entire community and was awarded for that recognition in 2002. John Tory served on boards and committees for countless organizations, namely the Canadian Paraplegic Association, Famous People Players association and Community Living. John Tory was present and making a difference in other people's lives.

As I say, Liberal times are hard times for this province. The residential housing construction industry is almost at a snail's pace because of their policies. There's uncertainty in land development throughout the province. Rising energy costs are taking away people's disposable income, and also there are the job losses, which we've commented about. The residential construction industry, which is the backbone of the economy, is slowing and this government's policies are the main reason.

Another problem we have, and the members from Simcoe-Grey and Parry Sound can tell you this here today, is the volume of traffic on Highway 400. The lack of a plan to deal with the gridlock is unbelievable. The Liberal government has done nothing. The highways are clogged every morning. There are no alternative routes. I can tell you that our basic infrastructure, which is what we need to attract jobs to this province, is at a standstill because they are doing nothing on the highway portfolio.

This opposition day motion is very timely. The Liberal government certainly has not addressed the economy in terms of what we need to go forward into the future. They have no plan. As I say, Liberal times are hard times.

1740

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): I don't always enjoy speaking in this place because it tends to be such an adversarial spot, with good guys and bad guys and all of that. I guess in the context of this resolution, I would observe in passing—it's something that one of my farm constituents shared with me once that I've always remembered—"Nobody would have remembered the good Samaritan if he hadn't had money." You can't look over your shoulder and help the vulnerable, and address the biggest single problem we're facing in Ontario, which is the growing gap between the richest of us and the rest of us—it's something I would candidly admit no government has done as adequately as they have should have in the last 15 years—without building a strong, prosperous economy.

We're doing what we can to try to shore that up. We're working as hard as we can, as diligently as we can

every single day, to try to get on top of the difficulties we have, some of which we've inherited and some of which are beyond our control, but we're struggling with it with integrity and we're going to make a difference in the province of Ontario.

Mr. O'Toole: I want to go on the record that the opposition day motion clearly is that the opposition is trying to put to you the importance of having a strong economy, so as to have the social programs and the quality of life Ontarians came to expect over the past eight years while we were in government.

When you came into government, the first thing you did was to break your first promise and to raise taxes. The next promise was to increase electricity rates. The impact on the agricultural economy of rural Ontario has been devastating. The forestry industry is now telling you a passionate plea—they've listened to John Tory this week—that your plan is simply not working for most sectors of the economy.

The interest rate is going to have a devastating impact on the economy. You're putting pressure on the economy. This will kill the auto and housing sectors. Most of the measures you're taking on sort of the monetary side of provincial control are having an adverse effect on the economy. The indicators are the GDP, the interest rate and the unemployment rate.

I put to you that for Ontario—the Minister of Finance—you have no plan for the hard-working families of Ontario. You have no plan for the economy of Ontario. You have no plan for the youth of Ontario. You have no hope for Ontario. What we're trying to tell you today is to pay attention to the hard-working families of Ontario so that there's a future left for our young people.

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): I'm pleased to rise in support of my colleague and our leader, John Tory, and his motion before the House today. I think all of us in the assembly who grew up in Ontario grew up in a province that was the lead province in all of Canada, a province of Ontario that was the economic engine that pulled the other provinces behind it, the kind of engine that had to be dragged kicking and screaming into a recession and was always the first one that came out and pulled the rest of the country behind. But not any more, not in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. Higher taxes, higher hydro rates, higher costs of home heating, higher gas, runaway deficits and spending have resulted in an Ontario economy that is, at best, average in all of Canada, if not falling behind.

Maybe Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals are willing to settle for a middling economy, to strive for mediocrity. I suspect there is some enthusiasm: What if they became a have-not province? They'd get even more money from Ottawa. I certainly hope that's not the plan. But if the members disagree with me, then I want to see them stand up and fight to lower taxes in the province of Ontario; I want to see the members stand up in their seats and fight to get hydro prices under control and to abandon this wacky hydro policy that is costing us jobs

and taking money out of the pockets of working families in Ontario.

I don't think the members opposite—maybe they do, and I hope they do; I have not heard it yet—have any concern for the vulnerability of working families in the province of Ontario. As I mentioned today, almost 130% of a year's after-tax income is out in commodities vulnerable to interest rates, like mortgages and personal debts through credit cards. That makes them so vulnerable to increased interest rates. In fact, if interest rates go up as expected to about five or five and a half points in the time ahead, that would be about an \$1,800 additional cost to working families in Ontario, and \$1,800 more per annum for these working families is simply unaffordable.

On top of that, Dalton McGuinty mercilessly increased taxes with the health tax, through not following through on his promises on gasoline, through higher hydro costs, through user fees, and now we have privatized care for chiropractic and optometry in Ontario, taking more money out of working families' pockets. The total: some \$2,000 per year that working families have to find somewhere in their pockets, something they did not have to do before Dalton McGuinty was elected.

We've asked the Premier and the finance minister time and time again for some indication of how they're going to cut working families a break, how they're going to try to put more money back in their pockets. Not yet, after asking time and time again, have we had a single answer of satisfaction from the Premier or finance minister. They have no plan except to put their hands deeper and deeper into the pockets of working families, seniors and young people in Ontario.

I strongly support our leader's motion today.

The Acting Speaker: It is now time to put the question to the House.

Mr. Tory has moved that the Legislative Assembly call upon the government:

To recognize that Ontario's businesses, farmers and hard-working families are being pushed to the financial breaking point by higher electricity prices, higher fuel prices and increased taxes; and

To recognize that the McGuinty Liberal government has presided over 42,000 manufacturing job losses in the past year alone, causing serious financial hardship for families and communities province-wide; and

To recognize that the current government's fiscal and energy policies are placing increased financial pressure on large and small job-creating businesses, creating an uncertain investment climate; and

To keep its promise to "balance the budget, keep taxes down, manage prudently, and invest in higher productivity and better quality of life."

Addressed to the Premier of Ontario.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1749 to 1759.

The Acting Speaker: Mr. Tory has moved opposition day motion number 2. All those in favour will please stand and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Jackson, Cameron	Scott, Laurie
Barrett, Toby	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Tascona, Joseph N.
Chudleigh, Ted	Marchese, Rosario	Tory, John
Flaherty, Jim	Martiniuk, Gerry	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Horwath, Andrea	Munro, Julia	Yakubski, John

The Acting Speaker: All those who are opposed will please stand and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arthurs, Wayne	Duncan, Dwight	Parsons, Ernie
Bartolucci, Rick	Fonseca, Peter	Peters, Steve
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Bryant, Michael	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kennedy, Gerard	Racco, Mario G.
Caplan, David	Leal, Jeff	Ramal, Khalil
Colle, Mike	Levac, Dave	Sandals, Liz
Craitor, Kim	Marsales, Judy	Smith, Monique
Crozier, Bruce	Mauro, Bill	Van Bommel, Maria
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Wilkinson, John
Dhillon, Vic	Milloy, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mitchell, Carol	
Duguid, Brad	Mossop, Jennifer F.	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 24; the nays are 40.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion to be lost.

It now being after 6 of the clock, this House stands recessed until 6:45.

The House adjourned at 1802.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
Wayne Arthurs, Caroline Di Cocco,
Garfield Dunlop, Andrea Horwath,
Cameron Jackson, Kuldip Kular, Phil McNeely
John Milloy, Jim Wilson
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Finance and economic affairs /
Finances et affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Phil McNeely
Wayne Arthurs, Toby Barrett, Pat Hoy, Judy Marsales,
Phil McNeely, Carol Mitchell, John O'Toole,
Michael Prue, John Wilkinson
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vic Dhillon
Marilyn Churley, Vic Dhillon, Brad Duguid,
Linda Jeffrey, Jean-Marc Lalonde,
Deborah Matthews, Jerry J. Ouellette,
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Andrea Horwath
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Michael Gravelle,
Andrea Horwath, Tim Hudak,
David Oraziotti, Ernie Parsons,
Laurie Scott, Monique M. Smith,
Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Justice Policy / Justice

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bob Delaney
Michael A. Brown, Jim Brownell, Bob Delaney,
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Frank Klees, Peter Kormos,
Shafiq Qaadri, Mario G. Racco, Elizabeth Witmer
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Bob Delaney
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mario G. Racco
Donna H. Cansfield, Bob Delaney,
Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese, Ted McMeekin,
Norm Miller, Tim Peterson, Mario G. Racco, Mario Sergio
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Public accounts / Comptes publics

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro
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Bill Mauro, Julia Munro, Richard Patten,
Liz Sandals, Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Marilyn Churley
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony C. Wong
Gilles Bisson, Marilyn Churley, Kim Craitor,
Kuldip Kular, Gerry Martiniuk, Bill Murdoch,
Khalil Ramal, Maria Van Bommel, Tony C. Wong
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Social Policy / Politique sociale

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal
Ted Arnott, Ted Chudleigh, Kim Craitor,
Peter Fonseca, Jeff Leal, Rosario Marchese,
Mario G. Racco, Khalil Ramal, Kathleen O.Wynne
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

Electoral reform / Réforme électorale

Chair / Présidente: Caroline Di Cocco
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Norm Miller
Wayne Arthurs, Caroline Di Cocco,
Kuldip Kular, Norm Miller, Richard Patten,
Michael Prue, Monique M. Smith,
Norman W. Sterling, Kathleen O.Wynne
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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