



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 38th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 38^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 17 November 2005

Jeudi 17 novembre 2005

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

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



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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 17 November 2005

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 17 novembre 2005

The House met at 1000.

Prayers.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD
PRESERVATION ACT, 2005
LOI DE 2005 PRÉSERVANT
LA PROPRIÉTÉ FAMILIALE
DE FREDERICK BANTING

Mr. Wilson moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 20, An Act to ensure the preservation of the Frederick Banting homestead / Projet de loi 20, Loi visant à assurer la préservation de la propriété familiale de Frederick Banting.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to standing order 96, Mr. Wilson, you have up to 10 minutes.

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey): I'm happy to rise and lead off debate on my private member's bill, the Frederick Banting Homestead Preservation Act. Before I begin, I want to thank Helena Guergis, the federal member for Simcoe–Grey, for bringing to my attention the fact that the Ontario Historical Society had allowed the Banting homestead to go into disrepair. She is to be commended for her efforts to get everyone together just over a year ago. She held a press conference on the Banting homestead ground, and we began the fight to save this homestead. I also want to salute Bob and Peter Banting, Larry Keogh, Mike MacEachern, Alex Wright, Doug Curwood, Garnet Madill and all of those in Alliston and across the country who have given their support and who have worked so hard to preserve the memory of such a great Canadian.

Sir Frederick Banting was born on November 14, 1891. His birthplace is a farm in my hometown of Alliston. Canadians connect Sir Frederick Banting with the discovery of insulin. For this outstanding medical discovery, Dr. Banting was awarded the Nobel Prize for medicine in 1923—Canada's first. A noble man, he did not seek to profit from his achievement. Instead of applying for a patent, Banting transferred the rights for his life-saving serum to the University of Toronto for \$1. This magnanimous gesture ensured affordable insulin for millions of people suffering from the metabolic disorder known to

us as diabetes. His contributions to medicine were so immense that CBC viewers and listeners selected him as one of our top-10 greatest Canadians.

The purpose of my bill is to preserve Sir Frederick Banting's memory by safeguarding the buildings and property where he performed some of his earliest experiments. The home and buildings on Sir Frederick's Alliston farm are deteriorating. Earlier this week, I passed along to each member of this House some photos of one of the last remaining octagonal sheds in this country that sits on the Banting farm. By examining the photos, you will see how the shed looked in 1995 compared to now. More importantly, you will see the declining condition of a national historic site. I am sad to say that the homestead of this medical giant is almost in ruins, largely through Ontario Historical Society inaction.

Edward Banting, the last owner of the homestead, bequeathed the property to the society in 1999 on the understanding they would preserve and maintain it for the benefit of all Canadians and indeed the world. Unfortunately, they have failed to live up to that arrangement. In most countries, a birthplace of this national historic significance would be a shrine. Why have the so-called guardians of this heritage failed to preserve a national treasure—a treasure that's right here in our own backyard, a treasure that has been abandoned and permitted to fall into ruin?

My private member's bill underscores the spirit in which Edward Banting bequeathed his 100-acre property to the Ontario Historical Society. While he was alive, Edward had more than a dozen meetings with executive members of the society during which he expressed his wishes. Any reasonable person would immediately grasp the sense of Edward's bequest. He trusted the Ontario Historical Society to do what he had discussed with them. He counted on this more than 100-year-old organization with a well-established reputation for promoting and preserving Ontario history to maintain the homestead as a permanent memorial of a great Canadian.

Unfortunately, Edward was mistaken. The mission was clear, the terms were understood, yet the promise has been unfulfilled. Proud Canadians support our campaign now underway to fulfill this mission. That mission is essential if we are to respect and honour the Banting family and express the gratitude of 350 million insulin users worldwide.

The restoration has to begin now. It's time to repair the damage that six years of carelessness have caused. It's time to restore those buildings and it's time to protect the property from potential vandalism and further wear-

ing away. In the words of the Banting family, the Ontario Historical Society has misled their membership and the public. Though Sir Frederick Banting lived on the farm until he entered the University of Toronto medical school, they say it was not his home. What nonsense. Because the family remodelled the farmhouse, they say it isn't the original home where he was born. They say the farmhouse was in disrepair when they were given the property in 1999, an opinion that's contradicted by the photos. At that time, Edward's daughter, Marie, was living in the house and maintaining the property in a very reasonable manner. Since assuming title, the Ontario Historical Society has condoned a level of deterioration that no self-respecting homeowner would ever permit.

The society asserts that in addition to the free gift of this historic 100-acre farm, Edward should have given them an endowment for its upkeep. They conveniently forget to tell the public and their membership that a local potato grower pays rent on that farm and generates income for the farm of between \$15,000 and \$20,000 a year. What has the historical society done with that? That's more than enough money to pay for the utilities and the taxes, and it's a pretty good endowment by anyone's standard to maintain and enhance the buildings on that property.

Why has the property had to endure six years of neglect under the hands of the Ontario Historical Society—six lost years? The homestead was placed in the trust of a group that is overseeing the destruction of a legacy—a legacy for people with diabetes, the Bantings, Canadians, the world and indeed our local residents of New Tecumseh. The Banting family are appalled with the mismanagement of this historic property, and I share that frustration. I know all members of this House will share that frustration.

My bill, if passed, imposes a restrictive covenant on the property. It prohibits the erection of any new structures. It also prohibits the destruction of the current structures that are on the property and allows for only maintenance or repair to those buildings. They certainly will not be allowed to tear down the buildings that are there. It allows the Minister of Culture to send inspectors in to make sure that the buildings are being maintained and that the Ontario Historical Society is living up to the trust the people of Ontario place in that organization.

Initially, my bill was just to signal our determination to save this historic property. I was hoping—and we had meetings. In fact, unfortunately, the last meeting was a year ago. We had a number of meetings. The Deputy Minister of Culture was trying to negotiate a deal between the town of New Tecumseh, the Banting family, the Banting educational committee and the Ontario Historical Society. Unfortunately, no deal was to be had. A year later, we have to go the legislative route and use this legislative hammer.

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I want to conclude by reading one of the letters that I've received. This one is from Harvey Cuff, the chairperson of the Banting Historical Trust in Musgrave Har-

bour, Newfoundland. As you know, that's where Dr. Banting's plane crashed during the Second World War. He's a war hero, in addition to being the discoverer of insulin and many other inventions, frankly. It says,

"Dear Mr. Wilson,

"On behalf of the Banting Historical Trust Inc., I am writing this letter in support of protecting and preserving the historic property of the Banting farm/homestead in Alliston, Ontario.

"It was on a mission to England that Sir Frederick Banting's plane crashed 10 miles inland from Musgrave Harbour, Newfoundland, during World War II. Local hunters, led by a search plane from Gander, located the wreckage. The bodies of Sir Frederick and crew members William Snailham and William Bird were taken to the Orange Lodge in Musgrave Harbour. The pilot, Joseph Mackey, survived.

"This ill-fated crash has always been a part of our history and considered a fascinating and intriguing story. In 1991, the wreckage of the plane was airlifted to the Banting Memorial Municipal Park and an interpretation centre was built next to the plane. In 2001, the 60th anniversary of the tragic crash, the Banting Historical Trust was successful in getting funding to have a replica of the plane (a Hudson Bomber) rebuilt and a monument put on the site for the men who died in the crash. The interpretation centre displays artifacts of the plane and tells the story of the life and death of Dr. Frederick Banting, who in 2004 was given the honour of fourth place by fellow Canadians as Canada's greatest hero.

"The site, since it opened in 1991, has received more than 50,000 visitors from around the world. There are so many people living with diabetes who would not be with us today if not for Dr. Banting's discovery of insulin. Visitors have expressed an outpouring of emotional gratitude for Dr. Banting's work and life-saving discovery....

"The Banting Historical Trust Inc. wholeheartedly supports and encourages the Sir Frederick Banting Educational Committee in their efforts in securing this property and their plan to form a foundation for the preservation of the buildings and conversion of the fields to a camp for diabetic youth. What a wonderful inspiration and legacy for the co-discoverer of insulin, of which without insulin many of these children would not be with us today."

That's from Harvey Cuff, the chairperson of Banting Historical Trust in Musgrave Harbour.

I would ask all members to support this bill today. It's unfortunate that the Ontario Historical Society, which receives \$242,000 in grant money from the Ministry of Culture, has failed to live up to their mandate and to their promise to the people of Ontario to preserve and enhance national historic properties such as this. The property is worth a lot of money. Apparently, the historical society is more interested in money than in saving this national historic site.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek): It is indeed a pleasure to rise today and speak to this bill. I want to thank the member for Simcoe-Grey for bringing this issue forward to the House. It's an important one.

I think everybody here knows that I'm the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Culture. Heritage is very near and dear to my heart, not just my portfolio, and it is for many, many reasons.

I think what we need to reiterate for those who maybe are not quite familiar with the exact contribution that was made by Sir Frederick Banting—I know it has just been outlined, but we can't say it enough. We know the name Banting. We know the term "insulin." We know what it does for diabetics. But we have to go over what exactly was the contribution he made. It was unique; it was special.

Sir Frederick Banting was born and grew up on a farm in Alliston, Ontario. He became Canada's first Nobel Prize winner for his discovery of insulin, but he did not profit from this monumental discovery. He gave the rights to the University of Toronto to keep insulin affordable and to further medical research. That in itself is an extraordinary contribution, because we know that since the discovery of insulin, since it came into common use, millions and millions of lives have been made worthwhile, in fact have been saved, through the use of insulin. Many people would have otherwise died of diabetes. So his contribution is absolutely enormous, not just to the history of Ontario or Canada but internationally. This is a worldwide historical figure.

As I mentioned, heritage and history are close to my heart. It is the importance not just of the stories of the people who came before us, how they lived, how we got to where we are now, but it is often their legacies. The legacy of Sir Frederick Banting and his contribution is a living legacy. It is a life-giving legacy. It is an inspirational story that must be told again and again. Clearly, one of the ways that we tell these inspirational stories is through the places where part of the story perhaps took place. In this case, part of the story of Sir Frederick Banting took place in Alliston, Ontario, on a 100-acre farm. It's not the original Banting homestead. It's not the original home where Banting was born. That has been replaced. However, it is that sense of place that is still there, and that tremendously important piece of international history took place there.

That is why our government passed amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act. For decades, we had been watching important heritage properties in our province be destroyed, demolished, whether they were built heritage or natural heritage. We have watched those properties be destroyed, and there has been tremendous demand for three decades now for changes to the Ontario Heritage Act that would give tools to municipalities to help protect these important heritage properties. Previously, municipalities could only delay the demolition of an important heritage site by 180 days; they could not prevent it. We have now, through our changes to the Ontario Heritage Act, provided municipalities and communities with the tools they need to permanently protect heritage buildings. And that is why I am strongly urging the municipality to continue with the process that they are engaged in right now with the Ontario Historical Society to come to an

agreement that will preserve and celebrate the history of this tremendously important place.

And I have to reiterate at this point the fact that heritage makes our communities incredibly vital and also viable. There is a tremendous economic benefit to historical and heritage sites. They bring tourists, they provide education, and they often provide communities where people want to live and want to congregate, because they tend to be very beautiful. You've all heard me say this in the House before, and my minister has said it very well: She says, "People do not come to see a strip mall; they come to see history, heritage, beautiful buildings, beautiful architecture."

If you have ever been to Europe, you know that when you step into the streets of many European cities the history is tangible. They're beautiful places because they have recognized their heritage. They have preserved it and celebrated it, and they bring people from all over the world there to see it. So there is also that economic benefit. You make a stronger community when you celebrate and protect your heritage.

While I fully support the spirit of this bill, I do feel our government has provided the tools for the communities to solve this problem. We know the negotiations are still going on right now, and we would like to see the community resolve this issue. We do have a couple of things, and I want to just outline what can take place here. There are two better mechanisms for long-term protection, because although I say the spirit of Bill 20 is great, it could make restoration a little bit difficult. It makes it difficult to establish a future use for this site, just because there might be alteration required. We'd like to leave a little bit of flexibility in there, because in the past there was difficulty if we were too restrictive. We need to have some flexibility in there so that the site can be used in special ways.

The OHS could work with the town now to register a heritage easement on the title of the property, which would require the current and all future owners to ensure the upkeep of the farm. That can be done in a specific way. More commonly, the town of New Tecumseth could designate the property under part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. Such a designation could ensure upkeep but at the same time be tailored to meet the needs of each farm building by identifying all the parts in the appropriate municipal bylaw. It could also allow for future uses, perhaps as a camp for children, as has been suggested, and establish minimum maintenance standards. It could be made as restrictive as need be without impacting future uses. An adaptive reuse is really, really important if we are going to make the maintenance and preservation of our heritage buildings viable well into the future.

Also, a designation may be applied without the approval of the OHS, so if the municipality felt sufficiently strongly about the situation, it can just go ahead and designate it as a heritage property, and then the heritage act kicks in and we protect that property. The town simply has to use the powers the province has already given it, since the Ontario Heritage Act already makes it

possible to protect the Banting farm from alteration and even demolition.

Decisions regarding the use of the Banting farm should be made, though. We feel fairly strongly these negotiations should continue. We do have a commitment from the OHS that the roof is to be repaired. Apparently there was a failed attempt at this earlier, for a number of reasons, so it has lasted a little longer, but they have given us their assurance this is going to go ahead immediately.

Once again, I want to thank the member for Simcoe–Grey for bringing this forward, for bringing this to light, and for giving us all the opportunity, once again, to understand the incredible contribution that Sir Frederick Banting has made to generations and generations of human beings and will continue to make to the lives of people. I just want to reiterate the importance of his birthplace, its value emotionally, its value historically and its value economically. That has to be recognized, and I encourage the town to recognize that as well. Thank you very much to the member for Simcoe–Grey for bringing this forward.

1020

Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford): I'm pleased to join in the debate. Certainly, I'm in support of Bill 20, brought forth by my colleague—senior colleague, I should say—from Simcoe–Grey. It's called An Act to ensure the preservation of the Frederick Banting homestead. I just want to commend Mr. Wilson and Ms. Guergis, the MP for this area, with respect to their bringing this important issue to the attention of the community. Certainly maintaining heritage properties as a point of principle is something that we should respect in this province.

I know my own constituency office was a former assembly area, armoury, in the late 1890s and early 19th century with respect to training of Canadian forces. It unfortunately was allowed to deteriorate. At the time I was elected in 1995, I chose to take on that building to maintain it, because it was not being maintained, even though it was a city of Barrie building, and bring it up to the standard that it should be as a historical site. That's why I take a strong interest with respect to this bill in terms of maintaining and protecting our heritage properties, because once they're gone, they're gone forever and you can't look back and say, "Well, we should have done this." This is an opportunity to do something constructive.

This is a 100-acre piece of property. I believe it's zoned agricultural, but it's surrounded by residential home development, and a developer, from what I understand, is interested in purchasing that property. There's no doubt why they would be interested in it, because as everybody knows in this Legislature and as my senior colleague Mr. Wilson knows, Simcoe county was not covered by the greenbelt legislation. The greenbelt legislation, because it doesn't apply to Simcoe county, has led to intensification, an incredible search for land, an incredible search to get developable land. Certainly New

Tecumseth, which is the home of Honda, is an area that is going to be targeted for growth. Certainly being able to get land in an area that can be developed, such as the property where the Banting homestead is, has proven to be a big issue. I believe that if the greenbelt legislation had applied to Simcoe county, it could be applied to protect that particular piece of property, because it is agricultural land. What we have is mass intensification and a tremendous amount of activity by groups that want land to develop. This is why my senior colleague from Simcoe–Grey has come forth with this bill, because something has to be done now. You cannot just sit idly by. He has worked diligently. He has also set in course a procedure that will hopefully be adopted by the House today where we can get expedited committee hearings and also an expedited process to bring this piece of legislation into law.

It's a restrictive covenant to protect the property, and it has to be acted on, I would say, not only to preserve the buildings—because when you look at the buildings in the pictures that were provided by Mr. Wilson, they show that the property has just gone into deterioration. It's just not acceptable for a heritage property to be left in ruins the way it is. If you have a property and it's put in trust to you, you have to maintain that property. Otherwise, you shouldn't have taken it on in the first place. So what we have here are buildings that are not being maintained. We have, no doubt, a valuable piece of property here, because of the fact that the Liberals' greenbelt legislation has sort of worked in reverse effect in Simcoe county. There's an intensification of people looking for land. This is a prime parcel of land in New Tecumseth because of the fact that it's an attractive area to develop.

We have a situation here that has to be addressed immediately, it has to be addressed responsibly and it has to be addressed in a manner that is going to respect the family and respect probably one of the great Canadian citizens and a great humanitarian—Frederick Banting.

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): I have to say that this is one of those bills that anybody who has ever taken a step back and looked at an historic building or an historic site, anybody who has owned an historic building or been living near an historic site or anybody who has participated in any way in the preservation of either buildings or properties that are significant in our collective historic past and tried to save those gems for the future would say is a no-brainer.

This particular homestead, this particular site, is extremely important and is one of the symbols of the kind of people this country has produced who have gone on to do some wonderful things for humankind as a whole. I don't think it's necessary to go into a long history lesson as to the contributions of Sir Frederick Banting, or Dr. Frederick Banting. Suffice it to say that anybody who has been touched by the disease of diabetes—and it's recognized that diabetes is a disease that is on the rise, particularly in young people—knows how important Banting's discovery of insulin is in the management of that illness. It's unfortunate that so many people who are touched by

this disease end up in serious medical situations. Unfortunately, that remains a problem to this day: People lose limbs as a result of gangrene and other complications of diabetes that are not treated effectively or properly.

I have to say that when you look at the opportunity that's before us to make sure that the place of residence, the homestead, of Dr. Frederick Banting is preserved, I think it's incumbent upon us to make sure that that happens. There is a time on Thursday mornings when we talk about issues that are not really partisan in nature but are more co-operative, things that can get done that are not about your party or your platform but more about the real issues that face communities, the real issues that face Ontarians, the real opportunities we have to make some differences.

I think this is one of those where some might say, "Well, it's a homestead. It's an historic site. What's the big deal?" But it is a big deal. If we don't take the time to preserve our history, if we don't take the time to acknowledge and recognize and celebrate the contributions of people who have done so many great things, and if we don't do that in a way that will last into future generations, then we really do lose a bit of our collective understanding of who we are as a community, who we are as a province, who we are as a nation.

1030

I really think that this bill brought forward by the member for Simcoe–Grey is one that gives us an opportunity not only to acknowledge the work of Dr. Banting but also the work of the people in the community who are trying to make sure, through volunteer efforts and volunteer hours, through the sheer love of history and sheer desire, that we don't lose these kinds of really significant homesteads or sites. For their sake, we need to make sure that this bill is unanimously supported.

It's a bill that in effect preserves this site, that says that as a province we're committed to preserving this site. We want to see this site exist not only now but well into the future. We want to make sure that the sheer neglect that happens when you don't make positive efforts, particularly with historic sites, doesn't happen, that we don't get to a situation of erosion and of deterioration of the site.

Like anyone knows, it's that old adage, "a stitch in time saves nine"; in other words, let's make sure we're doing everything we can do right now and on an ongoing, regular basis to take care of this piece of property. If you don't do it now, if another six years goes by, and another six years after that, and nothing is done to make sure this site is preserved, we're going to turn around one day and it's not going to be there any more. It will be the collective shame of the members of this Legislature and everyone else who could possibly have lent a hand in the preservation of this site.

I'm happy to be able to support this bill. I really do laud the member for bringing it forward. I actually own right now an historic property. I'm in the process, probably—I'm definitely in the process of selling it at this point in time, mostly because I don't have the time to keep up with the darn thing. It's a property that was built

in Hamilton in the 1850s. It's called the Stone Terrace. It's one section of a commercial street frontage that has living space above and commercial space below. It's a fabulous, fabulous building.

Unfortunately, as I said, I really don't have the time to keep up with it, nor the money, to be honest with you, because they can be money pits, for sure. But it's a gorgeous piece of property. I've been really honoured to be able to hold on to a piece of history the way I have for the last several years, but I recognize that I don't have the opportunity. I'm extremely busy with serving my constituents and serving in this Legislature, and I recognize that it deserves the love, the care and the attention that it can only get from someone who has got the time to put into it. That, unfortunately, can no longer be me, so I'm selling that property to a couple of people who I know will take very good care of it.

Similarly, although this is not a sale of property, this is an acknowledgment that if it's not being taken care of, this historic site has to be enshrined in legislation. The preservation of this site has to be enshrined in legislation to ensure that in the future it is taken care of, it is properly maintained and all of the upkeep is stayed on top of; otherwise, these buildings can deteriorate extremely quickly, and these properties can very quickly become problems, and very expensive ones.

I was really pleased when I received the package of background materials on this site that the member provided. It's too bad there is no opportunity for us to be able to hold up the pictures and let people see exactly what it is that we're dealing with here. The buildings in this package of photographs are quite interesting—an octagonal implement shed. In fact, some of the pictures show the deterioration of that very shed. It's a very unique structure and quite an interesting building.

I've had the pleasure of working with people in Hamilton who are interested in architectural and historical preservation. They are a very passionate group of people and they are very concerned that in our haste to build and create new structures and change the utilization of land, we're going to lose some very significant and very beautiful buildings. I know that the people in Hamilton are no different than the people in every other community who are interested in the architectural and historical preservation of lands and buildings. They acknowledge, they recognize and they treasure, and they try to convince the rest of us that these pieces of property and these buildings are pieces of history that should be treasured and need to be valued. And we can't just do that in words, we need to do that in action.

If anybody has ever had the privilege of travelling to Europe, for example, there's history no matter where you turn. But those buildings in Europe that we all look at in pictures, or for those of us who have had the opportunity to be in Europe, we're awestruck when we get there and see the history, the gorgeous buildings, the beautiful artwork and the frescoes inside and outside. It's amazing when you go there, but it's not amazing by accident. It's amazing because these cultures, these communities and these countries have spent a lot of time and effort and

have huge restoration and maintenance budgets for these beautiful, architecturally significant buildings.

That is something we've lost in many of our older communities. I know that even in the community I'm from, we have constant struggles and we're in constant anxiety about the loss of historical sites. In fact, there's one that's currently on the radar in Hamilton and that's a building called the Lister Block, which was in fact the very first indoor mall in all of Canada. That is a downtown site that is deteriorating significantly and has been doing so for decades now. It's extremely unfortunate. There are two concerns: One is that the longer it deteriorates, the less likely anybody's ever going to have the money to bring it back to where it should be, and secondly, because of the state of the building—it's right in our downtown—it causes concern for people.

I'm going to leave a few minutes for my colleague Gilles Bisson to say a few words about this bill, but I really do support it. It's the right thing to do. I think opportunities to save these buildings and to respect and acknowledge the value of the contribution of people like Sir Frederick Banting cannot be missed.

Mr. Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls): I'm pleased to rise in support of the bill of my honourable colleague the member from Simcoe-Grey, Jim Wilson, on the preservation of the Sir Frederick Banting homestead. I will say that it's a fine thing he's doing. The preservation of this home in his riding is significant.

I want to tell you that I'm fortunate to have a descendant of the Banting family in my riding of Niagara Falls. He's an exceptional dental surgeon in my community. His name is Ron, the great-nephew of Dr. Frederick Banting. Because of that, I've had the opportunity to sit with him and a number of his family members to really get a personal insight of the significance and importance of this bill. The quest of the Banting family is to honour their great-uncle and to advance the well-being of those who fight against the terrible disease of diabetes. In fact, I have two members of my family who are affected by diabetes, so I know first-hand the consequences of it.

At the outset of the debate on the bill, there are two things that should be made clear. The family itself has never profited and does not want to profit by this bill. It's a bill to preserve and protect the heritage and to recognize the discoverer of insulin. In fact, Ron's brother, Bob, and others—again, I've met Bob Banting—have invested countless hours in an attempt to preserve the legacy and discovery of insulin.

1040

For the people who are watching, the 100-acre farm was left in trust to the Ontario Historical Society by Edward Banting, and that was after many, many meetings to explain to the historical association what this bequest meant. It appears, sad to say, that the Ontario Historical Society has different objectives from those envisioned by Sir Frederick Banting.

It's felt by the supporters of the Banting homestead that it's obvious that the Ontario Historical Society has a very different objective, and that is their own financial

survival; that's job number one. This is sad. If they sell the property, and there are suggestions of that, to reduce their debt and to finance operations, what's going to remain? Are they going to sell it and we're going to see a subdivision there? I think most of us can reflect back on our own communities and have seen some of those situations happen. I can tell you that in my own community of Niagara Falls we just recently lost Loretto monastery, a magnificent historical facility. In fact, I was there the day they had an open house and walked through it with thousands of people. A lot of tears were shed; a lot of stories were told. It will be forever lost and forever missed in our community.

The family strongly feels that Sir Frederick Banting was never about money and they constantly tell me that. In fact it's been said, and it's important to say again, that he could have made millions of dollars from the discovery of insulin but he didn't. In fact, it was determined in a deed that no one would ever profit from the discovery of insulin. Who would do that in this day and age?

The farm was important in the development of insulin. Without Dr. Banting's farming experience, the original supplies of insulin would not have been made or would have been more difficult to obtain.

Unfortunately, our lifestyles and diet choices are now showing that diabetes is growing, almost to a very staggering, significant situation. However, supporters of this are really interested in juvenile diabetes and envision at some point the development of a camp for juvenile diabetics. These unfortunate young people need the support of their peers—and that's who we are today, their peers—and we have an opportunity to support a significant bill.

As most people know, there are some very significant things about Dr. Banting. Of course, we know he grew up on a farm in Alliston. He became the first Canadian Nobel Prize winner, for the discovery of insulin. He didn't profit from this discovery. He gave the rights to the University of Toronto to keep insulin affordable and to further medical research into the discovery, which has saved millions of lives across the world of people who, without insulin, would have died from diabetes.

The preservation of this homestead and its development for humanitarian purposes related to diabetes is essential. Sir Frederick Banting and the Banting family would have wanted it this way, and this House shouldn't want it any other way either.

I have two articles from the newspaper; I want to quickly read them. One says, "A Nobel Home, Neglected." It has a picture of Bob Banting standing in front of the home. Although it's not a prop and may not be clear, it shows what disrepair this home is now found in. The other one says, "Family Fights to Save Banting Home."

I want to again congratulate the member from Simcoe-Grey. I urge all the members in the House to support this bill. It's a significant bill and a great opportunity to show that this House cares about history and about preserving it. I again commend the member for bringing this bill forward.

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington): It's my pleasure to rise today and speak in support of Bill 20, An Act to ensure the preservation of the Frederick Banting homestead, brought forward by the member for Simcoe–Grey.

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the member on bringing forward this private member's bill, which deals with an issue very close to the hearts of his constituents. This member is certainly one of the hardest-working members of this House. He is motivated by high principles and high values, which he acquired from his family, and he makes a conscious and deliberate effort to apply those values and principles to his day-to-day work in this Legislature.

I'm proud to say that I share a few things in common with the member for Simcoe–Grey. We were both born in the same week of the same month of the same year, and we were elected to serve our constituents here in this Legislature at the same time in 1990. I am honoured to have had the chance to work with the member throughout our time here in the House. It was his honour to serve as our Minister of Health during a very challenging time shortly after our party formed the government in 1995. He did a tremendous job in that role.

The bill that this member brings forward today shows his ongoing commitment to his constituents in Simcoe–Grey. The Frederick Banting homestead is the birthplace and home of one of Canada's all-time greatest physicians. In 1923, as has been pointed out, Dr. Banting discovered insulin—a landmark medical discovery that changed the lives of millions of people around the world who suffered from diabetes. He was later recognized for his achievements when he won the Nobel Prize for medicine, the first Canadian to win this prestigious award.

Dr. Banting then made a selfless and honourable decision. After devoting his life's work to helping those suffering from diabetes, which prior to the discovery often meant a death sentence, he made sure that insulin would help humankind for decades and even centuries to come. Instead of trying to profit from his fundamental and ground-breaking discovery, Dr. Banting chose to sell the rights to his life-saving serum to the University of Toronto for the princely sum of \$1. This courageous decision ensured that diabetes sufferers around the world would have access to affordable insulin. At the time of Dr. Banting's discovery, Canada was considered by many to be a backwater of the British Empire, often ignored and forgotten by the world. Who could have imagined that a Toronto-based Canadian researcher would make such an important and life-saving discovery that was eluding the rest of the world?

This is why the bill brought forward by the member for Simcoe–Grey is so important. This bill seeks to preserve the Frederick Banting homestead, located near Alliston, Ontario, which serves as a constant reminder of the achievements of Dr. Banting. Unfortunately, the home and buildings on this property, as has been pointed out, are deteriorating, and are in some danger of being destroyed should the land be sold for development.

Currently, the Frederick Banting homestead is the property of the Ontario Historical Society, donated to the society in 1999 by Dr. Banting's nephew, Edward Banting. It was the hope of Edward Banting that the society would maintain the property and buildings and help preserve the memory of his distinguished uncle. Sadly, to date, this has not been the case. The homestead and surrounding property have deteriorated badly after being neglected and poorly maintained for the past six years. Understandably, Dr. Banting's family and the larger community feel let down by the Ontario Historical Society's failure to properly maintain this historical landmark.

The member for Simcoe–Grey has introduced this bill in order to preserve and protect the Frederick Banting homestead, which is a symbol of the momentous achievements of this Canadian hero. In fact, the viewers and listeners of the CBC recently recognized him as one of our top 10 greatest Canadians of all time. It is my hope that this bill passes second reading in this House so that the Legislature can make a statement that they care about this very important Canadian historical site. It is our opportunity as members to signal to the government that steps must be taken to preserve this valuable landmark.

Since we're talking about insulin, I think it's appropriate to make reference to the private member's bill brought forward by the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North in the previous session of the current Parliament: Bill 55, the Health Insurance Amendment Act, intended to help pay for insulin pumps for diabetics. This is a bill that I supported as well. I received a great deal of positive feedback from my constituents on it. I hope that the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North will continue to advocate for this idea in the balance of the current Parliament. He would continue to enjoy my support if he did so.

I look forward to hearing the contributions of other members of this House on this important bill and would encourage everyone to support Bill 20.

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–Baie James): Je voudrais prendre cette occasion pour dire que le caucus néo-démocratique va suivre et supporter la motion qui était mise par notre collègue M. Wilson. On pense que cette motion a beaucoup de bon sens. Premièrement, M. Banting a fait une contribution non seulement dans la société canadienne mais aussi dans la société de notre planète avec sa découverte, qu'aujourd'hui 350 millions de personnes à travers le monde en bénéficient et sont en vie grâce à ce monsieur-là. Imaginez-vous que vous, un individu, êtes capable d'influencer la santé du monde de la manière dont il l'a fait avec sa découverte. C'est vraiment quelque chose de fantastique et, franchement, quelque chose qui est parfois dur à comprendre.

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Le problème est simplement celui-ci. Son domicile, là où il est né, est présentement en danger de savoir exactement ce qui va arriver. Le neveu de M. Banting avait donné cet édifice, la propriété, à la société historique de la région. C'était un défi un peu trop difficile pour eux autres. Ils ont eu des problèmes à être capables de garder

en place tout ce qui est nécessaire pour garantir que la terre et le bâtiment sur cette terre demeurent en bonne condition pour l'utiliser comme site historique et pour attirer, premièrement, des touristes, mais deuxièmement, pour célébrer la vie de M. Banting.

Sur ce point-là, M. Wilson amène devant nous une motion qui dit qu'on va créer une autre société à but non lucratif pour être capable de donner la capacité à eux autres de faire ce qu'ils doivent faire pour s'assurer que ce bâtiment reste là où il est et en bon état, et qu'on peut célébrer, à travers cet édifice, la vie de M. Banting et aussi la découverte qu'il a faite.

C'est intéressant de dire qu'au Canada, parfois on n'est pas bien « smart » quand ça vient à trouver des manières à reconnaître l'histoire de notre pays. On le sait, ceux qui ont eu la chance de faire des voyages autour du monde. Moi-même, j'ai fait l'Europe, l'Asie, l'Afrique et d'autres places. Spécialement l'Afrique, et je dois dire l'Europe, n'ont pas seulement une histoire très longue, mais ils y arrivent d'une manière un peu différente quand ça vient à promouvoir l'histoire de leur pays. Par exemple, si on va à Paris, si on va à Bruxelles, si on va à Londres, si on va à Venise, l'histoire est représentée d'une telle manière que le public peut le comprendre et peut le voir. Par exemple, si on a la chance d'aller à Londres et on se promène dans les rues, il va y avoir une pancarte qui dit qu'à cette place, à telle ou telle date, telle ou telle affaire est arrivée pour telle ou telle personne.

On prend en Europe, je pense, une meilleure manière d'apprécier, premièrement, l'histoire de son pays, mais aussi de la présenter d'une manière pour qu'elle vive dans la société d'aujourd'hui. Si j'ai quelque chose à dire sur ce point, c'est que le Canada a une histoire très riche, une histoire qui date des milliers d'ans, parce qu'on sait que les communautés autochtones étaient ici avant nous. On a besoin de prendre, je pense, l'habitude de mieux reconnaître, premièrement, qu'on a une bonne histoire et, deuxièmement, de la présenter d'une manière que, à la fin de la journée, on peut en être fiers, on peut la voir, on peut la vivre, et on peut célébrer ce que c'est d'être Canadiens.

Je pense que cette motion en est une partie, parce que M. Banting a joué un rôle important dans l'histoire du Canada. On doit le célébrer, on doit s'en souvenir, et c'est pour cette raison qu'on va supporter cette motion.

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): I'm pleased to stand in the House today and speak in support of the bill presented by the member from Simcoe–Grey. The member has worked in the Legislature during the last session and this one to preserve the birthplace of a monumental figure in Canadian history. Not only is the member from Simcoe–Grey committed to conserving the historic site of the Frederick Banting homestead, but he has taken the time and energy to consult the Sir Frederick Banting Educational Committee and the descendants of Sir Banting himself in the process of writing this bill.

I think all members of the House can learn from the way this bill was drafted. As representatives of our respective ridings, we are here on behalf of the thousands

of Ontarians living in our communities, and sometimes we must stand up to well-established, province-wide organizations to protect the rights and properties within our community.

Many community members in New Tecumseth have been discouraged as they witness the disrepair and declining state of the Banting family home. There had been much speculation that the Ontario Historical Society intends to sell sections of the property for other purposes, and there has been much turmoil as a result of public statements from the Ontario Historical Society. This organization has implied that the generous donation of the homestead from the family of Sir Banting was not enough and that they required an additional endowment fund to maintain the property.

In spite of the ill will surrounding this home, there is hope in this commendable bill. This is a home that deserves to be a celebrated tourist destination and educational historic site. The success of the bill offers a solution to the citizens of New Tecumseth and to history buffs worldwide. The bill would promptly address the poor condition of the home and work proactively to prevent any further damage to the property. It gives due recognition to a man who was rightfully listed among the greatest Canadians.

This Monday, November 14, was Sir Frederick Banting's birthday, a date that is now recognized as World Diabetes Day. As well, each year the Canadian Diabetes Association celebrates November 6 as Sir Frederick Banting Day.

There are countless reasons why we should respect the memory of Sir Frederick Banting through preservation of his childhood home. It is fitting that Remembrance Day falls between the two days designated in his honour by the Canadian Diabetes Association and the world diabetes association.

Not only was Sir Frederick Banting an incredible mind in the world of medicine and a generous soul who forfeited all the possible profits from the patent to his life-changing drug, insulin, doing this so that insulin could be affordable treatment for all those afflicted with the disease, but Dr. Banting was also a courageous war hero. We have the opportunity to preserve the home of a Nobel Prize-winning doctor, a doctor who was also a Military Cross recipient for his service during the First World War. After establishing himself as a leader in medicine in the 1920s, Banting did not rest on his laurels. His patriotism and dedication to military service continued. He was a liaison officer for the North American and British medical services when the Second World War began. Before he succumbed to his own injuries from an air disaster in that war, Banting was sure to dress the wounds of the pilot of the aircraft in which he was flying.

Today, as members of the House, we have the chance to keep the memory of this incredible man alive. In 1923, this Legislature endowed the Banting and Best chair of medical research. Now, over 80 years later, we have a chance in this House to preserve the memory of this revolutionary doctor's childhood home.

As you know, diabetes continues to affect the lives of thousands of Ontarians, many of whom could not possibly lead a normal, healthy life without insulin, which was discovered in 1920 by Sir Frederick Banting and Charles H. Best.

Last spring, the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North introduced a bill that recognizes the contemporary reality of the disease that is diabetes and would provide insulin pumps to diabetics under the Ontario health care program.

The member from Simcoe–Grey is bringing forth a bill that will assist the public history of our province and our country. In preserving the Banting homestead, there is the potential to bring the legacy of Dr. Banting to the forefront of people's minds.

Although there are tens of thousands of Canadians living with diabetes, this is not an unproblematic affliction. Diabetes is a contributing factor in the deaths of approximately 40,500 Canadians each year.

The homestead, established almost 115 years ago, was bequeathed in good faith by the Banting family to the Ontario Historical Society in 1999. The family did so with the intention of preserving Sir Frederick Banting's legacy to share with all Canadians. Our own Minister of Culture said recently that "For too many years, our heritage resources have been left vulnerable." This is all too true and proven by the current state of the Banting homestead.

I hope that the success of this bill will reverse the years of damage incurred to the property and that the bill can someday provide an educational and recreational resource for the hundreds of thousands of proud Canadians who wish to honour the memory of Sir Frederick Banting.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr. Wilson, have you two minutes to reply.

Mr. Wilson: I want to thank the member from Stoney Creek for her kind comments, and my colleagues from Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford, Hamilton East, Niagara Falls, Waterloo–Wellington, Timmins–James Bay and Laurie Scott, who just spoke.

The Ontario Historical Society, frankly, duped Edward Banting. He had over a dozen meetings with them in the three years before he died in 1998, and by the time the will was done, in 1999, the Ontario Historical Society received title as a result of Edward Banting transferring title to them. Perhaps he made a mistake. Perhaps it should have gone to the Ontario Heritage Foundation, which raises money to preserve and enhance historical properties like the Banting homestead. But what's done is done.

As was said, the homestead is probably worth about \$2.5 million. There are some 300 homes being built around it right now by Mattamy developers. The fact of the matter is that it needs to be preserved.

I appreciate the kind comments from my colleagues. We've got some great historians here in the House. I think Mr. Arnott perhaps said it best. In Canada, we take for granted these things. We don't preserve our heritage

like we should, like other countries do. To underscore that, just a few weeks ago 25 people from the ministry of retired persons in China flew into Toronto, drove up to the homestead and did a tour. That's how interested the Chinese are. We have delegations all the time, from many, many countries, come to this homestead. All it has in front of it right now is an historic plaque. It's not the big tourist attraction it could be.

The fact of the matter is, the Banting family wants to make it a diabetic camp for youth. I appreciate the support of all members of this House. I hope the bill will pass, and I hope the government will actually call it for third reading.

1100

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should do whatever is necessary to protect the citizens of Ontario from nuisance bears.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Ms. Smith has moved private members' notice of motion number 5. Pursuant to standing order 96, Ms. Smith, you have up to 10 minutes. You have the floor.

Ms. Smith: I rise today to speak to the issue of nuisance bears, which is very important in my area, and in my riding in particular. Although it is perhaps somewhat selfish of me to take up the time of the House on this issue, I think it is an issue for all of Ontario, and specifically for northern Ontario.

This issue, which has always been a part of our lives up in northern Ontario, came to my attention most recently this fall. It has really become an important issue and a serious safety concern for the children of our community and for the broader general public. I decided to bring forward this resolution in September, when I had spoken to a number of people who had been directly affected by the presence of nuisance bears in our communities.

Nuisance bears are affecting our schools. In Mattawa, the school is on guard for bears. Let me just cite for you an article from the North Bay Nugget: "Hungry black bears are roaming the streets of Mattawa and Trout Creek, and the North Bay District Ministry of Natural Resources is getting swamped with calls from people who say the bruins are getting too close for comfort." This is dated September 9, 2005. "At least one school has increased supervision during recess after tracks were found on its property, and residents are walking in groups at night with flashlights and bells to ward off encounters." This is in downtown Mattawa. The council in Mattawa "discussed the situation at a special meeting ... after a bear tore apart a garbage box" at some time over the weekend of September 9 "at the Mattawa Child Care Centre on the St. Victor school property." The bears are right in the school properties, right in our communities.

In North Bay proper, we've had bear sightings near the West Ferris Secondary School. On September 14, we

had to have the North Bay Police Service and our humane society get involved and actually trap and remove a bear cub. They were involved because the Ministry of Natural Resources' bear wise technicians were unavailable at the time due to the high number of calls and traps being sets in Mattawa and other communities. We do have resources in place to deal with the nuisance bears. However, they're being tapped out.

Again, this one really brought it close to home for me in October, when we had a bear sighting right next to our high school at 11:30 in the morning. The high school yard is attached to a primary school. The children in the primary school were kept in the school for their lunch-hour recess because the teachers were too concerned about letting them out while there was a bear in the vicinity. The police were called and they actually shot this bear cub out of a tree in front of the students. I bring this particular incident to your attention because it was right in downtown North Bay. It was about eight blocks from where I live. It's right next to the school that my brother attended. It's very scary. It also disturbed the children and the neighbourhood. That was following a sighting the night before of a bear in that neighbourhood as well.

When I was in Mattawa recently for a rally, I met with some of the seniors there who were afraid to take out their garbage. They're afraid to go out of their homes. One particular senior told me that she hadn't left her house for two days after she'd seen a bear at the end of her driveway. This isn't, of course, just an issue for my riding. As you know, we've had some serious bear incidents across the province, including the tragic mauling death of Dr. Jacqueline Perry in September in the Missinibi Lake provincial park and the injuring of her husband.

The numbers speak for themselves: There have been an inordinate number of sightings this year in particular of nuisance bears across the province. Province-wide last year, 2004, we had 948 occurrence of bear sightings in August, and in September we had 736. This year, 2005, we had 1,758 reported occurrences in August, and in September we had 2,385. Let me just compare that to the numbers of bears that have been reported killed: In 2004, 25 in June and 30 in July. In 2005, 81 in August and 92 in September. We're seeing an exponential growth in the number of sightings of nuisance bears and then having to deal with them.

Again, the number of bears reported killed is a low number, because it's those reported. We have a number of residents who are taking issues into their own hands, dealing with the nuisance bear problem on their property. The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters questioned some of the numbers that the Ministry of Natural Resources is putting out, because they feel that they are being under-reported.

I want to take the Legislature through a brief history of where we've been and where we're going with the bear hunt. Back in the 1980s, there was an open bear hunt; there was no real restriction on our bear hunt. In 1987, we introduced some licensing restrictions around the bear hunt. It wasn't until 1999 that we actually saw the elimin-

ation of the spring bear hunt, many would argue for political reasons, and many have questioned the science behind that decision.

I will concede that there are some questions around the science and the correlation between the increase in nuisance bear sightings and the elimination of the spring bear hunt. However, the people of my community are firmly of the belief that the elimination of the spring bear hunt has increased the number of nuisance bear sightings and the bear population in the north.

As you know, in December 2003, our government introduced the bear wise strategy. This is based on some very good science: Most of the reports from different jurisdictions talk about the fact that we have to educate the population on how to deal with our nuisance bears. The bear wise program, introduced in March 2004, outlined a strategy for reporting bear sightings, responding to those bear sightings and preventing human-bear conflicts. As the Minister of Natural Resources reported yesterday, the reporting line which we set up, which is a 24-hour, toll-free hotline, has had 14,500 calls.

We have developed protocols with 40 municipalities in order to deal with nuisance bear calls, and our municipalities are supported by the MNR. But as I indicated, in our community and the North Bay sighting in West Ferris, we didn't have the resources available because there are so many calls that our resources are tapped out.

I might also draw your attention to the fact that in 1996-97, the previous Conservative government cut the resources of the Ministry of Natural Resources down to the bone. We have, over time, been building them up since our government came into power. We have been providing more resources to that ministry in order to deal with these problems, but there is a legacy of problems within the ministry not having the proper resources that they need.

The bear wise program is going some way to deal with the problem, but as I've noted, our communities are noting an increase, this year especially. I wanted to bring it to the attention of my fellow legislators, as well as to the attention of the general public. In the North Bay Nugget on October 1, we had a report of a gentleman living in Powassan who shot four bears outside his home after they ripped off the screen door of his home. In his home at that time were his wife and six-month-old child. That causes huge concerns in a community where we have bears being that brazen and bold. That led the township of Chisholm, at its council meeting in October, to pass the following resolution:

"Whereas the cancellation of the spring bear hunt several years ago has resulted in an overabundant black bear population; and

"Whereas the black bear population is becoming increasingly bold and there are increased incidents of nuisances bear and bear attacks in urban and rural areas; and

"Whereas the spring bear hunt was a viable management tool and a way of controlling the black bear population;

"Now, therefore, be it resolved that the council of the corporation of the township of Chisholm petitions the

Honourable David Ramsay, Minister of Natural Resources, to immediately move to reinstate the bear hunt, and further, that this resolution be circulated to local members of Parliament and all municipalities in the province of Ontario for support.”

The science is there. Many reports have indicated that prevention and education is an important component in dealing with the spring bear hunt. But there are also other ways of dealing with nuisance bears, and I would argue that one of those ways is to reintroduce the spring bear hunt and allow for some management through that means.

1110

Most recently, in the state of Pennsylvania, where they've been dealing with the issue, they introduced a management plan for black bears in October 2005 based on the most recent science and studies. They do indicate that nuisance bear conflicts have economic and public safety consequences. They go through a number of initiatives which they are introducing, including a major educational effort. But as part of their overall strategy, they are looking at, by October 2008, identifying areas within their bear management units where locally high bear abundance is a factor in human-bear conflict and they're evaluating if hunting may be used to reduce that abundance. I would suggest that might be an appropriate approach for our government to deal with the nuisance bear problem which is putting our population at risk, particularly in the north. I think the issue of our children's and our seniors' safety is something this Legislature has to take seriously.

I thank you for your time, and I look forward to responding to my colleagues.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): It's my pleasure to join in the debate on this resolution from the member from Nipissing, “That in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should do whatever is necessary to protect the citizens of Ontario from nuisance bears.” I'm very pleased that the member has brought forward this resolution. It's important to get the government's attention on this issue, although I would point out that the member is part of the government and the government doesn't need a resolution from private members' business to act on the question of nuisance bears—although I think this resolution is certainly a lot more important than the past one, which was the Kormos resolution to do with a dress code in the Legislature. This is certainly a much more important issue.

The government needs to act on the recommendations of a report that was tabled on August 28, 2003, and that's the Nuisance Bear Review Committee report. In that report, there was a recommendation for a partial reinstatement of the spring bear hunt. Now, they didn't find in that report a connection between the cancellation of the spring bear hunt and an increase in the number of bears, but they did recommend a reinstatement of a very controlled spring bear hunt for socio-economic reasons.

There was also a recommendation in that report for further research, and I think that is very much needed.

Information I have from an independent organization on the bear synopsis for 2005 says that Ontario's black bear population may now be 100% higher than what the MNR is telling the public—that means 200,000 or more and growing. The MNR's estimate of 100,000 is based on information more than 20 years old.

This has been a bad year for bear attacks and deaths. We've had at least four people attacked—one killed—in Ear Falls, Chapleau, Sioux Lookout and Upsala. Problem and nuisance bears are at unprecedented levels across the province. For example, the town of Marathon recently declared their garbage dump a danger zone. MNR's province-wide toll-free number received 15,000 calls in 2004. The OPP and residents are killing problem and nuisance bears at unprecedented levels.

I received a lot of information, and I don't have enough time to go through everything, because other members want to speak to this. But I did receive some excellent information from an outfitter in the north, Roxann Lynn at Moose Horn Lodge—a whole package of information, including some highlighted excerpts from the Liberal campaign document of 2003.

But one of the more compelling letters in that information package is a letter from the Minister of Conservation for the province of Manitoba. I'll highlight a couple of parts of that letter: “Experience in this province”—Manitoba—“has shown that if bear populations increase, then there would be an increase in the number of bear-human conflicts. This increase would lead to more bears being killed in response to increased property damage and to circumstances where personal safety is at risk. Large numbers of cubs would subsequently be orphaned as, inherently, less thought is given in these circumstances to the protection of females and cubs....

“The spring bear hunt provides socio-economic benefits to Manitoba. The purchase of goods and services by both resident and non-resident hunters, coupled with initiatives such as the mandatory use of outfitters and resident licensed guides by non-resident hunters, is important in many areas of the province, particularly where high unemployment exists.

“Manitoba's bear populations are stable, and Manitoba Conservation views a well-managed spring bear hunt as a legitimate approach to managing the bear population.”

“With respect to your inquiry on orphaned cubs, it is my understanding that approximately six orphaned cubs are handled each year by Manitoba Conservation.”

Interestingly enough, that letter was signed by Oscar Lathlin, the Minister of Conservation for the province of Manitoba. In Ontario, a partial assessment of the number of orphaned bears with no spring bear hunt, which was part of the justification for the cancellation of the spring bear hunt—in 2001 in Ontario, there were 159 orphaned bears as compared to six in Manitoba.

Also, this person sent a letter from the minister in Quebec as well, outlining why they support having a spring bear hunt as well.

I think the spring bear hunt obviously has some socio-economic benefits, but also it is a tool for the control of the population of bears. We've certainly seen many in-

cidents this year, in particular the very tragic incident near Chapleau, when Jacqueline Perry, a doctor from Brantford, was killed by a bear.

I support this resolution, and I think the government should act on the report that it has in its hands and received in August 2003. I look forward to some comments from other members of our party who want to add something to this debate.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): Well, I think there has been a conversion in this Legislature. I just heard it happen a couple of times this morning. Us northerners—Mike, Monique, others. When was it that the bear hunt was cancelled in northern Ontario? Was it under the Liberal government? Was it under the NDP government? No. It was under the Conservative government. I just heard the whip for the Conservative Party now take a position that we should reinstate the black bear hunt, and I think that's rather interesting, considering it was his very party that cancelled it in the first place. So I look forward to a response to this question from the Tory caucus when they get up and debate. Is I to take—"Is I," as I always say in good English, right? Am I to then take from the speech from the Conservative whip that the Conservative Party has reversed themselves and they are now taking the position that we should reinstate the black bear hunt in the province of Ontario? I need to know that from the Conservative caucus.

I also heard my good and esteemed colleague from North Bay—I think I heard her right, and I was a bit surprised. As some people say, I almost swallowed my bubble gum because I thought what I heard you say was that you're in favour of the reinstatement of the spring hunt. I would like a clarification on that at the end, because if that's the case, then I would ask the member, why not bring the motion in the House this morning rather than having a motion now that basically says, "The government should do everything possible to deal with black bears"? Well, that's kind of a no-brainer. We're all going to vote for that, and we all believe that the government should do all it can about nuisance bears and protect the public. I don't think there's a member in this House who's going to vote against that. But if the position of the Liberal member is that there should be a reinstatement of the spring bear hunt as a means to control the black bear population in northern Ontario, if that's what Madame Smith is saying, I would suggest that you should say that categorically, yes or no, because maybe I misunderstood you. I heard you say yes. If the answer is yes, then you should have amended your motion to say, "I call on the Legislature to reinstate the black bear hunt," and we could have had a very clear vote. People would have voted the way they were, and we would have known the position of both the Liberal and the Tory caucuses.

I've got to say that our caucus—I'm personally not on side with this decision—has always taken the position that the cancellation is something that should be maintained. That's what my leader says and that's what the majority of caucus says, other than me. I've taken an opposite view. Sometimes you lose these battles within

caucus and you take your lumps and you go along. However, that is the position of the NDP caucus, and I'll be very clear about that. But if I'm hearing that there is now a change on the part of the Conservatives and Liberals, that they are now reversing themselves and saying we should reinstate the black bear hunt—I just thought that was rather interesting. The motion should have been straight up or straight down: "Do you vote for the reinstatement of the black bear hunt?"

1120

I want to say that we have, as all legislators have over the years, made fun of the black bear thing. But it's really a serious issue in northern Ontario. For anybody who lives in northern or, I would argue, central Ontario—you probably have some of the same problems in and around Parry Sound, Muskoka and those areas—I'm telling you, it is a real serious issue. For example, in my own backyard last year, at about 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning—I live in downtown Timmins. It's not as if I live out in the bush. I have a cottage out in Kamiskotia, but I live in downtown Timmins, on Middleton Avenue. I, like most residents, have been woken up a whole bunch of times over the last two or three years by bears in our backyards. And I live in a downtown community. I don't leave my garbage outside, so there's nothing for the bear. The barbecue is protected, so there's nothing for the bear to get in the barbecue. But the bears, rummaging for food, travel from one backyard to the other knocking over barbecues, trying to get into homes, going into garbage cans. In fact, I've been woken up in the middle of the night more than once by Timmins police chasing black bears out of my backyard on Middleton Avenue.

Just now, before I came into the Legislature, I was talking to Glen and Marjory Ironside on a different issue. I asked them what they thought about this. Their position was that the cancellation was the wrong thing to do. Both Glen and Marjory, like most northerners, I think, say the reinstatement of the black bear hunt is something that should be done, because they're seeing, as citizens in the city of Timmins, an incursion of bears into our community.

I want to relate to you a couple of stories that happened to me just last summer. I think they're kind of indicative of what we're starting to see. First of all, we need to understand what the issue is. As there are more bears out there and humans are basically encroaching on their territory—that's what's happening. As our communities are getting larger, our cottage areas, all that stuff, as we're developing more and more land, there are less and less places for bears to sustain themselves as they normally do out in the forest. As a result of an increased population of bears because of the cancellation of the spring bear hunt, I would argue, you have more bears with fewer places to go, so they're coming to where we live. Basically, we're the ones who are backing up into their backyard.

The point is this: The bears are not as afraid as they used to be. I'll give you a couple of examples of what happened to me this summer. I've got a cottage out in Kamiskotia. We have a dump run by the municipality, so

you bring your garbage out to the dump. Obviously, there are going to be bears at a dump. We all know that. That happened even before the cancellation of the black bear hunt. But here's the difference. It used to be that you'd see one or two, sometimes three bears, from time to time, at the dump. But if you saw them, and you drove up in your truck or your car with the trailer on the back with the garbage, the bears used to skedaddle. They didn't want to be around humans, because they were nervous about having humans around them. Nowadays, those bears don't give a darn. They're in big numbers. I'll show up at the dump and there will be five, six, seven bears rummaging through the garbage bags at the dump. It's to the point that you know when you go to the dump now, you're going to see bears.

Here are a couple of things that happened to me this summer. I went over one time with my Uncle Condo, who has a cottage just up the road from us. I have this habit—because a lot of our elderly neighbours don't want to go to the dump. Mrs. Damini next door doesn't want to go to the dump because she's afraid of the bears. Mr. and Mrs. Lo-a-chie, on the other side, don't like to go to the dump because of the bears. So I've gotten in the habit of picking up the garbage as I go to get rid of the garbage for the neighbours who are afraid to go to the dump. Well, I went with my Uncle Condo, I think it was this summer, and we saw the bears. We drove up and did what we normally do—made a bit of noise, trying to scare the bears away. But they weren't being scared away, so we took my truck and parked it a little farther away so the bears wouldn't bother us. So here I am, and I know there are no bears where I'm dumping the garbage into the hole. The bears are over there by about 150 feet. I see there are no bears inside the hole. I walk behind my pickup truck, open up the back and take out the garbage bags. I'm talking to Uncle Condo as I throw the garbage in, at which point my Uncle Condo goes, "Holy Jeez, look behind you!" I'm throwing the garbage on top of the bears, because those suckers had walked across during the time I had turned around; they were like five and 10 feet behind me, and I'm throwing garbage bags on to the bears. It was, "Whoa, let's get out of here."

Something could have happened. Some people would say that might have been a good thing, if there had been a by-election in Timmins—James Bay. I think most people would have said no. But the point is that the bears are no longer afraid of humans, and it's getting to be a problem. Even somebody like me, who has grown up in the bush and who understands the rules of the outdoors—I'm careful and responsible about how I approach this; I looked to see if there were any bears. I'm used to bears. We've had them around for a long time. And here, these bears had no fear. They saw me throwing garbage out of the back of my truck. They're at the point where I'm throwing garbage and I hit one bear square in the head, right in the snout, with the garbage bag. If the bear had got kind of—thank God there was a steak or something inside that bag, because he didn't come after me; he went after the bag. That was a good thing. That's an interesting thing:

"Bisson? Garbage bag? Bisson? Garbage bag?" Imagine the decision that bear had to make. That's scary when I think about it. That's another story.

I've got to tell you another story. We go back and we tell this story to some of our neighbours over a couple of wobbly pops, as we call them back at the cottage. We're having supper over a glass of wine and talking about this bear story. My aunt says, "You know what? Every time I've brought people out to the dump to take a look at bears, I was never lucky to see bears. Can I go with you next time?" I said, "Sure." So I pick up Aunt Carmen, I put her in the truck, we drive out to the dump, and there, behold, are about four, five or six bears. We're sitting there looking at the bears; we're inside the truck where it's nice and safe. Finally, the bears kind of move away, so I open the truck door and my aunt is going, "Gilles, Gilles, arrête. Don't do that. The bear is going to come after us." I say, "Ma tante, don't worry." I grab the garbage bags, I throw them inside the hole at the dump, I get back in the truck and I sit down.

Now, because I was throwing the garbage, the bears got attracted. This is the interesting part, back to my point that they're no longer afraid. The bear didn't only come up to sniff the garbage, didn't only put his paws on my truck and look at the window; it got in the back, the box of my truck. Here my aunt is panicking inside the truck somewhat, saying, "Look at that. The bear is in the back of the truck. What do we do?" I said, "Let's drive and show it to Uncle Condo." I didn't have the nerve to do that, because I would have brought the bear into a populated area, but that was my reaction. My point is, the bears aren't afraid any more. The bears are basically in contact with humans much more than they have ever been before, to the point where the fearful part is that they're not afraid.

Another story: In Smooth Rock Falls, a gentleman—and I can't remember his name. I wish I had called for the name. If I had called Réjeanne Demeules, the mayor, she would have told me. This guy was at a celebration that the community was putting on last year, I think it was. The story with him is, he comes walking out of the arena at the celebration, in the middle of summer, on an August day, walking across the town as he normally does to get back to his house. He turns the corner at the schoolyard, and what does he come in contact with? A big black bear. Now, he kind of got scared, so he raised his arm. The bear took a swipe at him and scraped him, the whole bit. Now, you should see the bear. I've got to say, the bear fared less well than the guy did. The guy only got swiped at. I wonder what happened to the bear. The point is, they're not afraid of humans any more and that's really what we need to take seriously.

One other thing before I wrap up. One of the things that happened, again this summer: We've had this cottage at Kamiskotia since about 1961, and we have never seen bears on our property. Mrs. Damini or Mr. Lane next door, or ourselves, or the Lo-a-chie's or the Albertsons, or the Vincoeurs, we've never seen bears on our property. They've just always stayed away. What we've started to see last year and this year is that the bears are starting to

incur on to our properties. They are not satisfied staying at the dump; they're now coming up to the cottages and they're looking for garbage in our garbage cans. We're responsible cottagers; we don't keep garbage in our garbage cans. But to show you the degree to which these bears are persistent, I've got this garage that's built out of railway ties that my father built before he died. He built this great garage out of railway ties, a pretty solid thing. I've got a habit that if I leave the cottage, I take my garbage cans and I put them inside the garage and lock it up because I don't want the bears being attracted by the scent of an empty garbage can, those plastic ones with the covers on them.

So I go away, and my mom comes in the next day to the cottage. My mom is 70-some years old; I won't say her age. She drives the car in and she walks into the cottage. She didn't notice, but the bear was around where the garage is. It was a neighbour who noticed that the bear was scratching at the door of the garage, had ripped part of the door apart, and was trying to dig underneath to get inside the garage. It luckily couldn't get in because I have a cement floor there so he couldn't dig his way underneath. My mother walked right by the bear. She happened not to see it because the bear was down and not scratching at the door as she walked in. Now, the point is, what can a 70-some-year-old woman or anybody do if they walk into a bear? It can be a very dangerous situation.

I think a couple of things need to be done. The government has said that they were willing to re-upload the responsibility of taking care of the nuisance bears. I think that's a good thing. That's something that we, as New Democrats, called for. But we've not done the kind of stuff that we need to do in order to protect citizens when it comes to bears. For example, there was supposed to be a program put out where basically the government was going to spend some money on trying to do some public education about what to do when you're in contact with a bear, because for a lot of people, it's just a natural reaction, if you run across a bear, what you do. There are things that you should do and things that you shouldn't do, and if you do the wrong thing, the bear may come after you. Those are some of the things that I think the government needs to look at.

This motion? Obviously, we're going to support it.

You didn't tell me anything. Do you want time?

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): It's OK.

1130

Mr. Bisson: OK. She says to keep on going. I just looked up at the time and noticed where I was at.

Anyway, I say to the government, I think there's not going to be anybody who is going to vote against this motion. As parents, as citizens of our communities and as MPPs, it's a no-brainer. We're all in favour of doing more to protect the public from nuisance bears. But I go back to my original question to Madame Smith from Nipissing—I forget the name of the riding.

Ms. Smith: It's just Nipissing.

Mr. Bisson: Just Nipissing. Sorry. I really want to make clear what you're saying here, because what I

thought I heard you say in the debate was that you were in favour of the reintroduction of the spring bear hunt. If that's the case, there are people in northern Ontario who would agree with you. I just think that what you should do is be clear, yes or no, are you in favour? If you are, I'd like to know an answer to the question, why, then, did you not put into the motion that we should vote here today, this day, on the reintroduction of the spring bear hunt? If you can answer those two questions, that would be very helpful.

I say again to my colleagues, we will be in support. I'm sure we have not heard the last of the bear story. It's an issue that I think affects many people across Ontario. We need to figure out what to do with this, because as Madame Smith has said—she's right, and I totally agree with her on this—somebody is going to get hurt. We've already had somebody killed this summer in Missinaibi Park. We're now at the point where we're seeing bears in schoolyards, and she pointed that out in her debate, quite rightfully. I know it's happened in my constituency, where bears have been sighted during the school year in the schoolyard at an elementary school. That's pretty scary stuff. I think we need to figure out what we can do as legislators to be able to make it safe so that people are not put at risk because of the increasing bear population and the bears being less afraid and coming into our communities. We need to do what we can to make it safe, and we will vote for this motion.

Mr. Bill Mauro (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): It is my pleasure to rise today and speak to this motion. I'd like to thank the member from Nipissing for introducing it. The member is from North Bay as well, and being from Thunder Bay, I think that people from southern Ontario sometimes confuse the two. We're only about 10 or 15 hours apart by car. It's a bit of a segue, though, into this issue, because I think this issue was confused by those in southern Ontario as well when they were trying to get it right back in 1999.

I can tell you that one of the first times I spoke in caucus after the election was on this issue. It was then, and it is still now, a very sensitive issue in northern Ontario, and I think that in short order it is going to become a bit more of a sensitive issue in southern Ontario as well.

If we go back to 1999 and look at the history of what was intended here, beginning with the chronology of Harris and Snobelen and the Shad Foundation, the intention as an animal welfare issue, I think—at least that put out there for public consumption—was that we were going to try and limit the number of bear cubs that were orphaned through the spring bear hunt. That is what was put forward as the reason for substantiating the cancellation of the hunt, that there were too many cubs being orphaned. Well, in fact, as is often the case when we sometimes meddle with Mother Nature, we get it exactly wrong. If you talk to the people in the know, they will be the first ones to tell you that this cancellation of the spring bear hunt has had probably the exact opposite effect. There are probably—and according to them, most

assuredly—more bear cubs being orphaned now than there were before the cancellation of the hunt, and that's for two or three different reasons.

One is that during the spring bear hunt, there were many more adult male bears that were being culled. Of all the bears being taken during the spring hunt, about 70% of them were male bears. Of course, when there are more male bears in the bush, they become very cannibalistic in their nature when they get hungry; in fact, they will take bear cubs, and that's what's happening now as there are more male bears allowed to be in the bush.

In the fall hunt, there are now more female bears being mistakenly taken as well, which of course leads to cubs being orphaned.

The third thing, and most important, I think, for this Legislature to consider, is that there is a phenomenon that's occurring in northern Ontario now, and it's referred to where I come from as the "shoot, shovel and shut up" approach. As the number of large bears increases, people are taking matters into their own hands. If you think this policy is stopping the orphaning of bear cubs, I can tell you that when people live in remote communities, when they feel that their lives are in danger, that their children's lives are in danger, that their property is in danger, they are in fact taking matters into their own hands and shooting these bears. Many of them are not turning up in the numbers we see that are reported to MNR; they're just being killed. Of course, the result of that is orphan cubs as well. So if you are somebody out there who is concerned about animal welfare and you think that this policy was well-intentioned, I call tell you it's having exactly the opposite effect to what was intended. There are two main issues for me as well: the safety and the economic issues that this policy has affected.

In my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, I think I can safely say that, overwhelmingly, the people I represent in that constituency all would see this issue as having gotten greatly out of control. The sightings are increasing exponentially, as has been mentioned by the member from Nipissing. I can tell you there are schools that no longer put their kids out for recess in the fall, because they are afraid. There are too many bears in town. I can tell you about an individual who was pulled by a bear out of his tent and was being drawn into the bush, the bear seeing him now as a food source.

One of the things we're told is the reason for the increase in sightings is that it was a bad crop year, or that there was not enough food in the bush. Well, we had many years previously where there were bad crop years, and we did not see the increased number of sightings. There are things going on, and primarily what it is is that there are too bears many in the bush.

I don't like the word "nuisance" bear, either. I think that severely understates the seriousness of this issue. These are dangerous animals that will kill at a moment's notice.

I have to go quickly. I apologize.

Economically: Ecotourism does not replace what was lost by the fall hunt. This was a \$40-million annual

revenue stream in the north. If you multiply that, on a relative basis, that would be a multi-billion dollar industry in southern Ontario.

I'm told I need to wrap up. I apologize for rushing through this.

I want to comment on the bear wise program. I think it is something that was well-intended. It has gone, through its education and prevention strategies, a fair way to trying to help a little bit, but clearly, this is a much more serious issue than can be addressed by simply the bear wise program. We need to give serious reconsideration to the reinstatement of the hunt.

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): We're debating a resolution that the government do "whatever is necessary to protect the citizens of Ontario from nuisance bears." I feel it is a much broader issue than that. It's an economic issue—certainly in the north—and it's a heritage issue.

The controversy has been around, I guess, since the mid-1980s. There were areas in North America where populations were declining, and much of that has rebounded, but that's certainly not a problem in the province of Ontario where the black bear population is one of the largest in North America. MNR had some conservative estimates two years ago of 75,000 to 100,000 bears. I think they've rejigged that to 150,000 bears, and I hear estimates of 200,000 bears.

With any large population of an animal like that, one of the most effective means of population control is hunting. Hunting is a management tool. It's a tool that is more than appropriate with respect to increasing populations of cormorants, for example, raccoons and possums. We have an issue in our area with the possum cycle. I think of deer. Myself, I've smashed into two deer in the last year. I've smashed two cars now. That tells me there are too many deer in my area. Again, hunting is the biological control.

However, banning the hunting of bears in the spring was not, at the time, a biological sustainability issue. As has been said here today, it was an issue related to the practice of hunting, to the position that young bears were potentially orphaned at that time of the year at a time when they're highly dependent on their mothers. But again, if you shoot a bear at the dump or kill one in your backyard in the spring, you have potentially created an orphaned cub. There are other reasons for cub mortality: starvation, for one, and the killing of cubs by male bears. I don't know whether they eat them or not. That's where we have to rely on expert opinion and science.

We have an ongoing controversy on the spring bear hunt. I fully support continued, objective, research-based analysis of the issue and scientific investigation. Much study has been done. I don't know how much of that has been made public or if the general public is aware of it, and I certainly don't think much of that has been acted on. Ongoing, independent external reviews are very important.

1140

Of course, safety is paramount. The protection of our environment and the management of species like bears is

dependant on a number of things. I feel it's very important that we maintain the legislative protection of our heritage rights and that we continue to rekindle the interest of young people in hunting. We have the hunter apprenticeship safety program in Ontario. That's an excellent program. We have legislation that protects the heritage of hunting and fishing. All of this, in my view, is very important for future generations, not only in northern Ontario but in southern Ontario.

I live in the sticks. I'm a hunter. I smash into deer with my car. I guess I get my limit that way. For many of us in the south and the north, hunting is a way of life, and that includes the spring bear hunt.

Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie): I know our time is limited and there are numerous speakers today, so I will try to condense what I have as best as possible. First let me say that I fully support the member from Nipissing's resolution to do whatever is necessary to ensure that the safety of Ontarians is paramount. Certainly in northern Ontario, in the riding of Sault Ste. Marie and surrounding area, this has become a much larger issue in recent years. I can recall being on city council, and a trapper who was contracted by the city used to get about 15 to 20 calls about nuisance bears in the area of Sault Ste. Marie. Following the 1999 cancellation of the hunt, that number escalated to 250, to 600, and there are now well over 900 calls of reported bears in Sault Ste. Marie and area. A Web site, sootoday.com, continually posts bear sightings, and if anybody logs on there, they can see just how many sightings we're talking about. We're not talking about an area that is in the wilderness, in the backwoods of northern Ontario; we're talking about residential areas, main streets, schoolyards and the like.

I would like to read a brief article that appeared in the October 1, 2005, Sault Star. This certainly doesn't have much to do with wildlife science. It's important to get the history of the cancellation on the record here at Queen's Park. This was written by a former NDP candidate in the Algoma-Manitoulin riding and I think it's right on the mark:

"Many northerners believe this is the inevitable result of the cancellation of the spring bear hunt in 1999, a decision that continues to produce as much controversy and polarized opinion as the hunt, itself, did.

"Why was the hunt cancelled?"

"It had nothing to do with the preservation of black bears in Ontario. The estimated bear population in the province, then and now, is between 75,000 and 100,000 animals, which is close to capacity for the available range.

"The government's stated reason for the cancellation of the spring hunt was concern over the orphaning of bear cubs that was alleged to have occurred when hunters mistakenly shot nursing sows. The more widely accepted reason for the hunt cancellation was that the Tory government of the time blinked when a group opposed to the bear hunt threatened to mount a vigorous campaign in ... 1999 ... against eight first-term Tory MPPs in southern

Ontario who won their seats by a narrow margin of victory in the 1995 election. The group, funded by industrialist Robert Schad, distributed videos concerning the bear hunt to homes in the 'swing' ridings and conducted billboard campaigns against the hunt in southern Ontario.

"The number of bear cubs orphaned wasn't really significant—in the eyes of the anti-hunting groups and, ultimately, then Minister of Natural Resources John Snobelen, any number was too many. There are far more cubs orphaned each year by ... vehicle collisions than the number orphaned by the spring bear hunt. But the images of cute cubs on billboards in Toronto and the probable reaction of people in the southern portion of the province was too much for the Tories to ignore. They went ahead with the cancellation of the hunt, even in the face of concern over how much political clout and influence an interest group with deep pockets could have over the Ontario government. Ironically, the number of cubs actually orphaned has still never been accurately quantified.

"Rather than investing some money in an objective analysis of the mortality of cubs, the group spearheading the cancellation drive seized upon hypothetical estimates and stated them as fact on numerous occasions."

The addition in Ontario of 20,000 large bears over the past six years is an incredible concern, both in northern areas and throughout the province. The article concludes by saying, "Any measures that the bear management strategy concludes are necessary, including the reinstatement of the spring bear hunt, should be implemented. Never again in Ontario should biologically correct wildlife management strategies be trumped by political manoeuvring."

The presence of bears in the Sault Ste. Marie area in the community and in the city—I think we're fooling ourselves if we're thinking that these bears are not being shot. They're being shot now by city police officers and by the OPP. In schoolyards, there are reports of recesses being cancelled in Sault Ste. Marie; kids can't go out and enjoy some fresh air because there are bears in the schoolyards. As a former teacher, I recall getting notes from students who had come late to class, saying, "I couldn't get to the car because there was a bear in the driveway."

I just want to express my complete support for the member from Nipissing to do whatever is necessary to ensure that we protect the safety of all Ontarians.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): This is actually a topic that I'm very passionate about and I could spend a lot of time speaking about it. I'm going to be very succinct in the time remaining on some of the issues.

We talked about reporting bears. I'll give you an example. I hired an individual just outside of Timmins, in Mr. Bisson's riding. Pierre said a bear came into his yard up in Foleyet and killed his dog. I asked him, "Did you report it?" He said, "Oh, absolutely. I reported that bear." I said, "Well, do you remember about eight years ago, when you had the bear in the barnyard, and you went in

and grabbed the gun and came out? It had gone from the barnyard into the tack shop, and when you were standing there, you could hear a noise. You turned and looked, and the bear ran right overtop of you. You shot it and it fell dead after it had knocked you over. Did you report that one?" He said, "Well, no. Why?" I said, "Why would you report one that kills your dog, but you wouldn't report the other one?" That's because the incidence of reporting is now almost 100%. You're seeing a large number of incidents being reported because of those bases, because people are reporting them, and they should have been doing that in the first place.

Some of other things that need to be made very clear: When you're talking about territories of bears, the average boar or male bear will range up to 90 miles as part of their territory. I read in a book dealing with Oshawa, printed by Dr. Hoig, which stated that in 1918, an individual had just picked up his new car and drove to the ridges in Oshawa, which is about halfway between Port Perry and Oshawa. He saw a big black bear—it could have been any size—and he turned around and came back. In other words, the point I'm trying to make is that the range of bears has extended throughout the province of Ontario, and documents right back to 1918, when you talk about those things.

You talk about municipalities taking on the responsibility. One of the positions within the ministry was that if you take on the responsibility of bears, what happens with deer? What happens, for example, as on my street, when a deer crashes through the school window and goes right into the school? What happens with racoons, opossums, beavers and all the other animals? Or birds and bird droppings? I know I get complaints because birds are leaving droppings in one place in one particular house. What happens with all those incidents? Is it the responsibility of the Ministry of Natural Resources to take on all those actions and correct them all? No, I don't believe so, because once you accept the responsibility, and total responsibility, for one animal, then you take on the onus of accepting responsibility for all the other animals as well.

The member from Thunder Bay mentioned bears killing cubs. The reason for that is a practice called infanticide. What takes place is the boars go out, they find the cubs and kill them in order to bring the females back into season so they can breed them so that their prodigy or their life cycle or genes can continue on in cycle. That's the main reason that bears practice infanticide.

My, my, how we've changed from the NDP, when Frances Lankin stood up in this Legislature and gave out little tiny teddy bears to everybody. Soft, little teddy bears were going to be saved because the spring bear hunt was now protected. Well, guess what? The reality of the situation now is that bears are doing what bears do best, and that's going out to feed and get involved. They participate in activities and, all of a sudden, people are starting to realize, "Oh, my God. I'm seeing bears in my cottage now like never before, and they're not afraid of me."

1150

The spring bear hunt was more about managing the population numbers. The report in 2003 indicated that the numbers should not increase until 2005 because of the cancellation of the hunt. The reality of that situation is that bears are creatures of habit. In the springtime, when they are chased by dogs and shot at by people, they realize, "People: bad things; stay away." There was a report handed to me by a person, Vern Mason, that indicated that the reason the bears were going inside and ripping open tents and sleeping bags was because of the same thing Mr. Bisson mentioned. Guess what? At the dump, they smell humans, they smell garbage, they associate it with food and they rip the bag open. The same thing with tents and sleeping bags: All of a sudden they smell humans, they associate that with past practices, and they tear open the tent or the sleeping bag because they assume there is food there.

It's negative reinforcement that needs to take place, and that's what happened with spring bear hunt. You had negative reinforcement, negatively imprinting humans on bears, and they stayed away from them. When you closed that, it stopped that.

Bear populations are very difficult to assess. There is a tuna can bait line they use to try to determine the numbers, but it's very difficult to determine. In the same fashion that they determine the deer population and how the tags are allocated in that area—and that's done because of the amount of crop damage reported, as well as the number of car incidents that take place—they do the same thing with bears. When there's a large number reporting and a large number of incidents, they potentially have the opportunity to increase the tag allocations in that area to deal with that.

The study in 2003 was designed to effectively determine what is in the best interest not only of people but of bears as a population as well. With the large number and potentially increasing number of incidents, I expect we should see more. The one thing I'm disappointed about in the resolution is that we should have concrete actions in the resolution. I will be supporting it, as I did—and I've been on the record. I've been on radio shows stating that I think the spring bear hunt is something that should be continued. It doesn't help me a lot in Oshawa, but it's a personal belief. In this particular resolution, I think some more action specifically telling us what and how we can move forward would be far more positive.

Mr. Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): First of all, I want to thank my colleague from Nipissing, Ms. Smith, for bringing this resolution forward. In my opinion, this debate is long overdue. Indeed, there should be little argument that the province should be doing whatever it can to protect all its citizens from the nuisance bear problem. The question then becomes, what exactly should we do to deal with this increasingly dangerous situation?

In my opinion, we should begin by listening to the people who are affected by this problem: our constituents, all of whom are northern residents, for those of us in the north. For the past several years, I have been

inundated with calls from many constituents terrified as a result of their encounters with bears. Regardless of what ministry officials say about the number of calls they've received, this past summer was the worst in terms of calls I've received. People from Marathon, Terrace Bay, Schreiber—in fact, every community I represent—contacted me by phone to tell their story. On two occasions, constituents actually called me at home while the bear was clawing at their door. Bears are wandering through towns, school yards, backyards, around daycare centers. They are clearly a real danger to our citizens.

Frankly, my constituents become very frustrated when they are told that the problem is a result of a bad berry crop, or they're told to empty their bird feeders or to tightly enclose their household garbage or to be sure to clean their barbecue grill. They are already doing this—perhaps they need to be reminded, but they are already doing this—but the problem continues to get worse.

What we do know is that there are more bears out there than ever, and they appear to have lost their fear of human contact. As we all know, deadly tragedies occurred this past summer, and I fear more will take place unless we deal with the situation in a more aggressive manner. At a time when we are hearing discussions of a bear cull, I want to put on the record today a call for a similar discussion on the return of the spring bear hunt—a more humane, controlled hunt, for sure, but a return nonetheless.

I don't think that anyone in this House would dispute that the cancellation of the hunt in 1999 was purely politically motivated. Not even my Conservative colleagues across the floor, whose government made that decision, would disagree with me. Indeed, the consequences of that decision have been economic devastation for tourist lodge operators in the north and, I would argue, the truly dangerous situation we are facing today. While I do not think that the return of the spring bear hunt will immediately improve the problem, I have become convinced that an improved, properly run spring hunt will make a difference.

But perhaps just as importantly, agreement to begin discussion on the return of the hunt would send an important message to northerners, the message that we are listening to them. We told northerners during the last campaign that decisions affecting the north would be made by northerners. I believe that was a commitment that was genuinely and sincerely made, but in light of the serious concerns regarding the human-bear contact over the past several summers, it's become all the more important that we live up to that commitment. Certainly, a reopening of the discussion regarding reinstatement of the spring bear hunt would send a very clear message that we are indeed listening.

Mr. Tim Peterson (Mississauga South): In the very brief time, it's great to wrap up on behalf of the members from Nipissing, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay–Atikokan, Thunder Bay–Superior North and Oshawa.

I would like to raise this challenge with the member from Oshawa and the member from Timmins: that we approach our leaders to look at revising and helping to

get the bear hunt back. The official position of all the parties is that the bear hunt should be banned. I think it's incumbent on us as backbenchers to take a personal challenge to our leaders and talk to them about that.

From my point of view as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Tourism, the effect on tourism in the north has been devastating. It's approximately a \$40-million industry. As part of my job as parliamentary assistant, I did a trails consultation across Ontario. In northern Ontario we have the largest and best-run snowmobile trails in all the world. The 43,000 kilometres of snowmobile trails allow us access to nature and allow us to understand our Canadian heritage, for the real Ontarian personality is built in northern Ontario in our interaction with all forms of nature, including the wildlife there.

It is great to support this motion. I compliment the member from Nipissing for bringing it forward. I also hope it leads to concrete action.

The Deputy Speaker: Ms. Smith, you have two minutes to reply.

Ms. Smith: I'd like to thank those who joined us in this debate this morning: the members for Parry Sound–Muskoka, Timmins–James Bay, Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, Oshawa, Thunder Bay–Superior North, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay–Atikokan and Mississauga South.

I'd like to address a couple of the concerns and issues that were raised by some of my colleagues. I was delighted to hear that the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka is onside with us on this, because his caucus is notoriously not onside for a lot of northern issues. It's good to see you're supporting the north.

As many of you will remember, it was former Premier Mike Harris, who formerly represented the riding of Nipissing, who cancelled the bear hunt and left a lot of northerners feeling betrayed. The basis of that decision was not scientific, but was strictly political. Now we have the leader of the Conservative Party, John Tory, up in North Bay, and when asked about nuisance bears, he said more study was needed. I'm glad to see that some of his colleagues, members of his caucus, are onside for the reinstatement of the spring bear hunt. I hope you will have some success in convincing your leader of the need for it.

With respect to the comments from the member for Timmins–James Bay, I have been clear throughout my campaign in Nipissing and here in the House that I am in support of the return of a limited spring bear hunt. I've been clear on that since the beginning; I haven't wavered. There have to be some restrictions, but I believe that the return of the spring bear hunt is part of the management process that will reduce the number of nuisance bears in the north and increase the safety of our residents, including our children and seniors. I think it's a sad indication that your party here, represented by seven members, three of whom are from the north, cannot see fit to support the return of the spring bear hunt, but I leave it to you to convince your fellow members that it's needed here in the community.

You also asked about the education process. Our government has in fact invested \$900,000 in 165 projects

involving prevention, education and awareness through the bear wise program. I know first-hand from my discussions with MNR staff members in my area that they're in the schools, teaching our children about how to be bear wise. I think that is a really important part of this whole strategy on how to increase safety and deal with some of the concerns that have been raised here this morning.

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD
PRESERVATION ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 PRÉSERVANT LA PROPRIÉTÉ
FAMILIALE DE FREDERICK BANTING

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): We shall first deal with ballot item number 7, standing in the name of Mr. Wilson.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We will call in the members for a vote after we deal with the next ballot item.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): We will now deal with ballot item number 8, standing in the name of Ms. Smith.

Ms. Smith has moved private member's notice of motion number 5, "That in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should do whatever is necessary to protect the citizens of Ontario from nuisance bears."

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We will vote on this ballot item as well. Call in the members. I remind them, this will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1200 to 1205.

FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD
PRESERVATION ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 PRÉSERVANT LA PROPRIÉTÉ
FAMILIALE DE FREDERICK BANTING

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Will members take their seats, please.

Mr. Wilson has moved second reading of Bill 20.

All those in favour, please rise.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hoy, Pat	Patten, Richard
Arthurs, Wayne	Hudak, Tim	Peterson, Tim
Baird, John R.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Runciman, Robert W.
Barrett, Toby	Levac, Dave	Ruprecht, Tony
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sandals, Liz

Bisson, Gilles	Matthews, Deborah
Chudleigh, Ted	Mauro, Bill
Craitor, Kim	McNeely, Phil
Delaney, Bob	Miller, Norm
Duguid, Brad	Mossop, Jennifer F.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Munro, Julia
Gravelle, Michael	Oraziotti, David
Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.

Scott, Laurie
Smith, Monique
Smitherman, George
Sterling, Norman W.
Tascona, Joseph N.
Wilson, Jim
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 39; the nays are 0.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey): Mr. Speaker, I would like the bill to be referred to the social development committee.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr. Wilson has asked that the bill be referred to the standing committee on social development. Agreed? Agreed.

The doors will now be opened for 30 seconds before the next vote.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): We will now deal with private member's notice of motion number 5, standing in the name of Ms. Smith.

All those in favour, please rise.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hoy, Pat	Patten, Richard
Arthurs, Wayne	Hudak, Tim	Peterson, Tim
Baird, John R.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Runciman, Robert W.
Barrett, Toby	Levac, Dave	Ruprecht, Tony
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sandals, Liz
Bisson, Gilles	Matthews, Deborah	Scott, Laurie
Chudleigh, Ted	Mauro, Bill	Smith, Monique
Craitor, Kim	McNeely, Phil	Smitherman, George
Delaney, Bob	Miller, Norm	Sterling, Norman W.
Duguid, Brad	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Tascona, Joseph N.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Gravelle, Michael	Oraziotti, David	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 39; the nays are 0.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

All matters relating to private members' public business having now been dealt with, I do leave the chair. The House will resume at 1:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1210 to 1330.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CHILD CARE

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): Many Ontarians have been contacting me with concerns about the Liberal government's new child care program. Many are concerned that the government's preferred option for child care is expanding spaces in public schools. They want to know, and I want to know, that Ontario's families will be able to choose the child care option that is best for them.

Ontarians do not want child care to be provided only in the manner that suits the government. Parents know what is best for their children, and it should be parents who make the choice.

Ontarians want this government to consult widely before it moves ahead with any province-wide child care system. It must consult not only with the large lobby groups; it must consult with small home daycare operators and with individual families.

Families want to know that their child care options will not be chosen by governments or lobby groups or agencies. They want to do the choosing, as they know what is in the best interests of their own children.

EDUCATION

Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West): As we all know, education is a top priority for this government. From the Best Start program, aimed at giving young children the encouragement and support needed to embark on their academic careers, to the student success strategy, which ensures that their career is a long and fruitful one, the McGuinty government has demonstrated that the most important investment we can make is in our youth.

Hamilton West boasts fantastic institutions of higher learning. McMaster University and Mohawk College foster the developing minds of almost 35,000 students annually. It is institutions like these where young people can realize their dreams.

This past November 4, an agreement was put in place that will ensure that more students will have the opportunity to do so. This agreement, known as the “articulation agreement,” between the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board and Mohawk College will ensure that students from the school board are guaranteed admission to certain Mohawk technical programs if they graduate with certain courses on their transcripts. Furthermore, if these students score an average of 70% or higher in their high school programs, they may be exempted from certain introductory courses in the Mohawk programs.

The school board has many programs in place that will ensure children stay in school in order to realize their full potential. This agreement will further encourage students to pursue a higher education and will aid all students in their path for success, whether they pursue an academic field or a trade.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): It is unbelievable that the Minister of Education can come up with \$80 million of taxpayers’ money to ensure big union compliance when he has not one red cent to assist those who are given the responsibility of getting our children safely to and from school each and every day.

For over two years now, this minister has done absolutely nothing to address the legitimate concerns of

school bus operators with regard to reasonable compensation for service provided. While the operators struggle to stay afloat, their costs continue to rise. Aging fleets require increased maintenance to meet safety standards. They can’t even think of investing in new fuel-efficient buses with new safety enhancements. Operators from my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, such as Chuck Sandrelli, Steve Murray and Jim Manion, have told me repeatedly that this must be dealt with or they simply can’t afford to continue.

I say to the minister, take the politics out of this equation. Stop taking our children for granted. These operators have virtually no control over their costs. You must recognize that the transportation allocation given to school boards must be tied to the actual costs of operating a school bus.

You have broken your promise to keep rural schools open. You’ve gone back on your word. At least take the necessary action now to ensure that we can get our children safely to and from the schools that you have left open.

SUPPORT FOR THE DISABLED

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): I want to raise again in the House on an issue that I’m finding, alarmingly, is becoming more and more of an issue in my constituency of Timmins–James Bay. I would venture to guess that the issue is one that other members of the Legislature are hearing in their own constituencies, and that is that there seems to be a bit of a pattern developing that agencies such as the Association for Community Living, Access Better Living and various agencies that provide support in the community for those who are developmentally challenged are not able to cope to the degree that they need to with the demand in their communities.

For example, in some communities, we see that at the same time the government is shutting down residential institutions in the province, group homes are being shut down in the very communities that the residents will have to be moved to when those institutions close. We see as well—and one of the things that I find extremely alarming—that there are elderly parents who have older children in their 40s or 50s whom they are wanting to make sure are in a residential setting in a group home before it becomes too late for the parents to care for them. They’re unable to get in. Why? Because there’s not enough capacity in the system to take them. Then we see people needing services in the community in order to live independently who are not getting the services they need.

The government needs to do something to respond to this; otherwise, it is going to fast become a huge crisis in our communities.

PAUL BOSC

Mr. Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls): Paul Bosc is a fifth-generation wine grower who moved to Canada in 1963 from Alsace, France, with a viticulture and

oenology degree from the University of Burgundy. After studying the Niagara Peninsula for many years, he founded the Château des Charmes winery in 1978.

While there was a fledgling wine industry already in Niagara, Paul Bosc, with his Old World wine know-how laid the foundation for the development of a world-class wine industry. Paul Bosc's commitment to excellence and disregard for the naysayers paved the way for today's vibrant and internationally recognized Ontario wine industry.

In turn, the establishment of a viable, expanding wine industry has forever changed the lives of Niagara's residents and the economy of Niagara-on-the-Lake. His wines have won over 500 awards at national and international competitions.

Paul Bosc has been the proud recipient of many awards over the years, including the Order of Ontario, the Queen's Golden Jubilee medallion, the Tony Aspler award of excellence in 2005 and, tomorrow—and I'm proud to say this—the nation's highest civilian honour, the Order of Canada.

May this House join with me in congratulating Paul Bosc for his leadership and achievements in growing the Canadian wine industry. And I say to Paul, congratulations, a job well done.

PLANT CLOSURES

Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton): I'd like to bring the Premier up to date. While he was on his junket over in China, let me update him on what was happening in Ontario.

The Prescott Shirt Co. in Prescott announced it's closing. The maker of Hathaway shirts, one of which I'm wearing, will leave 53 people out of work at Christmastime.

Sleeman Breweries in Guelph announced it's laying off 40 people. It's the first time in their history that they've laid anybody off.

Automation Tooling Systems, a leading-edge, high-tech manufacturer, is closing its plant in Burlington; 40 people out of work.

Glis Inc. of Corunna, just outside of Sarnia, a garment manufacturing plant, is closing; 35 people out of work.

Waterloo-based Dalsa is laying off 60 people, the first time ever that they've downsized.

KUS Canada Inc., a piston manufacturer in Leamington, is closing their doors; 127 people out of work.

The famous World's Finest Chocolates factory, Campbellford, Ontario: 125 full-time employees. The plant is closing.

The Hershey chocolate plant in Smith Falls is laying off 50 people.

Glenoit in Elmira is closing; 75 jobs gone. They're moving their equipment to China. I wonder, did you happen to see that equipment last week, Mr. Premier, when you were over there?

Rheem Canada is closing its Hamilton-based headquarters; 150 people out of work.

Harrowsmith Cheese Factory—closed; 89 people out of work. It goes on and on.

Hemosol of Mississauga, an artificial blood substitute manufacturer, is laying off 50 people, leaving only 22 employees. Like Ontario, this company is bleeding to death while you, Mr. Premier, were traipsing around China.

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre): I'm very proud that the McGuinty government is back in the housing business. We're now starting to see tangible results of our commitment to affordable housing, and I want to share with this House news of one such project.

I'm delighted to tell you that 14 families will soon have their dreams come true. In the very near future, they will be moving into a beautiful new townhouse on Savannah Drive in my riding of London North Centre. This project is the result of the vision, dedication and years of hard work and perseverance from some very dedicated people in London.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank them and recognize their work. Sister Joan Atkinson, Reverend Susan Eagle and David Poole deserve special mention. They are the leaders of the London Affordable Housing Foundation, which comprises faith-based communities like the Sisters of St. Joseph and the United Church of Canada, along with community partners, including the Bank of Nova Scotia. They have formed a dynamic partnership to address the housing needs of those who need it most, and are committed to supporting the residents of this neighbourhood long after the moving trucks have driven away.

This project was supported by the city of London and \$453,000 from the Canada-Ontario affordable housing program. It was made possible because all levels of government worked together, shared a common vision and joined forces with a strong community partner. When all levels of government and the community work together, great things can happen. This project is definitely evidence of that.

CLINICAL SIMULATION EQUIPMENT FOR NURSES

Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek): The McGuinty government is investing \$10 million this year in clinical simulation equipment to help train nurses. Clinical simulators are anatomically correct, computer-run mannequins that are designed to exhibit signs and symptoms of injury or illness and responses to treatments just as a human does. Ontario is the first province to embrace this important innovation in nursing education.

But yesterday, the NDP's Howard Hampton attempted to make light of this. He said in the House to our minister, "You visited a school of nursing and held a photo op with some dummies. Now, according to the Canadian Press, the Ontario Nurses Association, after

watching this performance, suggested, 'You are the dummy.' They say that instead of holding photo ops with dummies, you should keep your promise to hire more nurses."

Well, maybe that was supposed to be entertaining or a little clever play on words, but the information is not correct. Yesterday, the ONA called the Minister of Health and said that they never made that comment to CP; in fact, what they said was, "The Ontario Nurses Association applauds the McGuinty government's \$10-million investment in clinical simulation equipment to improve the education of nurses."

"This is a positive step in the quality of training available to nursing students. This equipment will allow student nurses the opportunity to practise a variety of procedures." That was said by ONA president Linda Haslam-Stroud.

That is to set the record straight. This is only one part of the McGuinty government's health care renovation.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): I wanted to take this opportunity to thank those people in my riding, particularly the private sector, who participated in the application for affordable housing. The last time I made a statement, I didn't have an opportunity to talk about the private sector. In this case, we have a non-profit-private sector called Y Homes. Y Homes is an organization that provides affordable housing for those people who need that type of housing.

Y Homes did an interesting thing. They worked with our local YM-YWCA, where our facility was, took the facility over and converted it into the Y Homes project, which was a successful applicant for the affordable housing program. On top of that, the private sector jumped in and also made a temporary home for the Y while it pursues its needs for creating a new Y.

This is an example of what the private sector, the non-profit sector and all government levels can do when they put their minds to providing us with not only affordable homes but recreational facilities for those kids who need them and for those people who buy into the Y theory of what it is and why they have these programs for children. Included, on top of that, was one more turn that I think is worthy of understanding: The city got involved in making sure that all three sectors of this particular broad stroke happened together. So my kudos to each and every one of those partners in that program.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on estimates.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Todd Decker): Mr. Jackson from the standing committee on estimates reports the following resolutions:

Resolved that supply in the following amounts and to defray the expenses of the following ministries and offices be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006:

Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, vote 4001, infrastructure and growth management planning/ministry administration: \$262,003,600;

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, vote 1401, ministry administration: \$168,945,400.

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Dispense.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

LIQUOR LICENCE AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES PERMIS D'ALCOOL

Mr. Tascona moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 31, An Act to amend the Liquor Licence Act /
Projet de loi 31, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les permis
d'alcool.

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. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): This bill amends the Liquor Licence Act to require that beer sold in public premises under a licence issued under the act must be poured into unbreakable containers before being served to a member of the public on the premises. "Public premises" are defined to be premises to which the public has access, such as a restaurant, bar or stadium, whether or not a fee is payable for the access.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

FAMILY DOCTORS

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): It is with great pleasure that I rise in my place today to speak about an important announcement made earlier today.

This morning, I had the privilege of announcing that this government is investing an additional \$33 million to help train more family physicians. Everyone knows that family doctors are in many ways the front line of medical care. For millions of people throughout this province, their family doctor is the face of the medical profession. But tragically, far too many people don't have a family physician. Many parts of the province are underserved,

and even in large urban centres, a lot of families have difficulty finding a family doctor. This government is taking action to address this problem.

In March of this year, we announced that we were increasing Ontario's supply of family doctors by creating 70% more family medicine residency positions at the province's five medical schools. Today, we moved further with this initiative, investing another \$10 million in capital funding and another \$23 million in operating funding to further expand family medicine teaching sites over the next three years.

The \$10 million in capital funding will be used for the construction of new hospital-, community- and university-based family medicine teaching sites associated with four medical schools: the University of Toronto, the University of Ottawa, McMaster University and the University of Western Ontario.

Both Queen's University and Western received capital funding in March when we kick-started the expansion of the family medicine program.

We also invested a further \$23 million in operating funds at all five sites: U of T, Ottawa, McMaster, Western and Queen's. This operating funding will pay for the increased costs associated with training more family medicine residents over the next three years—things like salaries, educational opportunities for residents and their teachers, supplies and services, and administrative support.

This investment will create 141 new family residency positions in Ontario by 2006, and importantly, as a result of this investment, by 2008 there will be fully 337 more family doctors ready to serve Ontario families.

1350

More family doctors mean more Ontarians with access to a family doctor. As a direct result of these new family residency positions, thousands of Ontarians who did not previously have access to a family doctor will now have one.

The medical students throughout Ontario who train as residents recognize that this is a major milestone for them and for the patients they serve. In fact, just this morning, Dr. Adam Natsheh, president of the Professional Association of Internes and Residents of Ontario, said the following:

"Today's announcement is a clear signal from the government of Ontario that family medicine is a highly valued field of medicine.... Increasing the supply of family doctors will help to increase access for so many families who do not have a family doctor today and will also help to alleviate the crisis that currently exists."

This is but one more piece of evidence that Ontario is once again a good place for doctors to practise medicine. That's good news for all of us.

Mr. Speaker, as you and other members of the House will know, this government has three key health care priorities: keeping people healthier by shifting the focus from illness care to health care; improving access to doctors and nurses; and fixing wait times and access for health care services.

Today's announcement is a big step toward more access to doctors, and I know all members of this chamber will join me in celebrating this important step forward.

HEALTH PROMOTION

PROMOTION DE LA SANTÉ

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):

November 14 is Health Promotion Day here at Queen's Park, and my message to everyone here today is prevention. Regular medical checkups and early detection, coupled with leading a healthier lifestyle, are key to disease prevention. Today I welcome to Queen's Park representatives from the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Canadian Diabetes Association, the Ontario Pharmacists' Association and the Canadian Lipid Nurse Network. An array of tests, from glucose levels to blood pressure to cholesterol, were made available by these associations and enabled a number of our colleagues—I believe over 40 MPPs participated—together with members of the press gallery and Queen's Park staffers, to get tested.

Mon souhait est que cette journée soit la première de nombreuses journées de la promotion de la santé à Queen's Park, afin que nous puissions faire passer le message sur la prévention et son lien avec les modes de vie sains et actifs.

Our government is taking a holistic approach to health care. Whether it's the substantive expansion of community health centres, as announced last week by my colleague George Smitherman—and I want to take this opportunity to thank the minister for including Nepean community resource centre on the list and the good work that Patricia Pepper and others in that community are doing to expand the community health centre network in eastern Ontario—or removing junk food from elementary school vending machines, many ministries are working together to ensure that we break down the silos that sometimes plague governments and reduce our effectiveness in promoting wellness.

Je tiens à remercier encore une fois tous ceux qui nous ont aidé à réaliser cet événement.

I felt it was important to ensure that we lead by example and offer our colleagues, employees and media the opportunity to have these various tests conducted. Far too often in our sometimes busy lives, we put our own health and well-being to the side. Hosting Health Promotion Day complements a number of initiatives that our ministry has taken part in since it was created last June. It also provides me with an opportunity to share some of the things I have learned to date with my colleagues here in the Legislature.

First, Ontario has traditionally spent much more money to treat illness at the back end of the health care system rather than promoting wellness at the front end. This was supplemented by an OECD study last week that showed the governments around the world have taken that approach. We'll try to do things differently.

Second, our challenges in health and wellness in the 21st century include, among other things, a growing and aging population, rising obesity rates, and communities and workplaces which encourage sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy nutritional options.

Notre gouvernement a pris un engagement au plan de la santé de l'Ontario, et au plan de la santé des Ontariens.

This is essential if we are to prevent the onset of more serious diseases such as cancer, stroke, heart disease and diabetes among our citizens. The startling reality is that up to 50% of cancers in this country are preventable. Prevention is also key when it comes to obesity. In the last 25 years, there has been a 300% increase in the number of obese children, and in 2001, the estimated cost of obesity in Ontario was \$1.6 billion. Once people are overweight, they tend to gain even more weight. For example, almost one quarter of those in the national population health survey who had been overweight in 1994-95 became obese in 2002-03.

Ontarians with diabetes account for 30% of the strokes in this province. Strokes are the third leading cause of death in Ontario, and the leading cause of disability. More than 800,000 Ontarians have diabetes, and another 200,000 may be unaware that they have the disease, underscoring the need to get tested on a regular basis. I mentioned to my colleagues today at the health forum that we held just down the hall that when a similar day was held at the Quebec Legislature, there were approximately five members of the National Assembly in Quebec who discovered they had type 2 diabetes as a result of getting tested.

Experts from across the health care and wellness sectors—the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Canadian Diabetes Association, the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association and the Canadian Cancer Society—have commended Premier McGuinty for creating a standalone ministry and putting more emphasis on wellness, as opposed to simply illness. The Ministry of Health Promotion's priority areas—and I'm delighted that my colleague Peter Fonseca, who is taking an active role on a number of these files, is with us today—are smoke-free Ontario, sport and physical activity strategy, healthy weights, injury prevention and mental health and addictions.

Since the creation of the Ministry of Health Promotion in June, the government has done a number of things to promote healthy and active lifestyles among children and adults. A significant portion of the smoke-free Ontario campaign is committed to preventing smoking among young people. Not smoking is one of the most assured ways of preventing a host of unfortunate debilitating and costly illnesses. About a month ago, I was at Brock University with my colleague the Honourable Jim Bradley, and was extremely pleased to announce that our government has provided \$600,000 to support and expand the highly successful Leave the Pack Behind program.

Cette initiative, en partie, donnera aux étudiantes et étudiants les outils nécessaires pour cesser de fumer.

We provided school boards in Ontario with nutritional guidelines to assist elementary schools in ensuring that

available food and beverage items are healthy choices. The health and well-being of all students is of great concern to this government. We're starting with elementary school students, as good eating habits are best learned early in life.

Just a few weeks ago, I helped launch a program in Minister Cordiano's riding with education minister Gerard Kennedy to ensure that every elementary school student in Ontario takes part in at least 20 minutes of daily physical activity as part of the government's overall healthy schools program. According to the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, over 50% of children aged five to 17 are not active enough for optimal growth and development. Physical inactivity in this province costs \$1.8 billion in direct and indirect costs. Now elementary school kids can dance, jump, walk or leap their way to improved fitness for 20 minutes each day, and this is in addition to the physical education program in elementary schools. Promoting physical activity at this early stage will help to ensure that an active lifestyle is maintained throughout their lives, and assist in keeping people out of the health care system.

These are significant first steps—and they are just a few of the things we've done—but there's much more to do. To that end, I look forward to working with our partners, stakeholders and other levels of government to get the message across that healthy lifestyles and active living are good for business, taxpayers and Ontarians. In January, along with my parliamentary assistant, Peter Fonseca, I'll be hosting a series of round tables across the province to listen to and learn from local success stories on health promotion that have had a positive impact on communities.

Before I conclude, I'd like to leave you with a quote from Jan Kasperski from the Ontario College of Family Physicians regarding the creation and focus on health promotion:

"We were particularly delighted when the government indicated its intent to work closely with its health care partners, stakeholders and other levels of government on initiatives that target specific sectors of our society.

"That move underscored your government's understanding that the delivery of programs that promote healthy choices and healthy lifestyles can help Ontarians lead healthier lives."

I thank everyone in this chamber and in the Queen's Park precinct who took advantage of our health tests today, and congratulate you for taking charge of your health. Merci beaucoup.

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

1400

FAMILY DOCTORS

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo): I would like to respond to the statement made today in regard to family physicians. Our government had recognized that there certainly was a need for an increase in

family physicians, had set up the task forces and had moved forward very aggressively to ensure that people in this province would have access to family physicians, including of course the establishment of the new medical schools.

I want to emphasize that the announcement today is simply a reannouncement of information that has already been provided to the public. In fact, this government has quite a habit of reannouncing many of their announcements many times.

I would like you to know, Mr. Speaker, that despite the hype, people in Ontario actually have less access to family physicians than ever before. The number of underserved areas in this province has increased in the last two years under this government. According to the Ministry of Health Web site, the number of underserved areas in Ontario has increased from 126 to 139 during the watch of this government. In addition, the number of physicians needed to serve patients has increased from 592 to 795. How does the government expect to reduce wait times when there are not enough doctors and specialists to serve patients in Ontario?

It's also important to note that despite the fact that the minister and the government continue to talk about these family health teams, and keep announcing these family health teams, about 50 of the original number of 69 were part of the family health networks we set up. It's also important to take into consideration, when you look at the definition of a family health team, that today there is actually only one family health team that is fulfilling the definition and is fully operational, which means, again, that patients do not have access to the primary health services this government mentions are available to them.

This government talks about focusing on keeping people healthier, shifting the focus from illness to health care. Well, the reality is that this is the government that cut funding for eye tests for a majority of people in Ontario. They cut out funding for chiropractic care. They cut out funding for physiotherapy. So what they say and what they do are two different things, and people today have less access than ever before.

Not only have they cut health services for people in Ontario, but although they said they weren't going to raise taxes, they have increased taxes more than any other government in the history of this province, including a new \$2.4-billion health tax that people in this province are now forced to pay—forced to pay—even though they are getting less service than ever before.

As far as fixing wait times is concerned, I can tell you, I've got a story here. In fact, I have a lot of letters from constituents who are telling me that wait times are not improving. Furthermore, if you're not one of the five designated wait times, you have no hope whatsoever. I have a constituent who said that she tore her ligament in October 2004. She had treatment. She was finally referred in June 2005 to see a specialist in January 2006, and she has now been told that after she sees the specialist, it will take a year or two before she gets her

surgery. Now, she can go to Quebec and get the surgery within a month and she is asking that OHIP provide coverage for that to happen.

So I think it's important to note that the wait time strategy—we don't really have one—is not working. If you're not one of the five designated areas where they're going to try to focus on a reduction, if you have any other procedure that's needed, you're not going to qualify anyway.

The reality is that despite the rhetoric we hear from this government, there is no increased access to doctors and nurses. In fact, this is a government that has fired 767 nurses and spent \$91 million to do so.

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): In response to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care's statement, the reality in Ontario isn't that we don't have enough family residency spots; the problem we've got is that medical students aren't choosing family medicine as their first choice. Let's take a look at the statistics with respect to those family residency spots. In 2003, 39 of the family residency positions were left unfilled after the first iteration and 12 were left unfilled after the second iteration. In 2004, another 34 family residency positions were left unfilled after the first iteration. The problem is, the spots are there but medical students are not seeing family medicine as a viable option, and unless and until the government looks at what we can do to make family medicine more attractive, you can have all the new spots in the world and you won't be filling them. That's the problem the government has.

Now, what can the government do about that? They've been given a number of suggestions. Number one, the government can ensure that students at all medical schools in Ontario are given exposure to family medicine through lectures and clinical experience in the first year at medical school.

Secondly, the government can increase the prestige of family medicine as an academic specialty by funding more research by family docs, increasing the number of academic positions that are given to family doctors and increasing the percentage of classes in the undergraduate medical curriculum that are actually taught by family physicians.

Thirdly, the government can eliminate the current restrictions on retraining of family physicians. By doing so, the government would remove a barrier that is driving medical students away from family practice and directly into the specialties. It is true that if a family doctor were allowed to retrain, students in medical school would not feel trapped if they chose family medicine as an alternative, thinking that they may not be able to move to a specialty later on. What we need to do is ensure that there is a change made to the rotating internships for Canadian medical training, that we eliminate that and in effect remove that barrier which right now forces family physicians to make a choice about forgoing family practice because they are concerned that later on they won't be able to do retraining to go into a specialty.

Fourth, we can increase the exposure of medical students to training in multi-disciplinary environments, including community health centres.

Fifth, we can ensure that family health teams truly have an environment with a broad range of health care providers, to respond to the desire of more and more docs who are coming out of medical school (a) to work with a team and (b) to work reasonable hours so that their quality-of-life issues can be addressed. We need to ensure that family health teams recognize that and have the broad range of health care providers to allow that quality-of-life issue to be dealt with. We should look at disability insurance, extended health care benefits and pensions, all as mechanisms to again deal with that response to quality-of-life concerns that so many medical students have. If you put those in place, I think that many more medical students would choose family medicine as an option, because those issues would be addressed.

The NOW Alliance has many other suggestions which they have made to the government, responding to how to attract more medical students into family practice. I would urge this government to follow up, because if you don't do that, as I said, you can have all the spots in the world and they still will remain unfilled.

HEALTH PROMOTION

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): With respect to the statement by the Minister of Health Promotion, we all know folks who exercised regularly, went for their regular medical checkups, had a healthy diet and still fell victim to strokes, to cancer and to diabetes. I guess I'm more concerned today about what the government is doing to deal with people who are trying to manage their lives after a stroke, with diabetes or with cancer.

I go back to a statement I made earlier this week with respect to the diabetes program in this province, for example. The Canadian Diabetes Association came to the pre-budget consultations and urged a major expansion in the monitoring for health program to help diabetics manage their diabetes. They asked this government to expand those individuals who could qualify for the program; to include items like syringes, needles and insulin pumps under that program; to make sure the reimbursement level of the supplies actually matched the cost of those supplies. The government didn't respond to any of those concerns or to any of those initiatives in the current budget cycle.

As I say, I'm far more interested in what the government is doing to deal with people who have strokes, cancer and diabetes so they can manage their lives with those diseases.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I would like to welcome to the Speaker's gallery a delegation from Italy, from the province of Frosinone in the region of Lazio. Welcome.

DEFERRED VOTES

ENDING MANDATORY RETIREMENT STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT DES LOIS POUR ÉLIMINER LA RETRAITE OBLIGATOIRE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 211, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code and certain other Acts to end mandatory retirement / *Projet de loi 211, Loi modifiant le Code des droits de la personne et d'autres lois pour éliminer la retraite obligatoire.*

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1411 to 1416.

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Fonseca, Peter	Qaadri, Shafiq
Arthurs, Wayne	Gerretsen, John	Ramsay, David
Baird, John R.	Hudak, Tim	Rinaldi, Lou
Barrett, Toby	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Bartolucci, Rick	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Bentley, Christopher	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Bountrogianni, Marie	Levac, Dave	Scott, Laurie
Bradley, James J.	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sergio, Mario
Bryant, Michael	Matthews, Deborah	Smith, Monique
Cansfield, Donna H.	McMeekin, Ted	Smitherman, George
Caplan, David	McNeely, Phil	Sterling, Norman W.
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Meilleur, Madeleine	Takhar, Harinder S.
Chudleigh, Ted	Miller, Norm	Tascona, Joseph N.
Colle, Mike	Milloy, John	Tory, John
Cordiano, Joseph	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Van Bommel, Maria
Craitor, Kim	Munro, Julia	Watson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	Oraziotti, David	Wilkinson, John
Di Cocco, Caroline	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wilson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	Peters, Steve	Witmer, Elizabeth
Duguid, Brad	Peterson, Tim	Wong, Tony C.
Duncan, Dwight	Phillips, Gerry	Yakabuski, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Pupatello, Sandra	Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	
Horwath, Andrea	Martel, Shelley	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 66; the nays are 7.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): I would ask that the bill be referred to the standing committee on justice policy.

The Speaker: Mr. Peters has asked that the bill be referred to the standing committee on justice policy. Agreed? Agreed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Deputy Premier. We have not yet received an answer to our question of yesterday, so I'll try again on the basis that you might have some more information. Could you tell us how it is that an advertising firm with very close ties to your Liberal Party received \$6.3 million in business, a 6,000% increase for this company, from your Liberal government in your first year in office? Can you give us an explanation for that?

Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services): I can not only give you an explanation, but the executive director of the Advertising Review Board has put it in writing for you. He confirms that they made the decision completely independently. They say:

"I can confirm each was awarded on the basis of merit as determined by a panel consisting of a civil servant representative and two representatives from the Advertising Review Board. In each case, the rules were followed to the letter. There was no political involvement in the procuring of these contracts."

I will simply add that the decision, and the final decision, was made by three bureaucrats. One was 11 years as the executive director of the Advertising Review Board, one was three years as chair of the Advertising Review Board, and the other a civil servant from the Ministry of Health. This was done completely independently and the final decision was made by arm's-length bureaucrats on the basis of merit.

Mr. Tory: Let's check that against some of the other quotes. You folks should get your act together. I should tell you that last night's Lotto 6/49 jackpot was only \$4 million, which pales in comparison to the \$6.3-million jackpot for these friends of the Liberal Party. People want answers and the Premier, frankly, should be here to give them.

According to your own spokesperson, Minister, and I'll quote from the Toronto Star, "The decision typically involved the minister, his deputy, the communications director or a combination of them."

Will the Deputy Premier confirm whether any of the Ministers of Health, Citizenship and Immigration, Agriculture or yourself as Chair of Management Board were involved in the awarding of any part of these \$6.3 million in contracts to your Liberal friends, and whether anyone at all at any time from the Premier's office or any political staffers were involved? We've put in FOI requests on this. Tell us if any of these people were ever involved.

Hon. Mr. Phillips: I think we're seeing the real Mr. Tory now. I will say to you that I asked specifically this morning. I said to the executive director, "Your decision, therefore, on the advertising agency was final?" He said yes. I said, "In every single case was your decision final?" He said yes. He said there was no political involvement. That is your answer. I would just suggest that

you may want to move on, Mr. Tory, rather than trying to continue to dig up some dirt where none, frankly, exists.

Mr. Tory: We would move on if it weren't for the fact that there are so many contradictions in 24 hours from this government.

Here's what you had to say about this yesterday. When you were asked about the specific advertising projects that your good friends, the friends of the Liberal Party, at Bensimon Byrne did for your government totaling \$6.3 million, you told reporters, and I quote, "Each of their projects were as a result of a competitive process." Your office went to great pains to confirm that yesterday, except that a Ministry of Health spokesperson yesterday told CBC Radio, and I quote, "there was no competition" held for a \$5.7-million contract given to your friends at Bensimon-Byrne.

Tell us exactly what competitive process was used here to hand out these contracts worth \$6.3 million to the firm that did your advertising in the last election. Tell us about it.

Hon. Mr. Phillips: I'll tell you, the rules that we followed in that particular case were the exact same rules we inherited from your government. It was a competitive process. Every single agency on that vendor of record, every single agency, needed to go through a competitive tender to get on it and to sign the contract. That was the first competitive bid.

Secondly, those three people I talked to—and I remind you that the chair of that board was appointed by the previous Conservative government, and the executive director by the NDP government. Two of those three people made that decision. They were asked to find an agency for the Ministry of Health. They went through the entire list of agencies. They analyzed them, and in their judgment the best possible decision was the one they made and, as the executive director pointed out: absolutely no political involvement. That's the answer, Mr. Tory, and I do hope that you'll accept his word.

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

Mr. Tory: It's some of the answers given here and all the comments given by the spokespersons that we're after.

I want to share with you another comment—

The Speaker: The question is to whom?

Mr. Tory: Oh, I'm sorry. It's to the Deputy Premier again.

I want to share with you what the same Ministry of Health spokesperson had to say about the \$5.7-million project that your friends at Bensimon Byrne did for them. Again, from CBC Radio, the ministry spokesperson said, "The agency was assigned to the ministry," and "There was no competition for the contract at that ministry."

Now, let's look at the facts. You said there was a competitive process. You've told us, notwithstanding that your own spokesperson said the minister and the deputy minister and the communications people are typically involved, that there was no political action. Your spokesperson said that, and the Ministry of Health said there

was no competition for the \$5.7-million project that they used the Liberal ad firm for and that they were assigned this company to do work for them.

Minister, who made the assignment to give this agency to the Ministry of Health, if that's how it happened? Who made the assignment?

Hon. Mr. Phillips: You must not be listening to the answer. The Advertising Review Board, the arm's-length, independent agency, made that assignment. I repeat, two of those three people—Laird Ross, the chairman of the Advertising Review Board, Bob Farnley, who is the executive director, and someone from the Ministry of Health—made that decision. That is how it works. I said to you that the Advertising Review Board makes the final decision. No political involvement; they make that decision. They, therefore, assigned that agency to the Ministry of Health on the basis of merit. The process is clear, unequivocal and without any political involvement.

Mr. Tory: Just to be clear, what we have here is you indicating to us that we have an ad firm here that just happened to do your ads in the last election, the famous "I will not raise your taxes" ads, surely in content the most massively deceptive in the history of Ontario politics. So we have—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Stop the clock. I think we could find a better word.

Interjections.

The Speaker: There is an offending word. I would hope that it would be withdrawn.

Mr. Tory: I withdraw that.

Surely these are among the most massively inaccurate ads in the history of advertising in Ontario. This is an ad agency that had their advertising business with this government go from \$99,000 the year before you were elected to \$6 million the year after you were elected. So I just want to have this clear now. You have been very careful in all of your references to refer to the final decision as being made by these people. Will you stand in your place and tell us today that there was no involvement by anybody political—a minister, a political staffer, anybody from the Premier's office—at any time in this process—any time, no political involvement at all—in causing their billings to go from \$99,000 to \$6 million in one year? Will you stand and tell us that?

Hon. Mr. Phillips: I read you the statement from Mr. Farnley, 11 years as the executive director: "There was no political involvement in the procuring of these contracts. I can confirm each was awarded on the basis of merit as determined by a panel consisting of a civil servant representative from the client ministry and two representatives from the Advertising Review Board," which is an arm's-length agency of the government. "In each case, the rules in place were followed to the letter."

There was no political involvement in the awarding of these contracts, for the fifth time.

1430

Mr. Tory: Well, it's interesting. There are all these contradictory comments out there: There was a com-

petition; there wasn't a competition. Why should this statement be placed in any different context than all the others? Yesterday you said there was a competition. The Ministry of Health spokesperson said there wasn't. We've been told all kinds of things.

Why don't we get to the bottom of this? Will you stand up and tell us right now that you will make sure—we've asked for all the documentation related to all these ad contracts given to your friends in the Liberal Party who did your ads in the last election—\$6 million of taxpayers' money. Will you agree to expedite the process? Under freedom of information, as we all know, it takes months and months to get that documentation. Will you bring to this House on Monday all the documentation concerning all of this process, and then we can all see exactly what's going on here? Will you bring the stuff here?

Hon. Mr. Phillips: You're looking for something that's not even close to there. Again I say to you, read the letter. Here's what Mr. Farnley said: "I've reviewed the scoring for each competition and confirm that Bensimon Byrne received the highest score from the arm's-length panel for each contract they received."

You may choose to drag this agency through the mud, but I would simply remind you that we did more scrutiny here than you did when you hired the same agency to work for Rogers.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker: I can wait.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

New question.

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Acting Premier. Before the election, Dalton McGuinty said, "We will require that all contracts signed by the government be subject to public scrutiny, including calls to tender," and "We will put the public interest ahead of political cronies."

Now we find that since the election the same company that produced the television ads for your election campaign has had a \$6.3-million increase in their advertising contracts, without tender.

Interjection.

The Speaker: The Minister of Northern Development needs to withdraw that remark.

Interjection.

The Speaker: The leader of the third party.

Mr. Hampton: Can you tell us, please, what happened to Dalton McGuinty's promises that there was going to be an open and transparent process, that everything would go to tender? What happened to those promises about not looking after your political cronies?

Hon. Mr. Phillips: I repeat what I said earlier. The process that has been followed here has been without any political involvement. I would also say that we have an advertising act, that we've said we're going to refer

advertising spending to the auditor to look at and publish annually. So we're doing that.

I would simply say to the member opposite that the Advertising Review Board has confirmed no political involvement. They conducted a fair, transparent process. So I would say to the leader of the third party that you're heading nowhere with this. The process has been above-board and clean, and the decisions have been confirmed by the Advertising Review Board as without any political involvement.

Mr. Hampton: This is about Dalton McGuinty's promise that these big advertising contracts wouldn't go out without public tendering, that you were not going to pay off your political cronies à la what's going on in Ottawa with the Gomery Commission. You weren't going to do that.

I want to quote a question Dalton McGuinty asked: "It is my understanding that you were going to provide strong leadership over there; you were going to set high standards; you were going to do things differently from your predecessor." That's what Dalton McGuinty asked three years ago.

Tell me: untendered contract—the same advertising firm that did your ads for you during the election campaign suddenly gets a 6,000% increase in advertising contracts from the McGuinty government. That smells and looks like Dalton McGuinty looking after his political cronies. What does it smell and look like to you, Acting Premier?

Hon. Mr. Phillips: Just because you use those words doesn't mean that there's an element of reality in that. Again, I would say, what is the transparent process? All of these agencies must go through a bidding process to get on as a vendor of record.

Mr. Hampton: There was no bidding process.

Hon. Mr. Phillips: Oh, yes, it is. You say it isn't, but you must go through a bidding process to get on the agency of record, where, then, there is a review done by the Advertising Review Board to select the proper one.

Frankly, in June 2004, we enhanced the procedure; we strengthened it; we made some significant changes. Those are now part of the ARB's procedures to make it an even more transparent process. The last thing we've done is our Advertising Act, where the spending for advertising would have to be referred to the Auditor General.

So, there are no untendered—every one of these has to follow a process where they are awarded on the basis of cost and on the basis of merit, and that's exactly what has been done here.

The Speaker: Final supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: Sorry to correct you, Acting Premier, but this Advertising Act that was so important, you haven't even proclaimed it yet. It's not law, because the McGuinty government won't proclaim it. Don't cite to me a whole bunch of process. That's the process that you used to condemn under the Conservatives. You used to say—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Stop the clock. Order. I need to be able to hear the leader of third party. Only one member has the floor at a time.

Mr. Hampton: Here's the reality: It was Dalton McGuinty who said, "We will put the public interest ahead of our political cronies." "We will require that all contracts signed by the government be subject to public scrutiny, including calls to tender."

My question to you, Acting Premier, is, will you table all of the documents associated with these bids and the processes by which your political cronies were selected for these lucrative government contracts? Will you make it public? Will you provide the public scrutiny that you promised, or is this another broken McGuinty promise?

Hon. Mr. Phillips: I hate to bother you with process, but there is a process that the Advertising Review Board follows—

Interjections.

Hon. Mr. Phillips: This is a public—he's yelling because—

Interjections.

Hon. Mr. Phillips: But it is a fair, transparent process that the advertising review agency has followed here. It ensures that there is fairness in the selection and that the selection is done on the basis of merit. Furthermore, the Auditor General will have an opportunity to review, in detail, the expenditures.

We have substantially improved the process. No one is awarded a contract without going through the proper process, all of which took place. Furthermore, I repeat what Mr. Farnley has said: There was a fair process here with—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is to the Minister of Energy. But I wonder, where's the tender and where's Dalton McGuinty's promise?

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Are you asking the question of the Minister of Government Services?

Interjection.

The Speaker: No competency to answer a question about government services.

Mr. Hampton: Speaker, are you trying to tell me how to write my questions?

The Speaker: The leader of the third party would know that he has to address a question to the minister who is expected to answer that question. I'm sure you can find some help besides me.

1440

Mr. Hampton: My question to the Minister of Energy is, as of April 1, 2006, the McGuinty government intends to scrap the revenue cap on Ontario Power Generation's fossil fuel and secondary hydro revenues. All by itself, scrapping the hydro rate buffer will likely drive electricity rates up by another 15% or more. Can the

McGuinty government assure hydroelectricity consumers, businesses and industries struggling to pay their electricity bills now that you will keep that hydro rate hike buffer in place?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy): To the honourable member's question, no decision has been made. The discussions are ongoing.

Mr. Hampton: Let me assure you of one thing, Minister, which you should know already: Any plan to scrap the hydro rate hike buffer will make an already very bad situation worse. It will make life more expensive for ordinary families already struggling to pay the hydro bill and it will shut more paper mills and more factories and kill more jobs and push more workers into unemployment and devastate entire communities.

But there is something the McGuinty government can do. You can commit here and now that you will lessen the blow of your punishing spring hydro rate increases by extending the hydro rate hike buffer for at least another two years. Will you do that now, Minister?

Hon. Mrs. Cansfield: What I will commit to is that all things will be taken under consideration.

Mr. Hampton: Minister, let me tell you what's at stake. You've got dozens of paper mills that are looking right now at whether they want to stay in business in Ontario. They're looking right now at where they're going to cut 100 jobs, 200 jobs, and they need a signal from the McGuinty government—not more photo ops, but a clear signal. They don't want to lay off another 42,000 manufacturing jobs, which has happened in the last year. So they're asking you, will you extend the hydro rate hike buffer for at least another two years and lessen the blow of the hydroelectricity rate increase that you're going to announce in the spring? Will you do that, and will you do it now, Minister?

Hon. Mrs. Cansfield: What I think I can commit to is that it's important to learn the history of the past; for example, the increase of 40% under the NDP government. As I recall, between 1990 and 1995 there were 14 mills that closed. So all things will be taken under consideration.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): I want to return to the Deputy Premier. I just want to ask you to bear with me here. If all that has been said here is as it happened, in terms of the documents you've been reading from today—by the way, you keep referring to the fact that it has been sent to me; I don't have copy of it here—will you measure that against the optics we have here of a volunteer working on your election campaign in a very key post, saying that he had a relationship with the Premier, receiving a \$6-million contract of the taxpayers' money overnight? The firm goes overnight from \$99,000 to \$6 million. Can't you understand the optics here, especially in the wake of all that we've seen with the Adscam fiasco in Ottawa?

I would ask you this: If you're not willing to table all of the documentation so we can see it, in light of the contradictions between your spokesperson and you and other people, would you refer this matter to a committee and have these spokespeople—

The Speaker: Thank you. The Acting Premier.

Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services): Just to help out a little bit, one thing you should be aware of is that there was another \$735,000 that this agency earned as a result of a contract awarded by the previous government, in the same fiscal year you're talking about

I would say again to you that you have the process we have in place now; you've got it sitting right there. You have a confirmation from a well-respected civil servant, 10 and a half years on the job, telling you exactly what took place. I would make the assumption that you can take at face value what this civil servant has laid out for you in some detail. I think you can trust him. That should give you the answer you're looking for, that this process was fair, transparent and honest, with no political involvement. I think you should accept that.

Mr. Tory: If the process was fair, open and transparent, with no political involvement, as you just said—I just got this letter handed to me now and I'll read it with care—why would you have any objection whatsoever to agreeing that you will bring all the documents concerning the process described in this letter to this Legislature and not make everybody wait six months, or as I suggested a minute ago, refer it to a committee? If it's all as you say it is and as this gentleman says it is, will you agree to make those documents public, and to make these people including your spokesperson, Ciaran Ganley, who told quite a different story than you, available so all of us can see that what you're saying is exactly in accord with those documents?

Hon. Mr. Phillips: Well, I have done it. You have the process. You've got it all there. It's attached to the letter I sent you, step by step, what takes place. You have the word of our civil service: "I have reviewed the scoring for each competition to confirm that they received the highest score from an arm's-length panel for each contract they received." I think the Leader of the Opposition should read that letter carefully, and should recognize that it's from a respected civil servant with a very fine reputation. Someone called Laird Ross, a respected chair appointed by the previous government—your government—was in on this decision as well. The process has been fair, transparent, honest and without political involvement, as laid out in that letter, and the process is attached. I think that gives it to you. I think you now know exactly what took place.

CANCER TREATMENT

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the Minister of Health. Jim Leslie was here earlier. Laura McCallum is still in the gallery right now. Jim was diagnosed with colon cancer in 2002. He's had numerous surgeries and chemotherapy. Recently the cancer was

found in his rib cage, so he needs treatment again. Laura was diagnosed with multiple myeloma in 2001. She's had a stem cell transplant and chemotherapy. She was lucky enough to participate in a hospital trial in Hamilton in 2005, so she's in remission. What they both have in common is that the chemotherapy drugs they need have been approved by Health Canada but not approved in Ontario. What they both need is a process here in Ontario for their oncologist to request special consideration to get Erbitux and Velcade for them even while the drug review is underway.

Minister, will you adopt a policy for exceptional access to chemotherapy drugs so that Jim and Laura and other patients like them can get the treatment they need, when they need it?

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'm pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the challenging question related to the provision of drugs in a public health care environment. As is well known, and as I've had a chance to say in this House, overall the new drug funding program is up 1400% since 1997. In fact, through the actions of our government, we've made bigger investments in that program than through all of those Conservative increases over seven years. Notwithstanding that, there is of course a new product made available every single day. The products the honourable member mentions are before the Drug Quality and Therapeutic Committee.

To the policy question she asks, I've commented before that our current drug strategy review is looking at that. But in her supplementary, I'd like the honourable member to confirm what she said in answer to the media today, which is that she doesn't believe that the effectiveness of a drug—that there should be any consideration of how the drug works, but rather all of these products should and can be funded just on the basis of compassion. I'd rather suggest to the honourable member that in an environment where there are 22,000 drugs, I think the public health care system would quickly collapse under the honourable member's logic.

Ms. Martel: That is entirely untrue. I said at the press conference today that this province needs a process for special consideration for drugs while the review process is underway. That's what my press release says, that's exactly what I said and that is exactly the question I am asking you today.

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Minister, while your drug review process goes on and on, Jim needs Erbitux now. His cancer has come back. He needs treatment now. He and his wife are being forced to go to the Roswell clinic in Buffalo to see about treatment there. They're prepared to spend \$15,000 a month for six months to get Erbitux in the United States because they can't get it here.

I ask you again, as I stated at the press conference this morning, when will your government adopt a policy for special consideration for access to chemotherapy drugs that are still under review, so that Jim and—

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

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: I doubt very much that the honourable member is going to like it, but her very response confirmed what I said, which is that it is her policy and apparently the policy of her party that Ontario can be in a position where any drug therapy or presumably any service that isn't offered anywhere in the world, that has not been properly evaluated, should automatically be provided because a request was made. This is the honourable member who today would not answer a question in a fiscal context, only in a compassionate or humanitarian context.

All I say to the honourable member, who resided over a reduction in a government ministry that started with \$350 million and ended up at \$200 million, is that she has forgotten all of those necessary lessons associated with the challenge and responsibility of being in government; and that is to make sure, for the integrity of a public health care system, that we evaluate the quality of a product that is available before we're in a position to make a determination about whether a public health care system can support it. That is the scientific basis of our system. It was when you were in government. It was—

The Speaker: Thank you.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): My question is for the Minister of Energy. The winter months are upon us, and that means skating and snowmen, but it also means people have to heat their homes. Some of us don't have to worry about turning on the heat so we can keep warm inside, but that isn't true for low-income earners in this province. When the cold months come, low-income earners worry about how they will pay their bills, choosing between food and heating. This is unacceptable. People shouldn't have to choose between food and heating their homes. Minister, what are we doing to help those low-income earners keep warm this winter?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy): This is one area where I think everyone in this House is very concerned. I can tell you that the former Minister of Energy, currently the Minister of Finance, made this a priority, and I was given the responsibility to work with the senior policy adviser on developing a program and a process around accumulating the information to deal with low income. We did that, as well as getting the conservation bureau up and going, and the first priority was to provide a directive to develop a low-income program.

In the interim, a number of local distribution companies or utilities are actually providing low-income assistance. They have a variety of programs. They have made decisions where they will not cut off hydro. Gas companies have made similar decisions. They have provided a myriad of opportunities for savings in terms of things they can do. There are things being undertaken, and I can tell you, it's in Newmarket, it's in Wawa, and it's in northern—we're working together to leverage dollars with EnerCan. There's a program—

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

Mr. Fonseca: That's great. I'm glad to hear that we're paying such close attention to this matter and helping people who need it most.

Cold Canadian winters are much like our blistering summers in that we use more energy than we do during the spring and fall months. What can Ontarians do over the winter months to help keep their heating bills down? What conservation methods can average Ontarians easily adapt to their homes so that we can see direct energy savings?

Hon. Mrs. Cansfield: There are a number of things. I would like to mention one in particular for northern Ontario, which is with Hydro One, where in fact qualifying individuals can leverage up to \$3,000—and I believe it's now up to about \$4,200—with EnerCan and Hydro One, where they can actually replace their windows, their doors, do weather stripping—more concrete, sustainable things in their homes. Also, many utilities will provide an energy audit of the home to see where the problems lie. But simple things such as making sure of the caulking around your windows, using your drapes and programmable thermostats are the types of things that can be used.

Look to your local utilities. There is \$160 million worth of programs out there that the utilities are using to help. A lot of them are targeted at low-income folks. We have also put together, with social housing, a program for 5,000 houses across the province.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): My question is for the Minister of Health. On Monday, you refused to respond to a question about your hidden health agenda. I'm going to ask you again: Will you confirm that you are reducing community care access centres from 42 to 14?

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'm very happy to have an opportunity to confirm to the honourable member that long-standing work is underway to build a system where a system has not existed so far; that is, a health care system that has the capacity to deliver on the most essential benefit of a public health system, which is equitable distribution of resources.

The circumstance we have in Ontario today is that across the breadth of 42 community care access centres, we have a different range of services being provided. This is the inequitable circumstance we have inherited. We also have a circumstance, related to community care access centres, where that government took away their local community governance, something we think is a very important principle of our solutions in Ontario.

I can confirm for the honourable member that work is underway. I look forward to an opportunity soon to be able to brief her and other members of the Legislature with respect to the efforts our government is taking to build a system that can deliver this public benefit in an

equitable fashion for Ontarians regardless of where they make their home.

Mrs. Witmer: Let me say to the minister that by reducing these community care access centres from 42 to 14, you really will be eliminating the opportunity for the local community to have any input to decision-making, because you're going to have Ottawa and all these other communities with totally different interests.

I know that your colleagues on management board have had a lot of concern about this whole plan—LHINs and everything else—and some of the costs involved. We have learned that your plan for CCAC consolidation will cost about \$100 million for severance, legal costs and wage harmonization. Can you tell us if you have conducted an independent analysis of the real cost of CCAC consolidation? Have you submitted these costs to cabinet, and if so, can you confirm the cost?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: I can't confirm these numbers. I'm pretty sure they are a figment of someone's imagination.

I can say that the work we're doing within government is to seek to gain the support of cabinet and the government for initiatives to transform Ontario's health care system. To date, my colleagues have been very supportive of our initiatives to make sure we have a health care system in Ontario that is able to deliver an equitable result and to move forward in a fashion which takes genuine power of the Minister of Health and presses that down to the community, closer to the action, so that people who are living in those local communities can exercise important judgments over the health care system, which is, after all, an asset of the people of Ontario. It's a public asset, and we seek to be the government that restores the public's voice in it. We will not be continuing in a fashion that the honourable member advanced as Minister of Health, when she robbed communities of the power to manage community care access centres.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth): I have a question for the Minister of Labour. Today in Windsor, friends and family attended the funeral of Lori Dupont, a nurse and the single mother of an eight-year-old girl, who, as you know, was stabbed to death on the job over the weekend. She had feared for her safety for some time and had applied for a peace bond, which she never got. So every day, she was forced to work in fear and in danger until she was tragically murdered.

Minister, Theresa Vince was murdered at her workplace in 1996, and yet Ontario still has not brought sexual harassment under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, as recommended by a coroner's inquest. In light of this most recent murder, will you agree now to take those steps immediately?

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): I thank the member for the question. I think all of us extend our condolences to the Dupont family in the tragedy that has

taken place in the municipality of Windsor. I think it's important for you to understand that this government does not tolerate any sort of violence in the workplace, and nor has any government that has served this province.

As you know, under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, employers are required to take reasonable precautions to protect all workers from violence in the workplace. We encourage all employers to undertake a comprehensive review of their internal policies. The Ministry of Labour does go out and investigate complaints of incidents of violence within the workplace. When an act of violence does occur, as defined under the Criminal Code, the police are the lead investigating authority.

1500

Ms. Churley: Sadly, experts say that doesn't work. In Ontario, workers have the right to refuse unsafe work when it involves equipment, but women like Lori Dupont who know that their lives are at risk from dangerous co-workers don't have that right. They have to keep working even if it gets them killed. Michelle Schryer, executive director of the Chatham-Kent Sexual Assault Crisis Centre, has said that had there been "effective legislation in place to help protect women from sexist violence at work, the hospital would have been able to take additional steps to protect Lori at work."

I'm asking you again, Minister, will you support the changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act that I proposed in my private member's bill over a year ago that would protect women from workplace harassment and perhaps actually save their lives?

Hon. Mr. Peters: I appreciate the question and I'll respond to the supplemental. Workplace violence policies and procedures within the Ministry of Labour operational policies and procedures manual outline specific procedures for Ministry of Labour inspectors to follow when dealing with complaints about workplace violence. Policies and procedures are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. We're constantly reviewing those policies. As I said earlier, we investigate all complaints associated with workplace violence. Where it's associated with work responsibilities, orders are issued. As well, in Ontario, psychological harassment, verbal abuse and other forms of harassment that are not addressed under the Occupational Health and Safety Act are covered under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): I have a question today for the Minister of Community and Social Services. First, I'd like to congratulate the minister. All members of the House will know that as of September 1, 2005, the Ministry of Community and Social Services was given responsibility for the accessibility unit, which is comprised of the recently passed legislation, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

Minister, I know that even prior to taking on that responsibility, you've always been an advocate for accessi-

bility issues and ensuring that as a government we work toward removing barriers for people with disabilities to allow for the equal inclusion of all individuals in our society. In my riding of Oakville, my constituents have told me how thrilled they are that we made sure that our legislation went much further than that of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act introduced by the previous government.

Minister, would you please tell the House today what your ministry is doing for Ontarians with disabilities now that you have taken over the accessibility unit?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): I appreciate the question from the member opposite. He really is a leader, not just here in this House but, as well, in the work he's doing in his own constituency office to become more and more accessible. I think we should use the fine office in Oakville as a potential model for all of the constituency offices across the province. There is some very good news coming out of Oakville on accessibility.

Let me say how pleased I am to have accepted the accessibility directorate into the Ministry of Community and Social Services. It is a fine fit. We are working over the next 20 years to have five-year milestones to reach total accessibility. The huge task ahead of us will be divided up into standard development committees. I would be pleased to give more description of that. As well, we are now launching an advisory committee to the minister in the development of those standards for the province. It will include both the private sector as well as the public sector.

Mr. Flynn: It's clear that your ministry is moving forward to ensure that every Ontarian is treated with fairness and dignity and that we eliminate the barriers that those with disabilities face.

On October 17, you announced how the McGuinty government is making Ontario more accessible to people with disabilities with the development of two new province-wide committees that will work to develop new proposed standards to improve accessibility in Ontario.

Interest groups in my riding of Oakville have expressed to me that they would like to participate in some way toward making Ontario more accessible. I'm pleased to see this initiative, obviously, and I'm pleased to see that this initiative will give them an opportunity to do so. Minister, could you specifically tell us what these two committees are focusing on and what the current status is of the committees?

Hon. Ms. Pupatello: In addition to this advisory council to the minister on the standards, we are launching two standards development committees first. Of those two, one is very sector-specific, regarding transportation, and the second is on customer service.

Most people will know that one of the largest barriers facing people with disabilities is transportation. It is one of the areas where we have some excellence around the province, and I hope we'll be able to move quickly to standards development in the transportation sector. The

second area is customer service, and that cuts across the broad breadth of everyday living—individuals, private businesses, public places—and we know that if we can set the right level of standards in customer service, it will be of enormous benefit, have an enormous impact on accessibility for people with disabilities.

We are committed to this. We are going to do this well, and I welcome people to participate in this process.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Despite the new health care tax you've levied on the people of Ontario, they are still facing serious problems accessing health care. In communities across Ontario, there are still many thousands of individuals and families who are unable to find a family doctor. These are orphaned patients. In my riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, there are tens of thousands of orphaned patients. They need access to health care now. These orphaned patients cannot properly access health care services. Minister, when are you going to help these orphaned patients get the health care they need?

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): It's a very interesting question, coming as it does on a day when I've announced a significant increase in the size of our family residency programs, made possible because of the work that our government is doing to renew comprehensive family care. But it's an even more interesting question coming from an honourable member who might have more appropriately stood in her place and said thank you for the investments that were made, as our government announced just last week to bring two community health centres to her riding, to the patients in Minden and Brock township.

Interjections.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: I'm sorry. Now I'm in trouble over here.

Those important investments are in addition to the family health team that we've announced for Haliburton, which I had the privilege of attending at, alongside the honourable member.

The evidence is very, very clear that our government believes it's fundamentally important that we deliver primary care reform in a fashion that accesses more care for more patients. Accordingly, our commitment to build 39 additional community health centres, to build 150 family health teams, 69 of which are on their way to full completion, is very apt evidence that—

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

Ms. Scott: The family health teams are supposed to provide improved access to care in order to improve health outcomes. It's the family health teams in my riding that are asking the questions. Are the orphaned patients who do not have family doctors going to be able to access other services available through the family

health teams? They've been asking your ministry and no one has been able to tell them. Will the orphaned patients be able to use the comprehensive chronic disease prevention and management programs? Will they be able to access the health promotion programs and social workers? Will they be able to book appointments with a physiotherapist and obtain dietitian counselling? Minister, does being an orphaned patient without a doctor exclude someone from accessing the services of the other health care professionals who are part of the family health teams?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: By its very nature, the interdisciplinary approach is to provide a comprehensive array of services to patients. The team approach is particularly effective in those environments where patients have underlying challenges: chronic health conditions like asthma or diabetes, or related to aging, as an example, where they have a complex range of needs. Accordingly, family health teams are coming to life in the province of Ontario in a variety of different ways, and many of the questions you ask are best answered locally. We have determined that it's appropriate not to be overly prescriptive but rather to allow family health teams to emerge depending on the population health basis. In some cases, that will mean that they're targeted toward seniors who need this array of services; in other cases, maybe toward younger families where a midwife might more appropriately be part and parcel of the team.

Accordingly, people in communities all across Ontario can expect that this government will be the one that meaningfully addresses orphan patients who were created by your government and that one over there.

1510

PROPERTY TAXATION

Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth): I have a question for the Acting Premier. Acting Premier, in the wake of your refusal to take action on skyrocketing property taxes and mysterious methods of assessment, the NDP today launched a task force on assessment and tax reform. Now, in opposition, you said that the system needed to be changed; in fact, you made that commitment to Ontario's property owners. We all remember the harsh words you had for the Tory system. Will you admit today that the property tax system is broken and tell us what you are going to do immediately to fix it?

Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services): To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): As the member opposite is aware, Monsieur Morin has launched a review. Our government has offered its full participation in this, to look at MPAC and what the challenges are. We look forward to his recommendations.

We continue to have representations made to us by citizens in the province, by members of our caucus, all of whom are contributing, I would say, to our understanding of where there may in fact be challenges. We look

forward to any and all dialogue involving this issue. We look forward to Monsieur Morin's report back to this House. We look forward to hearing whatever plans come forward, so that they can be reviewed in a proper context and full understanding of implications of whatever undertakings may or may not be recommended by any number of organizations and individuals looking at this most important issue.

Ms. Churley: Minister, I remind you again, when you were in opposition, you protested against the municipal property assessment system that the Harris government brought in.

I want to tell you, Minister, that residents in the east end, in Toronto–Danforth and Beaches–East York—

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): Trinity–Spadina.

Ms. Churley: —and Trinity–Spadina are very hard hit, some as high as 40%.

We are talking about seniors. We are talking about struggling young families. We are talking about people who cannot afford this. Instead of moving to change the system, you've chosen to continue with it and pass the buck.

Today, the New Democrats, I remind you again, showed leadership that you're not showing and took the initiative that should have come from you. I'm going to ask you: Will you at least commit to seriously considering the recommendations made by the NDP task force?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: In 1990, that member campaigned to reform the property tax system. They said they were going to reform property tax, replace it. What did they do? Nothing. For five years you allowed the system to degenerate.

Now, let's hear who has been appointed to this task force. Are there any experts in property tax reform on it? No. Is there anybody involved who's had any involvement in anything other than the NDP? No.

Let's see what the media had to say about this little task force. The media suggests, and I concur, that this is simply an attempt to build a mailing list for the next election. That was one of the questions.

Mr. Speaker, I do have to retract something I said yesterday. Yesterday, I said the NDP voted against \$125 tax credit for seniors. In fact, they voted against a potential \$625 property tax credit for seniors. Your record is—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker: Stop the clock. The Minister of Finance will take his seat.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Members are waiting to ask questions. Thank you.

TRADE DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Minister, you were part of this government's recent trade

mission to China, which was led and organized by our Premier, Dalton McGuinty. The purpose of this mission was to foster strong ties of trade and friendship with China, a country whose economy is one of the fastest growing in the world. While the United States is, and will most likely continue to be, our largest trading partner for years to come, it is important for Ontario to expand our trade circles and take full advantage of the opportunities provided by emerging world economies, with China being one of the most prominent. Minister, could you provide us with some detail on this trade mission and its successes?

Hon. Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade): I'd like to thank the good member for Ottawa–Orléans for the question. I want to report to this House that the recent trade mission to China that the Premier led was a real success. As members may be aware, China is now our second-largest trading partner, so this is a very important relationship that we are establishing. I would like to say that under the able leadership of the Premier, we were able to make the case that Ontario should be the gateway to the North American marketplace for Chinese investment, and that the relationship needs to be two-way. We made the case that now is the time for Chinese companies looking to invest in North America to look to Ontario. There are many opportunities in the life sciences sector, the information, communications and technology sector, and of course the auto sector. We made that case, and there is a great deal of work that needs to be done to follow up on this trade mission, but indeed the mission was a real success.

Mr. McNeely: Thank you, Minister. It pleases me greatly to know how dedicated and innovative this government is in pursuing economic opportunities to benefit the province. Ontario itself has a great deal to offer in terms of investment and business: a hard-working, multilingual labour force, an abundance of resources and unlimited potential. Minister, could you inform us what steps were taken on this trade mission and what steps will continue to be taken by this government to ensure that when China and other countries are considering investment opportunities in Ontario, they remember to look to the east, to Ottawa, to Kanata and to Orléans?

Hon. Mr. Cordiano: I want to reiterate the importance of two-way trade and investment. Investment attraction is very important in the relationship, because investment then leads to additional trade opportunities. I believe this relationship we've established with China can now flourish as a result of the opportunities being opened for investment.

Eastern Ontario is no exception. Indeed, eastern Ontario is a great place for the Chinese to look to invest in the information, communications and technology sector, which Ottawa can boast is a prime location. We made that clear to many companies in China over the past 10 days. We had interest from pharmaceutical companies, as well, looking to invest in Ontario. Life sciences is an important sector that's flourishing right here in the greater Toronto area. Eastern Ontario, as I say, is blessed

with a great workforce in the information, communications and technology sector, and we will continue to make that case for eastern Ontario. Thanks to the member for the question.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington): My question is to the Minister of Health. In the first week of May, Doug Emerson, advocating on behalf of his father who had multiple myeloma, spoke with Peter Finkle, the director of hospitals branch in your ministry, who admitted there is a gap in the current delivery of treatment for cancer patients waiting for IV drugs that are under review. Within 24 hours, he picked up the telephone, stepped in and directed Princess Margaret Hospital to provide treatment for Doug's father, John Emerson.

Minister, there are five other cancer patients in the chamber with us this afternoon who have multiple myeloma and require Velcade. Why is it that your ministry decided that that patient, Mr. Emerson, should get treated and yet today you turned your back on those multiple myeloma patients?

1520

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): And how is it I've turned my back? By providing services in exactly the same way that your government did?

Mr. Jackson: Minister, your bureaucrat made a decision. The federal government has approved this medication. There are inconsistencies in both your approach as the minister and the way in which your ministry is handling this file.

I'll ask you again: Why is it, not only that your ministry picks up the telephone and directs a hospital to provide the care, but when that treatment is over, that same ministry is now telling Princess Margaret Hospital it's not going to pay for the treatment and you've stranded that hospital, as you've stranded hundreds of multiple myeloma patients in this province?

Minister, there are treatments that you're paying for in the United States for colorectal cancer patients from Ontario and there are patients whom you're denying. You're doing the same thing with multiple myeloma. When are you going to be consistent and have a consistent approach so that cancer patients can rely on the treatment in this province which, quite frankly, is falling apart under your watch?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: With all due respect to the member's rather direct advocacy related only to cancer drugs, his suggestion that the cancer treatment system we have in this province is falling apart is not just a slanderous comment to the government, but one directly to the hundreds and thousands of people who every day are dedicating themselves to enhancement of our cancer treatment system in the province.

The government of Ontario, which I'm very, very proud to be part of, with respect to new cancer drug funding, as an example, has in two short years increased

that funding by more than your party did for eight years while in government. And with all due respect to your questions with respect to process, the processes we're following are virtually identical to those that were followed by your government, which is the view that it is necessary to establish an evidence basis with respect to the provision of drugs in Ontario. We will continue to provide that—

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

TTC SERVICE

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Earlier this week, the member from Scarborough Centre told the Scarborough Mirror, "If the city can reach consensus on it for a vision for a subway for Scarborough, I think it's something the province would certainly want to play a part in...."

Minister, how much money is your government setting aside for the new Scarborough subway? Can we expect it in the budget? If the member is wrong, can you tell me and this House that he does not speak for your government?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation): This must be a very important question that it ended up last on the list, from this member. But let me assure you we will look at any proposal that the city will submit, and we will work with them.

PETITIONS

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington): [Failure of sound system]

"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 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.”

This has my signature of support.

MACULAR DEGENERATION

Mr. Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls): I'm pleased to read in the following petition on behalf of my riding of Niagara Falls. The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the government of Ontario's health insurance plan covers treatments for one form of macular degeneration,” known as wet, “there are other forms of macular degeneration,” known as dry, “that are not covered,

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

“There are thousands of Ontarians who suffer from macular degeneration resulting in loss of sight if treatment is not pursued. Treatment costs for this disease are astronomical for most individuals and add a financial burden to their lives. Their only alternative is loss of sight. We believe the government of Ontario should cover treatment for all forms of macular degeneration through the Ontario health insurance program.”

I'm pleased to sign this petition and show my support for it.

FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with that petition.

MACULAR DEGENERATION

Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale): My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the government of Ontario's health insurance plan covers treatments for one form of macular de-

generation (wet), there are other forms of macular degeneration ... that are not covered,

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

“There are thousands of Ontarians who suffer from macular degeneration resulting in loss of sight if treatment is not pursued. Treatment costs for this disease are astronomical for most constituents and add a financial burden to their lives. Their only alternative is loss of sight. We believe the government of Ontario should cover treatment for all forms of macular degeneration through the Ontario health insurance program.”

I agree with this petition and also put my signature on it.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I have a petition 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 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 affix my signature.

SERVICES AUX PERSONNES AYANT UNE DÉFICIENCE INTELLECTUELLE

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell): J'ai une pétition ici qui contient 542 signatures.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Sujet : sous-financement des salaires des employés travaillant auprès des personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle.

« Attendu que sans appui adéquat, les personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle sont souvent incapables de participer efficacement à la vie de leur communauté et sont privées des avantages de la société dont jouissent les autres citoyens;

« Attendu que l'offre de services de soutien de qualité dépend de la capacité d'attirer et de retenir des travailleurs compétents;

« Attendu que les salaires des travailleurs qui fournissent du soutien et des services communautaires peuvent être jusqu'à 25 % moins élevés que ceux des

personnes qui accomplissent les mêmes tâches dans des établissements gérés par le gouvernement et d'autres secteurs;

« Nous, soussignés, adressons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Que l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario examine la question prioritaire du financement des organismes communautaires du secteur des services aux personnes ayant un handicap de développement, dans le but de trouver des solutions à l'insuffisance des salaires du personnel et de faire en sorte que les personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle continuent de recevoir le soutien et les services de qualité dont elles ont besoin pour pouvoir vivre une vie utile et constructive au sein de leur collectivité. »

1530

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Minister of Culture recently announced that there would be funding cuts totalling more than \$1.2 million from Ontario public library services; and

“Whereas over 69 million people visited public libraries in Ontario in 2003, with more than 100 million items circulating; and

“Whereas these cuts will impact you as a library user, resulting in delays in how often your library receives new books;

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

“That the Minister of Culture restore the ... funding for Ontario public library services so that our library can continue to promote literacy in our community.”

I agree with the petition and want to thank the Collingwood Public Library for sending it to me.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the so-called Tenant Protection Act of the defeated Harris-Eves Tories has allowed landlords to increase rents well above the rate of inflation for new and old tenants alike;

“Whereas the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal (ORHT) created by this act regularly awards major and permanent additional rent increases to landlords to pay for required one-time improvements and temporary increases in utility costs and this same act has given landlords wide-ranging powers to evict tenants; and

“Whereas our landlord, Sterling Karamar Property Management, has applied to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) to add a fourth high-rise unit to our compound in order to circumvent city of Toronto restrictions on density and the city's opposition to its project;

“Whereas this project would lead to overcrowding in our densely populated community, reduce our precious green space, further drive up rents and do nothing to solve the crisis in affordable rental housing;

“Whereas this project will drive away longer-term tenants partially shielded from the ... rent increases, thereby further reducing the number of relatively affordable units in the city core;...

“We, the undersigned residents of Doversquare Apartments in Toronto, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

“To institute a rent freeze until the exorbitant Tory guideline and above-guideline rent increases are wiped out by inflation;

“To abrogate the ... ‘Tenant Protection Act’ and draw up new landlord-tenant legislation which shuts down the notoriously pro-landlord ORHT and reinstates real rent control, including an elimination of the Tory policy of ‘vacancy decontrol’;” and finally,

“To keep the ... government to its promise of real changes at the OMB, eliminating its bias toward wealthy developers and enhancing the power of groups promoting affordable housing, sustainable neighbourhoods and tenant rights.”

I will present this to you, Mr. Speaker, through our page Cara.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): I have a petition signed by good citizens of Cambridge, which reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Save Our Hospital

“Whereas the \$80-million expansion of Cambridge Memorial Hospital was approved in 2002 pursuant to the mandate of the Health Services Restructuring Commission; and

“Whereas the plans for the project have been in the works for the past two years; and

“Whereas the residents of Cambridge and North Dumfries, the city of Cambridge and the region of Waterloo have contributed their share of the project; and

“Whereas the decision to cancel the expansion will adversely affect and diminish health care in Waterloo region;

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

“Resolved that the McGuinty government reverse its decision to cancel the Cambridge Memorial Hospital expansion and hospital upgrades.”

I affix my name thereto.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to partici-

pate 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 agree with the petition, and I've signed it.

GO TRANSIT TUNNEL

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario, the minister of infrastructure services and the Minister of Transportation. It reads as follows:

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

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

“Whereas this bridge ... will be: (1) too narrow for the planned TTC right-of-way, since it will have only one lane for traffic; (2) it is not safe for pedestrians (it's about 50 metres long). It's dark and slopes on both east and west sides creating high banks for 300 metres; and (3) it creates a divide, a no man's land, between Old Weston Road and Keele Street. (This was acceptable when the area consisted entirely of slaughterhouses, but now the area has 900 new homes);

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

Since I agree, I'm delighted to sign this petition.

LESLIE M. FROST CENTRE

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock): “Recommendations for the Frost Centre

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government announced the closure of the Leslie M. Frost Natural Resources Centre in July 2004 with no public consultation; and

“Whereas public outrage over the closure of the Frost Centre caused the government to appoint a working

committee of local residents to examine options for the future of the property; and

“Whereas the working committee has completed their consultations and has prepared recommendations for the provincial government that include a procedure to follow during the request for proposals process; and

“Whereas the Frost Centre has been an important educational resource for the community, and continued use of the facility for educational purposes has widespread support;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

“The Dalton McGuinty Liberals should retain public ownership of the Frost Centre lands and follow the recommendations of the working committee regarding the request for proposals process.”

Signed by hundreds of people from my riding, and I affix my signature.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to standing order 55, I want to rise and give the Legislature the business of the House for next week.

On Monday, November 21, in the afternoon, second and third reading of Bill 197, the Budget Measures Act.

On Tuesday, November 22, in the afternoon, second reading of Bill 18, Budget Measures Act (No. 2), and in the evening, second reading of Bill 21, Energy Conservation Responsibility Act.

On Wednesday, November 23, in the afternoon, second reading of Bill 27, the Family Statute Law Amendment Act, and the evening to be confirmed.

On Thursday, November 24, in the afternoon, second reading of Bill 18, the Budget Measures Act (No. 2), and in the evening, second reading of Bill 210, the Child and Family Services Statute Law Amendment Act.

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ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 197, An Act to implement Budget measures, when Bill 197 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may then be immediately called; and

That, when the order for third reading is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of

this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That no deferral of the second reading vote pursuant to standing order 28(h) shall be permitted; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona): Mr. Caplan has moved government notice of motion number 30.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: I'm pleased to rise to speak to government motion number 30. It is, in fact, what we call here in the Legislature under the standing orders a time allocation motion. I'm very proud, by the way, of the record of our government. I expect over the course of this debate you will hear some hue and cry and a lot of noise from both opposition parties about how undemocratic or awful time allocation motions are. So I thought off the top I would remind all members of the Legislature of some of the history related to time allocation in this particular House.

Of course, all members would remember back in the early 1990s, time allocation in fact was introduced by then House leader Shelley Martel of the New Democratic Party, and passed by Dave Cooke, the House leader of the New Democratic Party, as well. In fact, the NDP did set the trend for these kinds of motions. They used time allocation and these kinds of procedures about five times more than the previous Peterson government. You know, there were no public hearings when the NDP ripped up collective agreements with their social contract. There was no time allotted for third reading debate. There were no public hearings when the NDP raised gasoline taxes, for example, 3.4 cents a litre during some of their budgetary measures. In fact, in contrast to that, this time allocation motion deals with Bill 197, a budget bill of the government, that was introduced back last May in this House. It has already had significant debate in this Legislature.

But I don't want to just leave the New Democrats alone, because there is a significant history with the Conservative Party as it relates to time allocation motions. In fact, the Eves government, with which most members across the way are very familiar, in the last session of the Parliament of Ontario used time allocation on 83% of all government bills that received royal assent. From 1999 to 2003, the Harris-Eves government used time allocation on 67 of 110 government bills that received royal assent, or 61% of the time.

I want to contrast that with the record of our government. This is the ninth time that we have introduced and used a time allocation measure. We've introduced 71 government bills, and passed 52 of them. I think you can see that there is quite a large difference between the way that both previous governments used these measures in the standing orders and the way that our government is using them, because we do not take time allocation lightly. We treat this as a very serious matter, and really as a measure of last resort. But it doesn't just end there.

In the eight years of the Harris-Eves government, there was never any more than three days of second reading debate for any budget bill. I'm going to find some of the opposition howling rich, when we discovered that time allocation, for every budget that was introduced since 1998, was a standard course of events in this House. In fact, Speaker, I know you would be very interested that in the very first budget, where welfare rates were slashed 21.6%, where one third of the Ministry of Environment staff were laid off, where education funding was slashed, cut, guillotined, by \$400 million, and the effect that that had on children right across this province was devastating and well documented—\$400 million additionally was cut from colleges and universities. I'm going to highlight that with what is in Bill 197, because it's quite a different story. And over half a billion were dollars literally taken, cut from municipalities.

I want to compare and contrast that record and the use of time allocation to limit any type of debate—to prevent any kind of discussion in this Legislature—with the way our government has progressed.

As I said, this is the ninth time over the course of two years that our government has used time allocation. As I did say, we've introduced 71 bills; 52 have been passed. I want to be very clear that I, and certainly members of our government, will not treat this House with the kind of disrespect we saw evidenced by a budgetary speech being held outside this Parliament—the now infamous Magna budget—and time allocation will only be used for major legislation when there is time sensitivity.

Now, in thinking about this motion, I would like to move an amendment deleting the second paragraph and substituting the following therefor—if I could have one of the pages come, I'll give them a copy of the amendment as well.

The amendment reads as follows: “That at 5:50 p.m. or 9:20 p.m., as the case may be, on the day that the order for third reading of the bill is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and”.

The Acting Speaker: Mr. Caplan has moved an amendment, as follows:

That the motion be amended by deleting the second paragraph and substituting the following therefor:

“That at 5:50 p.m. or 9:20 p.m., as the case may be, on the day that the order for third reading of the bill is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and”.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: I'm very pleased to move that amendment. I want to provide opportunities for all members of the House to have debate at third reading.

In fact, Bill 197, the budget bill, contains some absolutely terrific measures for the people of Ontario as relates to the budgetary policies that have been endorsed by this Legislature. Some of them are quite well known; for example, our historic \$6.2-billion investment in our

post-secondary sector, in training, colleges and universities. In fact, this is the largest multi-year investment in over 40 years. It is a strategic long-term investment in jobs, prosperity and growth in the economic underpinnings of our province, and it has been incredibly well received. I want to contrast that, as I said earlier, with the approach the previous government took in their very first budget, also time-allocated, to immediately slash \$400 million from post-secondary education.

Bill 197 makes operative some of the investments in elementary and secondary education, with more child care spaces and smaller class sizes. We've seen for the first time—and as the parent of two young children, I know I especially appreciate—the effect that peace and stability have had. We saw with the previous government over one million lost days of learning for our children because of labour disruption—lockouts, strikes. We have seen peace and stability in elementary and secondary school education, and our children are benefiting by it. In fact, test scores are showing that student achievement is going up.

In health, this budget makes operative lowering wait times, hiring more doctors and nurses, keeping people healthier with the creation of a new Ministry of Health Promotion.

There is one area I want to give some special attention to in the very few minutes I have available to talk. For the first time ever in the province of Ontario, a government has developed a plan for investment in infrastructure: a five-year, \$30-billion infrastructure investment plan called ReNew Ontario. It is incredibly exciting. It has been well received from one end of this province to the other. It makes operative the kinds of investments that the people of Ontario have told us are most critically important to them.

1550

Of those 30 billion dollars, I want to highlight some of them, and I'm so proud of the work that has gone into this, the thought, the support, from one end of government right to the other, but most importantly on behalf of the people of Ontario; for example, in the area of health care and the rebuilding of our health care.

You'd be surprised, Speaker, to know that the average age of a hospital in the province of Ontario is 43 years old. Under this plan, under this ground-breaking, \$30-billion, five-year plan, \$5 billion will be invested to modernize, to upgrade, and to ensure that Ontarians have access to state-of-the-art health care services. We have begun or completed 105 health care hospital rebuilding programs. That's unprecedented, and it is well received. I know they range from such projects as building a cancer centre at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie—Speaker, I know that you would want to speak to that, and perhaps the member from Barrie will speak to that. I know it ranges from the Grand River Hospital—in the member from Waterloo's riding; she may wish to speak to that very exciting project—getting the green light and having that go ahead. This news has been greeted with incredible enthusiasm from one end of the province to the other.

In education, over \$10 billion will be invested to rebuild and renew our schools, our universities and our colleges and to support the kind of training environment that we will need in order to train people for those jobs that our government is committed to supporting.

With record investments in the auto sector, with record investments in the forestry sector, and many, many others from around the province, it is important that we have the physical space, the research and development infrastructure and the lab space that will attract leading-edge researchers who will come up with the ideas which will drive our economy, and that we take the next important step and commercialize those ideas, turning them into services and products which, again, will generate significant employment.

I said health care and education. The third underpinning of our economy certainly is the ability to move around: transit, transportation and borders. We will be investing \$11.5 billion in public transportation, \$4.5 million—and I would contrast that with the approach of the previous government, who downloaded public transit on to municipalities. Not only are we building; we are seeing literally a renaissance. I understand today there was a question in the House regarding even greater interest about expanding transit options in the GTA. My colleague the Minister of Transportation is coming forward with some incredibly exciting proposals around the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority and our ability to make even greater investments.

I want you to know—and, Speaker, you would know—that we are going to be connecting Barrie with the GO system as a result of some of our groundbreaking work with the federal government. We are, in fact, moving forward with the city of Toronto and the TTC's state-of-good-repair plan. We're investing in highways unlike we have ever done before: over a billion dollars this year alone invested in our highways.

Interjection.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: Well, that's over five years, but just in one year.

But, of course, our number one investment priority is to make sure that our borders are open and that we can flow goods and people across, because, of course, Ontario is one of the most export-oriented jurisdictions in the world.

There are some other very exciting elements of ReNew Ontario, and I know that people across Ontario want to get hold of this very exciting plan: things like a \$600-million affordable housing investment, \$1 billion being invested into the justice sector.

I wish I could go on and on, but I know that my colleagues will want to speak to Bill 197. My colleague the whip here is telling me that my time, unfortunately, is up. Speaker, give me more time.

I want to thank you, and I want to urge all members of this Legislature to support not only government notice of motion 30, but also the amendment that we passed, which will allow even greater opportunity for the opposition, indeed all members of this assembly, to speak to this very

important budget bill. Speaker, thank you very much for allowing me this time here today.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): I am going to join the debate on this time allocation motion that has been put forward by the Liberal government. Certainly, I would contradict many of the statements that have been made by the previous speaker, the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. I would remind him that we have only had three days of debate on this bill, which is the minimum allowed, and I would also remind him that despite the rhetoric we continue to hear from all members in that party about democratic renewal, consultation, openness and transparency, it is abundantly clear that this government, by its actions, demonstrates that it is totally different than what it says. In other words, you just don't get it.

In fact, we're seeing that the hypocrisy continues, because this is a government which, under the leadership of Dalton McGuinty—he said on December, 19, 2000, "For a government that promised to be open, this closure action is the height of arrogance, the height of exactly everything you campaigned against and you said you were for." That's what Dalton McGuinty said about time allocation, and now we see this government behaving in a way that is indeed as Mr. McGuinty said, the height of arrogance, the height of everything you campaigned against.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): Another broken promise.

Mrs. Witmer: As I hear my colleagues say, this time allocation motion, which you're now using for the ninth time, is again a broken promise to the people of Ontario. Now, Dalton McGuinty also said other things. He always demonstrated that he was totally opposed to this type of action, yet this government, for the ninth time, continues to close down debate—any discussion—on an issue of importance to the people of Ontario.

But let's take a look at what this minister said. I have here a quote from Hansard, from David Caplan, Don Valley East, November 21, 2001. It says, "I usually start off my remarks by saying it's a pleasure to speak to something on behalf of the people of Don Valley East, but it really isn't. This is yet another closure motion, a gag order on the Legislature." That's what this minister said. He called it a gag order. Then he went on to say, "How could it ever be a pleasure to speak to that, when that's the normal course of action and when this Legislature is shut down for the very purpose it was meant for, which was to discuss important matters?" Well, we ask the minister today, how can you impose a gag order on this Legislature to close down discussion on an issue as important as this budget bill? How can you not allow people in Ontario to have input in this significant and important piece of legislation?

But let's take a look at what some of the other colleagues across the way said, because I can tell you, many of them spoke against time allocation. In fact, let's take a

look at what the past House leader, Dwight Duncan, who is now the minister responsible for finance, said. He said on November 21, 2002, "Time allocation is used yet again by a government that has not been able to manage its meagre legislative agenda, on a substantive issue that ought to have the benefit of hearings so that experts on both sides can be called, so that members can have an informed debate on the specifics contained in the bill. That's sad. That's wrong."

I would suggest to the Liberal government that you're having some trouble managing your legislative agenda. Then on October 26, 1998, Dwight Duncan said, "Closure motions really are inherently bad for our parliamentary system and prevent members of all political parties—government members, opposition members, third party members—from fully participating in the debates of the day. They're designed to limit those discussions." Agreed. Dwight Duncan went on to say again, on April 27, 2000, "If you're truly interested in democracy, as you say you are, if that is where you're going, I suggest to you that you won't use the great mallet of closure to stifle this Legislature and to prevent public input into this bill. If you're all about democracy, you ought not to be afraid of that."

1600

Today we see that despite the utterings of the members across the way, they are demonstrating that they don't have a great deal of interest in democracy, that they don't have a great deal of interest in allowing public input into debate on this bill. In fact, they've used the time allocation motion nine times. They have limited debate on this bill to only the minimum of three days.

When the minister stood up, he bragged about this wonderful capital plan they had put in place, and all the money they were making available. Well, you take a look at the money that they're making available, you take a look at the announcements that this government is making, and many of these announcements don't happen until well after the next election, like year 2008 or 2009.

By the same token, this government has not lived up to its promise to provide almost \$80 million in funding for Cambridge hospital, a hospital that had been told that a commitment had been made, that they were going to receive funding in order that they could continue to respond to the growing needs of their community, a community, by the way, that is rapidly growing.

This government continues to break promises to the people of Ontario, and certainly the Cambridge citizens are angry. They will be coming to this Legislature to protest, and my colleague the member for Cambridge has been working hard on their behalf to force this government to live up to its promise and its commitment to the people of Cambridge in order that they can have the additional allocation and renovations that they so desperately need.

There is a need, I would say to the minister opposite, for further dialogue and further debate on this piece of legislation, because it is not warmly embraced by all the people in the province of Ontario. It means that commu-

ities like Cambridge and others will not qualify for funding.

I would also say to the member that I have an article here from the Kitchener-Waterloo Record, November 17, which reminds this government that they all flocked to Kitchener in May 2004. We had David Caplan there, the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, we had Transportation Minister Joe Volpe, press releases were summoning the media to the Kitchener bus terminal, and it seemed there was going to be a grand slam announcement from this government, "something along the lines of the \$600 million pledged a few days earlier for Ottawa's light rail plan, or the \$150 million for transit improvements in York region." It goes on to say, "Instead, Ministers Caplan and Volpe bunted. They promised to team up with the region to share the cost of studies associated with the light rail plan." They "pledged to put up as much as \$2.5 million."

Well, guess what? The region still doesn't have the money. This government continues to let down the people of the region of Waterloo time and time again. That's why it is important to discuss this budget bill, to make sure that people in all parts of this province, not just Liberal ridings, have access to the funding they need for transportation projects, hospital projects and other projects that are desperately needed to respond to the needs of the community, and so I oppose this motion.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): Sadly, as I too often have to say in this Legislature, I close my eyes and from the government benches I still hear Mike Harris. I still hear the same words of closure. I still hear the same words of non-compassion. I still hear the same words, "When you were in government." I don't hear anybody taking any responsibility over there for what is, after all, Liberal promise-breaking.

If you had the nerve to say what you were going to do during the election, if you had the nerve to say what you were going to do in the run-up, then for God's sake, have the nerve to continue to do it in this Legislature. Don't talk about what happened 15 years ago, 20 years ago, "when you were in government," "when George Washington was a boy," because the eyes are looking at you. It is you, after all, who have been in here for two years and a month. It is you who have the responsibility, if things were wrong, to fix them.

I listened with chagrin, I have to tell you, to the honourable member when he was talking about Bill 197 and going into a whole history of "when you were in government" or "when they were in government," knowing full well that he was on his feet—at least for the last government, because I was here for most of it—condemning every single thing that he is doing here today, condemning in articulate words what he now praises himself for doing. If this is not the Newspeak of 1984, I don't know what is.

I think the people watching on television need to know something about this bill that we have before us. I went in, and here's what the bill is: An Act to implement budget measures, by the Honourable Greg Sorbara, as he

then was, the Minister of Finance. First reading: May 11, 2005. Not one word was said in that session of the Legislature, before it was prorogued, about this bill. The Liberals could have called it. Did they call it? Not once for public debate in all of that time, from the time that it was introduced on May 11, 2005, until the House was prorogued—not once. This important bill that now must have closure: Did you call it?

In fact, on this bill, in nice, bold, red print, it reads as follows. I hope the government members look at it. Open up your binder. It says that this bill was introduced in the first session of the 38th Parliament. It has been continued as a bill of the second session by the order of the House dated June 13, 2005.

So this is what you did: You had a bill. You forced the bill through to this session because you didn't want to reintroduce it; in fact, you probably couldn't reintroduce it. Then you let it sit there when this Parliament came back. The first full day of hearings was six months after you introduced this bill. First reading was May 11.

The first full day of hearings was October 25, 2005. On October 25, 2005, there were a couple of speakers, of course. Mr. Duncan and Mr. Arthurs split the government time but chose not to use all of it. You had an hour, but I think you used something like 30 minutes of government time debating that bill. Then the next speaker, of course, was member Runciman from Leeds–Grenville. He used most of his time. He was allocated about an hour and used most of his time, so chalk one up for the Conservatives speaking about the bill. Then, of course, I had my opportunity to speak to the bill, and I spoke for some 52 minutes that day. The time ran out because it turned to 6 o'clock. I spoke for my 52 minutes and I came back the next day.

The next day, there were a couple of speakers who stood up to talk about the bill again. I finished my eight minutes. We had Liberals again splitting 20 minutes. Two speakers stood up only to speak approximately 10 minutes each, members Ramal and Delaney. Then the member from Erie–Lincoln stood up to make his speech. He spoke for the period of time allocated to him.

We came back for a third day of hearings. Not one Liberal wanted to talk about this bill. The rotation went around and around and around, and not one Liberal used time to speak about this bill—not one. The people who spoke on that day were the member from Renfrew–Nepean—Mr. Yakabuski. I'm sorry, I can't think of it. The member from Nickel Belt spoke, the member from Whitby–Ajax spoke, the member from Niagara Centre spoke and the member from Simcoe North spoke. Not one Liberal thought it worthy to get out of his or her seat and actually say something about this bill, and then today they invoke closure.

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They don't even want to talk about it. They can't even say why it's a good bill. They can't even say why it's necessary. They can't tell a single soul in this Legislature, or people watching it, why they didn't call the bill from May of last year, why they have allowed two days

of debate in which they chose largely not to speak to the bill at all. And now it is so important that it has to be finalized, no one else can say anything about it.

Should closure ever be invoked? I've never been on the government side. I've never been over there. I have to tell you that I can think of a few circumstances where you may have to do it. This quite clearly, though, is not one of them. Has debate been exhausted? You haven't even spoken. You haven't said a word. You haven't even stood out of your seat.

People who want to speak to this bill are not going to get an opportunity. I can speak today because you're invoking closure, so I can talk again, but those who actually want to talk to the bill are not going to have that opportunity. They are not going to have an opportunity to tell you what a bad bill this is. They're not going to have an opportunity to tell you how this budget has grossly failed the people of Ontario. They're not going to have an opportunity to hold you to account for the election promises you've made and that you will never, ever keep. They're not going to be able to hold you to account for what the people of Ontario expect them to hold you to account for.

This is an awful budget. This is an awful budget, unless you're well-to-do. It's an awful budget, unless you don't really expect very much from your government. If you don't expect very much, then it's probably an OK budget, because you're not getting very much.

When I used to be in municipal politics, there were many types of people. There were people who thought that the government's role in the municipality was to pick up the garbage, and if the garbage was picked up, the municipality was OK. That's all they cared about. There were people, though, and an awful lot of them thankfully in East York, who cared a lot more than that. They cared about the boards and committees. They cared about what government was doing, how their money was being spent, whether the library was in good shape, whether the police were well funded. They cared about a whole range of things.

Well, I will tell you, people in Ontario are no different than the people of East York. They're exactly the same. They care about a whole range of things. They don't just care whether taxes are raised or not raised. They don't just care about whether the deficit is this big or this big or whether there's an effort being made, although it is a factor. I will not deny for a second it is a factor. But they care about things that you have not addressed and will never address in this budget.

I think back to the days when the Liberals were on this side of the House. I think back to the days when the Liberals actually stood for social reform. I remember many of the members, some of whom are here in this room today, were very eloquent when it came to the poor. They were very eloquent when it came to people on welfare, children and single mothers who had to subsist on \$500, \$600 or \$700 a month in a city like Toronto or cities like Hamilton, Mississauga or Ottawa. They would ask passionately and with great debate what the government was going to do to assist those poor.

I see those same members on the government bench today and those same people who are trying to close down debate, not wanting those very things to be asked. Where are they today, speaking about this? Where are they standing up and saying that not one cent in this budget is going to the poor, not one cent in this budget is going to the people who most desperately need it? In fact, as I said in my debate, and I will say here again, those poorest of the poor people on ODSP and welfare, those who rely on government assistance, are actually worse off today under this budget than they were in the worst days of the Harris government. Because of inflation and because of the fact that you have only raised their payments 3% in the first budget and nothing in this, they are actually worse off today than when Mike Harris walked out that door for the last time.

You know, I used to expect better things from Liberals. Perhaps I was naive sitting on this side of the House and watching them ask those very questions and promising to be, oh, so different once they were in government. I have to tell you that you are no different in government. You were different in opposition, but you are exactly the same in government as the people you used to attack. You say the same things; you act the same way. The only difference now is that you turn to the poor and say, "I am so sorry I can't give you an increase," instead of, "There's no increase for you." You say, "I'm so sorry. If only we had the money, if only times were better, if only we hadn't been left such a deficit, we would actually care for you."

I think about those who are on ODSP, those people who cannot work, those people who are infirm and sick, confirmed by doctors and verified by municipalities and by the province, who got no money at all this year from a government that I can only say should have had a heart and was, in fact, heartless.

I look back to what they promised about rent supplements. They promised to have a whole system of rent supplements. I see what is happening here: the slowness for those who are actually going to get one and the impossibility for the thousands and tens of thousands of people who thought they were going to be eligible.

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): 5,000.

Mr. Prue: The member beside me, the honourable PA to the minister, is yelling "5,000." That is but a drop in the bucket. What did you promise? How many of these rent supplements did you promise? Some 20,000 is what I remember—30,000, 50,000? In fact, you have a tiny little pittance that most people cannot and will never be able to qualify for. Those 5,000 are a drop in the bucket. You are doing nothing. You are pitiful in what you do. You can protest what you want. I know, when I heard you on this side of the House, that you would never have accepted 5,000 as a number. You would have guffawed if the government had suggested 5,000 was right. You would have known in your heart that it is pitiful. I tell you to your face that what you have done is pitiful. And now you close down debate so other honourable members can't enter it, so they can't talk about the really bad job you are doing.

I look at the aboriginal communities and how they have suffered with the patience of Job, all of them, since Confederation. The people in Treaty 9 in northern Ontario: Many of us have had an opportunity to go up into their communities and talk to them. You see, among the treaties in Canada, the 12 that have been signed, Treaty 9 was signed not only by the government of Canada but also by the government of Ontario. People forget that. Treaty 9 was signed by the government of Ontario to ensure that the aboriginal communities in northern Ontario would not be left out of the largesse, would not be left out of the prosperity of this Ontario, of this province, with all its wealth and all its riches. And you know, the people who signed Treaty 9, particularly the aboriginal community, believed they were not going to be left out.

Did this budget leave them out? This budget was a disgrace in how it dealt with aboriginal communities. Was there money for the ministry that looks after them? No. It was cut by 20%. This is the budget you're here defending, the same budget—the same Kashechewan where they can't drink the water. It just numbs my mind: In every single community, if you have gone to see them, there are no roads, there is inadequate sewage, there is poor drinking water—they have to boil it in most communities—the schools in at least one or two have had to be shut down because the oil has leaked and they're unsafe. Most of the homes the people live in have mould.

Is there money in this budget for Treaty 9? Is there anything in this budget that you have done for the aboriginal community about which you can say, "I am proud. We are making progress"? There is absolutely nothing. What this budget has done to the aboriginal communities, the First Nations of Ontario, is a disgrace. This is the party that cannot defend it, because it is the party that will not put anyone up to speak to this issue or any other issue. It is the party, instead, that invokes closure so that no one else can talk about your failures.

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I look at the failures around autism. I remember what Dalton McGuinty wrote. When I was knocking on the door, I remember what my constituents said at the door, how they were going to vote Liberal. I remember one very proud family, the Quance family—I've talked about them many times in the Legislature—who thought that finally there was an opportunity for their daughter, who has autism. This is a wonderful family, a remarkable family. They have done everything in their power to get IBI treatment for their daughter, who is now five and closing in on six. They have mortgaged their house. They have remortgaged their house. They have borrowed money from friends and family. The community has held fundraiser after fundraiser. Both of the parents have two jobs each. Do you know something? I would like a Liberal to stand up and tell this Legislature how this budget helps the Quance family. I'd like a Liberal to stand up in this House and say what a good job you are doing to help the most disadvantaged children of this province: those who are born with autism, those who will never be able

to be self-sufficient unless help is given early and often. The Quances believed in you then. I have to tell you, the last time I went to a fundraiser, speaker after speaker who stood up to talk about the plight of the family had nothing kind whatsoever to say about this government or the people who represent this government in this Legislature. Person after person stood up and said how they had supported you in the last election because you had promised, you had given a commitment, that you would deal with children with autism beyond the age of six.

What have you done instead? You have taken these same families, who are fighting with all of the courage, all of the resources they have, through the courts. You have taken them to court after court after court. That is what you have done and that is what you have used this budget to do. You have not used the budget to help the very people you had promised; you have used it to hurt them.

I look at other things you have done. I look at the failure of agricultural policy in this province, and I am not a farmer; I'm from Toronto. I only really know, about agriculture, what the farmers tell me. They have come to this Legislature many times.

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): Farmers Feed Cities.

Mr. Prue: As was said, and rightly so, the farmers feed cities. I know where my food comes from. I don't grow it; they grow it. I eat it.

Interjection.

Mr. Prue: Yes. I grow cherry tomatoes. That's what I grow in my garden, but everything else, other than that, I get from a farmer. That's the reality. I get it from a farmer, in terms of food.

I want to tell you that I have great, great pride in what they do and what they do in Ontario. I know the difficult problems they have. I know about world subsidies. I know how some countries subsidize and some don't. I know about tariffs with the United States. I know all of those things. But the nitty-gritty, what it comes down to: Farmers tell me today that they are not as well off as they were before, that it is more and more difficult and that they don't see this government helping. When I looked at the budget, I saw that there was a decline in monies to agriculture in this budget. I would like a Liberal to stand up—because none of you have, so far—and talk about what you have done to help the farmers of this province.

I would like you to stand up and talk too about the environment. I would like you to stand up and defend the big pipe that's running north of the city. I would like you to stand up and say why the Ladies of the Lake on Lake Simcoe have to put out a calendar to try to stop the degradation of probably the largest cottage lake in all of Ontario, where more people have homes and recreational homes than any other place. The people there used to look to the government and now they're having to sell calendars instead to look after that.

I'd like you to explain why your budget was so silent in help for municipalities. I'd like to know why a municipality like Toronto this year is going to turn around and

again have to ask for \$300 million so as not to raise taxes. You promised to deal with that.

Every week I look in the paper, joyously hoping that maybe, hope against hope, there's going to be some announcement, some breakthrough. A couple of days ago, I saw in the paper a 12-page memorandum of understanding that contained almost nothing: no budget measures, no opportunities for the cities to raise funds, no extra real power, except when it comes to speed humps—absolutely nothing.

We have closure here today. We have a government that introduced a bill and then would not call it for debate. They let the whole time between May and the last session in June completely elapse with no debate. Then they had the whole period of time in September completely elapse without calling this bill. Then they called it on October 25, for one day of hearings. They split their time in half. They speak to half the limited time that they have, split between two people. They called it back on October 31 and they did the same: They split 20 minutes between two people, and then they refused thereafter to allow anyone else to speak. Quite frankly, I think they are embarrassed to speak about their lack of action on so many fronts.

I cannot support this closure. I don't care whether the NDP invoked closure five times and the Conservatives 500 times, although I was here for most of those. It was frustrating; I was frustrated with them. They would not allow ordinary public debate. You, on the other hand, although you've allowed it on so many occasions, are stifling it here because you don't want to speak to your own bill. You don't have the temerity. You will not stand up and defend the indefensible. So instead you let us rant and rave, I guess—today—you invoke closure at the end of it and then you say that that's the end of it. We go back for third reading, you take some more licks and then you're out of here.

That's what this is all about: You cannot take the sustained pressure on your failures. This is a failure of a bill, and the invoking of closure is the greatest failure of all.

Mr. Duguid: I'm pleased to rise today to—

Mr. Prue: He speaks.

Mr. Duguid: I do speak. Indeed, I speak in here almost every day. I'm proud to be here to speak, as well.

I listened carefully to the comments made by the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, and of course the comments made by the member from Beaches–East York.

I've got to tell you, I don't know if you caught in the comments of the member from Kitchener–Waterloo that she accused the government of being hypocritical, which I always thought was a sort of unparliamentary word. I suggest that she really ought to look in the mirror when it comes to that word, which I still consider to be unparliamentary, and I don't want to accuse her of it. When you look at the record of their government compared to our government—look at the number of bills we've introduced: 71 bills that have been introduced in this House;

53 passed. This is only the ninth time that we've had to use time allocation. We didn't use it because we wanted to; we used it because we have to get this legislation through because it's in the public interest to make sure we do. We did it because we were forced to use it.

On the other hand, look at the previous government, from 1999-2003: 110 bills; 67 motions for time allocation. Compare that: 67 motions for 110 bills compared to 71 government bills and only using time allocation nine times. You just can't compare. I suggest that when the member uses words like “hypocrisy,” for goodness' sake, she'd better be looking in the mirror, because it certainly doesn't apply to this side of the House. It applies to the party that made those particular accusations.

This isn't something we're doing because we like to do this; this is something we're doing because it's time to move on with this bill. It's been here for a very long period of time and has had many, many hours of debate. We need to move on with this bill for a number of reasons. Look at what is in this bill. Look at the fact of the \$6.2 billion that's being invested in post-secondary education. That's something that people of this province want us to get on with. In fact, we're doing the best we can to get on with it, but we've got to pass this legislation to move forward. It's important that we get on with that investment. It's an important investment in our colleges and universities—in fact, the biggest investment we've seen in at least 40 years in this province, an investment in the college and university sector to ensure that those buildings can be brought up to a world standard, a standard that at one time this country and this province could be proud of. But it has been allowed to deteriorate over time, to the point where, in this province, we fund—I think we are ninth out of 10, or were ninth out of 10, in funding for post-secondary education across this country. That's just not acceptable.

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We need to invest more in our post-secondary education. That's what this budget does: It invests in our post-secondary education system, it invests in our colleges and universities, but more importantly, it invests in our young people, because it ensures that those post-secondary institutions are accessible to those young people. That's important for them to go on and achieve things in their life, to go on and become the best that they can be in our society, but it's important to each and every Ontarian as well, because if we want to achieve the prosperity in this province that I think all of us on all sides of the House would like to see us achieve, we're going to have to have the most skilled and trained workforce in the world. To do that, those young people have to get access to post-secondary education, if we want to have that kind of workforce. If we want to have the most skilled workforce in the world, they need the best education that they can get in the world. That's what we're trying to provide by giving them access to post-secondary education.

We're enhancing the loans program, which is very important. But for the first time in many, many years—I

believe, probably over a decade—we're also providing grants to some of these young people, and that's important too, because when you look at some of these young people after they graduate, when you look at that debt load they have to acquire, it is sometimes astronomical. Some of these young people go on and attain wonderful jobs with great incomes fairly early, but most of them have to work their way up, even after they get their post-secondary education degree. I think of my brother. He has been a lawyer now for probably six or seven years, and he's still paying off his student loan. He's making three times the amount of money I'm making, but he's still paying off that student loan. He's not one of the ones I feel sorry for, because he's making good money. But some of the people who graduate have a pretty sizable student debt, and they don't have the bucks to be able to pay for that. So it is important that we provide grants to some of these young people to help them get through and help them gain access to post-secondary education so they can become the best they can be, so that we as a province can obtain the prosperity that we want to obtain.

It starts even before then. Our school system in this province was in dire need of investment when this government came to office. Through this budget, we're investing in our schools.

I look back at my riding. I was in Churchill Collegiate not too long ago. They took me—

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): Good school.

Mr. Duguid: It is a good school. You went to that school, didn't you? I think the member for Scarborough Southwest is a graduate of Churchill, if I recall.

Mr. Prue: He went there for at least 10 years.

Mr. Duguid: At least 10 years; no, I think he graduated in six or seven. But he graduated from Churchill and did well—probably with honours, if I know him. It may have taken him a little longer, but he graduated with honours.

But when he was going to Churchill I'm sure it was in much better shape than it was for the last number of graduating classes. Their boiler system had almost broken down. In fact, there were concerns about safety with regard to the boiler system in that school. It was at least a \$1-million investment that had to be made in that one school alone under the previous government. Unfortunately, those investments were not being made. What's important is that we make sure these dollars do flow so that we can invest in our schools to ensure that things—maybe a boiler system is not all that sexy, but can you imagine trying to operate a school without a properly operating boiler system? The students in that school are now going to have better regulated temperatures in the school. They will now be in a safer environment, not to mention a number of other investments that have been made in that school and many other schools around the province that ensure that what we inherited as a government, which many considered to be Third World conditions for our schools—I don't know if that was

necessarily the case throughout the system, but certainly there are some glaring examples of that. At least now investments can be made in those schools to ensure that they are suitable for our young people to be able to get good educations. That's what this bill is about: making sure that we can make those important investments that were included in our budget.

We look at the classrooms themselves and the number of students in some of these classrooms, and we look at the need to try to reduce the size of our classrooms, and we do that for a number of reasons. Number one, we believe and we know that teachers need to be there to pay attention to the students and give them the attention they need and deserve, but we also do it because there is a need to intervene sometimes in the lives of these young people.

When we see some of the problems going on in and around the greater Toronto area, the shootings we see, the youth crime and violence, one of the most opportune times—in fact, it's late in the continuum of intervention, but it's still one of the most opportune times to intervene when these young people are in school, especially in the early grades. In the early grades, you can spot some young person who may be showing anti-social behaviour, and if you intervene then, you can rest assured that down the road you're not going to have to bring the justice system into play. You're not going to have to pay for thousands more police officers, which is another thing this budget is going to help us pay for. You're not going to have to intervene at that serious level. You can intervene early, and you can only do that if you identify the problem in the young people who are having those problems.

It's incredibly important that we move forward with what is a budget that's been seen right across the province as a good budget, a budget that delivers better education, better health care, better prosperity for the people of Ontario. It's a budget that it's time we move on with, so we can get on with the chore of delivering these very important programs.

Ms. Scott: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak this afternoon. Unfortunately, it's invoking closure on the Ontario budget, which affects all our lives, and nothing is more important than the budget for the people of Ontario.

The Liberals had choices and options, and they certainly picked the wrong ones. I wonder why they have invoked closure nine times now, I think the member from Waterloo said. When the Liberals were in opposition, they had some interesting comments about closure.

Jim Bradley, the current House leader, said, "What you have with this time allocation motion, with this closure motion, is a government that, every day it comes into the House, gets worse in the way it deals with the democratic process." Yet here is the Liberal government invoking closure today on one of the most important things to the people of Ontario, the budget, on how they are spending their money. "Time and again, the government puts the boots to the opposition in this Legis-

lature, as it has this afternoon with this time allocation motion—more ominous, more sinister every time.” Again, the member from St. Catharines, on December 15, 1997, said that.

The minister from Windsor West: “I am not pleased to be speaking to another closure motion today.... The government doesn’t want to hear how it has failed, and I will continue to point this out to the government always in the hope that they will finally take the suggestions we have made and apply them to the people.” That’s from December 1999. I guess she’s done an about-face.

We’ve been trying to make suggestions on the budget. They haven’t called it many times, and now they are invoking closure without people having the opportunity to speak.

The minister from Kingston and the Islands: “Of course the first thing that ought to be said is that this is once again a closure motion, another closure motion where the government is basically saying, ‘We don’t want any further debate. We do not want this bill to go to committee. We do not want to have any debate on third reading. We’re shutting her down.’”

That’s exactly what they’re doing here, not giving everyone the opportunity to speak to the budget and how it affects the people of Ontario. We’re now at the McGuinty Liberals’ fourth fiscal plan in two years. It completely missed an opportunity to do what’s right and help the people of Ontario.

You were good to the government this past year, the people of Ontario, bringing in far more revenues than expected, \$2.658 billion extra, unbudgeted dollars to be exact. Did the government seek in any way to return the favour and acknowledge the hard work by which the people of Ontario produced the revenue? No.

You over-performed, something the budget made clear. You deserve some recognition. Instead, you got saddled with even more debt, and you will pay even more tax this year, twice as many dollars in health care tax in 2005 as in 2004.

You, through your hard-earned income taxes, the people of Ontario, gave the McGuinty government \$274 million more in income taxes alone, above and beyond what was expected. But did the Dalton McGuinty government give some of that tax money back to you? Not one dime.

The illegal health tax that they brought in, which they promised they would not do, did they give any of that back? No. In fact, this year you’re paying double what you paid last year for the health tax. I bet, if you ask the people of Ontario—I ask the people of my riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock all the time—they’re paying more and getting less in health care.

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On top of this, the new pile of income tax dollars, the government received an additional \$1.2 billion in bailouts from the federal government, not including the most recent bailout they received just a few days before the budget. Even more money poured in unexpectedly: an additional \$1.193 billion in corporate tax dollars col-

lected from over-performing job creators across the province. In total, this past year alone, the McGuinty Liberals received \$2.658 billion more than they expected.

They had some choices to make. They had various options they could have pursued, alone or together. A tidal wave of \$2.658 billion in unbudgeted, unexpected cash could have, and should have, produced a deficit lower than planned. Instead it’s miraculously up by \$800 million. Can you imagine winning a \$2.6-billion lottery and somehow winding up owing an extra \$800 million? That’s exactly what Dalton McGuinty did this year. It shows that he has no plan—not a big surprise. Let’s be honest. If he can’t find a way not to get deeper and deeper into the hole when he has an unexpected \$2.6-billion windfall of tax dollars, then he certainly can’t be trusted to manage Ontario’s economy when things get tough, or even when things go exactly as planned.

That’s an important point. If things had gone exactly as Dalton McGuinty had planned this year, if revenue had been exactly what he projected, Ontario’s deficit would have been increased by a devastating \$2.6 billion. Why is that? Because he spent, he spent, and he spent some more.

They can’t even manage their own expenses. The reason we have brought budgets in is so we can bring discipline to our finances to ensure that we can make ends meet. If any of us received an unexpected windfall we would probably pay down a credit card or some other debt before we went on a brand new spending spree. If you are an employer and one of your workers over-performed and brought in billions more than expected, you might give that worker a bonus or at least a thank you. But Dalton McGuinty had the choice to either pay down the debt or give something back to you, the people who earned the money. He chose neither. Instead, he spent all of the extra money you gave to him and then some, actually adding to the deficit our children will inherit.

It gets worse. The closer you look at the Liberals’ ad lib budget, the worse it gets. Let’s look at what they promised and what they’ve done.

Balance the budget every year: What they actually did—plan to run a deficit at least five years in a row now. They will add \$13.8 billion to the deficit in that time.

Repeal the Balanced Budget Act: “I won’t raise your taxes”—the most famous.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton): He did, though.

Ms. Scott: He did: the new \$2.4-billion health tax; a 12% increase to corporate income tax—overall, the largest tax hike in the history of Ontario.

No accounting trickery in the province’s books: What did really happen? He got caught by the auditor not properly accounting for \$4 billion in hydro liabilities, using billions in revenue from past years to reduce their deficit, including tax receipts from as far back as 1995.

How about that famous “cap hydro rates at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour”? Instead, they raised the rate to 5.5 cents for most hydro ratepayers. Another increase is expected in the spring of 2006. They’re getting deeper into your pockets.

Will not add to the debt: Well, the current Liberal plan will see the debt rise by almost \$20 billion by 2008-09. The McGuinty Liberals will add over \$1,000 in debt for every man, woman and child in Ontario. The debt is rising at more than \$75 per second under the McGuinty Liberals.

It goes on and on, what they've done.

What does that really mean to the average Ontario family—two income earners making a total of \$61,000? Let's use that as an example. They are now paying over \$2,000 more per year in additional taxes and costs than they were paying when the McGuinty Liberals were elected. The health tax takes \$690 out of their pockets every year. Electricity costs have increased for the average home by \$180 per year, with prices set to increase again next year, as I said. Natural gas costs are increasing by \$65 for the average house this year. Gasoline costs are increasing by over \$600 for the average family this year. Driver's licences cost \$25 more to renew for each driver. Annual eye exams now cost at least \$75 for each adult. Cancelling the 2004 income tax cuts results in \$240 in lost spending money every year for the average family.

So the Ontario debt continues to swell under the McGuinty Liberals. By the next election the share of that debt for every man, woman and child will have increased by \$1,113, approximately 10%. Tell me Ontarians are better off. I can hardly see it.

Let's take a look into health care. Wait times are getting longer. People can't find family doctors. I mentioned this afternoon in a question to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care that I have approximately 30,000 orphaned patients in my riding. Family health teams are great. We support their purpose. It doesn't mean that more people are going to access care. Services are being delisted. There's a crisis; the Ontario Hospital Association is not getting the money they need to run the hospitals. They failed to mention the wait times. They have no way of proving what the wait times are now, so how are they going to gauge that? They mentioned that they provided funding for over 3,000 more nurse positions but failed to mention that they just laid off over 800 nurses and another 1,200 health care workers. The full-time nurses' jobs that they say they've created are three-month and six-month contracts. They failed to mention the carryover, the \$330-million hospital deficit crisis that they still have not addressed. The budget failed to mention the inflationary costs facing hospitals to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. That's about a \$1-billion gap they failed to mention in their budget. They failed to mention what the president of the Ontario Hospital Association brought to the public's attention: This means that many hospitals could, within weeks, be required to lay off staff and close beds.

Agriculture: What was in the budget about agriculture? Neglect, the cold shoulder—

Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): Increased.

Ms. Scott: Actually, it's not increased. The member for Northumberland thinks it's increased. They've actually reduced agriculture funding by over \$600 million in

this budget. They weren't satisfied with—what was that?—the 20% cut in the budget last year to agriculture. This government doesn't understand farmers.

Interjection.

Ms. Scott: The member from Beaches–East York: Farmers Feed Cities. The grain and oilseed producers were here this week saying to us, “We can't survive. Farmers are leaving. We cannot continue to farm in this province of Ontario.” Your government is failing to address this.

Thank you very much for the comments.

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): I have to say that it's a great opportunity for me to raise a couple of issues of concern that I have with not only the proceedings this evening but the budget bill itself. I want to start off, as most others have, just to put on the record my disappointment with the government's decision to invoke closure on this bill. People have mentioned it already but it's worth saying again: What that in effect does is close down the debate on the bill. It closes down the discussion. It reduces the opportunities for members of the Legislature to rise and discuss the issues or concerns that they have with this budget.

It's interesting, because I'm sure people at home are thinking, “Budget? What do you mean, ‘budget’? It's November. Why are they talking about a budget?” They're talking about a budget because, even though the budget was introduced way back—I think it was in May or something like that—it hasn't been called for debate. So here we are at the end of November—OK, so we're at the middle of November; we're past the middle of November—and the government has decided that they weren't going to bother to have us debate the budget bill all through the months that we've sat up until this point.

Here we have an opportunity to finally debate the budget bill and, lo and behold, the government decides that they really don't want to hear too much about what the rest of us have to say about their failure in this bill. It's not unexpected, and I don't think it is a surprise that that's the case. But, lo and behold, that is the unfortunate situation; that is the unfortunate case. For a government that talks about transparency, and has a lot of language around how they're going to be so open and democratic, unfortunately some of their actions don't reflect the remarks in that regard. That's a very frustrating thing for people who think to themselves, “Well, they stand for this, this, and that.” They thought that the Liberals stood for a whole bunch of things when they were running in the election back in 2003, and lo and behold, a little over two years later we found that in fact they don't stand for a heck of a lot of anything. Not only have they broken many promises but they've turned around and implemented things that nobody had any idea they were going to do. I think particularly of the famous, or is it infamous, health tax that they've foisted on the people of Ontario.

Nonetheless, there are some specific issues that I am very, very concerned about that I fear are not even on this government's radar. It just floors me that things are happening across this province that this government simply

is not able to get a handle on. Never mind as a member of the provincial Legislature, but as a person in Ontario, as a person in southern Ontario, as a person in industrial southern Ontario, I can tell you that I'm very, very concerned.

1650

I want to start off by talking about how people in my community are faring under the McGuinty Liberal regime, under the McGuinty Liberal plan, or lack thereof, that's unfolding in the province of Ontario. They are not faring well; in fact, they are faring poorly. Many would say that they are faring worse than they fared under the previous government, and that's a frightening thought, because people foisted out the previous government because they were tired of losing ground, because they were tired of moving backwards, because they had been sold a bill of goods that we were going to start moving forward in this province. Unfortunately, that's just not happening.

So when I say this, I don't say it lightly. I don't say it lightly because very many people are extremely disappointed. Frankly, I would count myself amongst those people. Why do I say that? Because if you look at what's happening in communities and you look at what's happening to regular families and regular people, you'll see that they are having reductions in their quality of life. By bits and pieces, this government is tearing away at the very fabric of these communities and these families. I can tell you how they're doing that. They're doing that by not having policies that are going to ensure that people can affordably be able to heat and light their homes, for example. So we have people who are struggling under the cost of increasing hydro rates, increasing gas rates, increasing insurance rates and increasing property tax rates. For those families who are in a position to be able to even think of sending their children to post-secondary education, that's another looming increase that's on the horizon, which is the increased cost of post-secondary education.

I received an e-mail recently. Do you know what? It so appropriately outlined the way this government is perceived by regular people in the community that I thought it would be really important to bring it to this debate and read it into the record, because I fear that the members of this government are not hearing what people are telling them. If they were, they wouldn't be so arrogantly ignoring what I'm saying and laughing beside me while I'm trying to enlighten them as to what the opinions are of some of the community members I'm talking to.

Let me read this e-mail that I received from John Hand, who lives in the city of Hamilton. It's to Dalton McGuinty. It says:

"Dalton McGuinty: I have voted Liberal all my life but now I can't wait until the next election. I work for a hospital and let me tell you that all the people are scared that they are going to lose their jobs. Contracting out our jobs and building P3 hospitals are things you said you would not do. And with CEOs making \$560,000 a year

and the doctors wanting private clinics so they can make more money is a crime this is not the fix for our health care. You say we have a shortage of doctors, well if they are all in private clinics who will be working in our hospitals? This is just a scam for them...." I can't actually read this one part, Mr. Speaker, because it's inappropriate, but nonetheless, I'll go on to the next sentence. It's not inappropriate in terms of sentiment, but it's unparliamentary language, and I don't want you to get mad at me, so I'm going to skip that sentence. "You have lost my vote, I will never vote Liberal again,"—and that's in bold—"and you should look at this because my wife and me are only one family who are going to lose their jobs in health care in Ontario. There are thousands of us and I am sure you have lost their votes too. In case you have not noticed"—to my point—"there aren't many jobs in Hamilton that pay more than minimum wage. With the cost of living, the middle-class people of Ontario are now becoming the poor. Thanks for nothing."

And then there is a list:

"P3 hospitals and contracting out = lost jobs

"Gas prices = paying more to drive and to heat our homes

"Hydro prices = paying more yet again

"Insurance = paying more for house and car

"Rents for apartments = just take a look it's like paying a mortgage

"College and universities = pay more to get in, cap being removed

"And the list goes on."

There are a couple of sentences in closure that I can't repeat, but one I can:

"Dalton you are not good for Ontario or Canadians

"The only thing that you have done is hurt the people of Ontario."

This came to me just two days ago, and when I read it, I thought—I was pretty sure I had House duty tonight. I wasn't sure what we would be debating, but when I found out that we were debating this, I immediately went back and pulled that e-mail off because I think it clearly states what many people are feeling about the failure of their government to address the real needs of real families and real people in Ontario. This is a classic reflection of what people are telling me. I don't know what the Liberal members heard during constituency week, but I can tell you what I heard. I heard a lot more people talking about these very issues and these very concerns. People are struggling.

It's interesting, because not only does Mr. John Hand from Hamilton very nicely lay out his disappointment and what he considers to be the failures of the government to address the concerns that he has as a person living in Ontario, but he also refers to the issue of job losses in the city of Hamilton. I've raised this issue several times in the House. I actually pulled off an article that was published in our Hamilton Spectator recently, because I think the headline itself is one that's instructive: "Economic Pressures Threaten Factories." It's a whole article that talks about, in large part, the hydro

policy of this government and how it's causing the manufacturing sector to close many plants in the southern Ontario industrial manufacturing sector. But it also indicates that there is a survey that had been done. It says that of the 942 companies surveyed, only 32% reported an improvement in business this year, and even fewer said they expect things to get better in 2006. More than half, 56%, said that rising business costs are their greatest challenge. Another 41% cited specifically the rising cost of energy. It's interesting, because one of the things that wasn't mentioned in Mr. Hand's e-mail is reflected somewhat in this article in the Spectator, and that's the rising business costs.

I had an opportunity to sit in Hamilton with our Hamilton-area BIA group—HABIA, they're called—a collective group of the business improvement area representatives for the city of Hamilton. They're from the downtown core but from all of the suburban parts of the municipality as well. What did they tell me? Holy smokes, they told me the same thing. They're concerned about energy prices, they're concerned about gas prices, they're concerned about property taxes, and they're concerned that this government hasn't listened to the needs and concerns of small business on many, many fronts. Equalization of the business education tax, for example, was a big one. There were a number of other issues around the property tax system and what that's doing for small business. That's something that I think this government has failed to address and, unfortunately, it looks like they're going to continue to fail to address.

However, I want to get back to the factory issue. Every time I talk about job loss, I hear Liberals stand up and say "No, we're creating jobs. The economy is doing great." Well, you know what? Look at the kinds of jobs that are being created, compared to the kinds of jobs we're losing. We're losing the high-paid manufacturing jobs that have benefits, that have health care benefits, that have pensions. We're losing the kinds of jobs that sustain families in communities. We're losing the kinds of jobs that allow people to contribute in larger ways to local economies. That's what we're losing. And what are we getting in return? We're getting service sector jobs that are low-paid; in fact, that are often so low-paid that parents have to work two or three jobs just to be able to pay the rent and put food on the table. Then people wonder why we have a crisis with our children. Well, holy smokes, if their parents are out working three jobs, how the heck are they going to be making sure that their kids are doing OK?

I'll say a little bit more about that if I have some time, but the point I'm trying to make is this: It's not adequate, it's not appropriate, it's not good to allow the loss of high-paying, decent jobs in our economy and replace them with low-paid jobs that have no benefits, that require people to work two or three of those jobs just to be able to make ends meet.

I would be remiss if I didn't refer to the crisis that a number of members of our caucus raise on a very regular basis, and that's the crisis in forestry. One of the heads of

industry in Hamilton described to me what's happening in big industry generally. He described it as a train wreck. He said, "At the front of the train wreck is the forestry industry. But, lo and behold, watch what is happening, because every car behind that train is heading right into that same train wreck." Of course, the train wreck he's talking about is the hydro policy of this government. Look at what is happening in the forestry industry and you will see that the pressure is unsustainable; it's untenable.

1700

We've got mines closing. We've got forestry manufacturers closing. We've got pulp and paper mills closing. We've got jobs being lost in small communities. And guess what? It's not like there are a lot of other jobs in some of those small communities where those small mills are, so that people can just find another job; it's just not going to happen. Even the service sectors you might be able to find in some of the larger southern Ontario communities are not available either, so you're actually threatened with the loss of whole communities in the north.

I talk about that because I think it's an extremely important piece that this government has missed the boat on. We all know that forestry is the second-largest industry in the entire province, and we see the threat to mills in places like Kapuskasing, Red Rock, Kenora and community after community. In fact, we had the leaders of those communities, along with the leaders of industries and the leaders of unions in those communities come and speak to us a few short weeks ago. They are worried. They are extremely concerned.

Do you know what? The effect of the loss of forestry jobs, the effect of the decline in pulp and paper mills is not only going to affect the north—I think "affect" is a very mild word. It's not only going to devastate the north, but it's going to have an impact on southern Ontario as well: a \$250-million impact, because those very mills, those very industries in the north rely on services and secondary industries that are located in the south to supply them in their production in the north. So we'll lose another \$250 million of economic activity in southern Ontario if something isn't done, and done quickly, by this government. Of course, this is not a new issue. This issue has been brewing for a very long time, and the Liberals simply have done nothing about it. It certainly hasn't been addressed in any major way in their budget—the bill we're discussing this very evening.

There are a couple of things I thought I should mention, and I want to do that at this point. The government has also missed the chance, or ignored the opportunity through this budget, to deal with the poverty that is growing day by day in the province of Ontario. It's interesting, because they talk around, "We're going to do this for children and we're going to do this for health care and we're going to do this for education," but guess what? Poor kids are not going to succeed in school. Poor kids are not going to be healthy. And guess what? Kids are going to be poor if their parents are poor. So shame

on you for spinning out all this stuff that purports to address things like education for children and health care for children when you won't deal with the basic, most fundamental root issue that faces children who are not able to succeed in Ontario, and that is the poverty of themselves and their parents.

Did the government address that? No. Did they change ODSP and Ontario Works rates? No. Did they stop the clawback of the national child benefit, money that would go immediately into the pockets of the parents of children living in poverty? No. They had an opportunity to do that, and instead they decided not to. So they're making all these announcements and doing all these other things, but they're not acknowledging, and are refusing to act on, one of the most significant, most important pieces of social policy, and that is the fact that children are growing up in extremely poor households.

You'd think, "OK. If they're not going to deal with the income side, maybe they'll deal with the biggest expense people have, which actually contributes to the poverty of many families, and that is the cost of housing." Everybody knows that the cost of housing is usually the largest portion of anyone's budget. I would say that virtually all people who are living in poverty are paying at least 50%—oftentimes closer to 75%—of their income on shelter.

What is this government's response? They're not putting any money into affordable housing. They're taking federal money and transferring it over, but I'm hearing from my municipality that still not much is happening in terms of on-the-ground affordable housing units being built. Nonetheless, they're not actually investing any of their own money in affordable housing. They're taking federal money, perhaps moving it over, but not making any commitments themselves.

They're not addressing the Tenant Protection Act, which speaks to the ability of people to maintain their rental households, let alone vacancy decontrol and all the other things they complained about or criticized—the previous government's initiatives in that regard—along with us, because we think they're wrong. But they haven't done anything to address those either.

Another thing the government is claiming some success on but not investing any money in—again, we are talking about the budget bill; they're spinning that they are doing all of these wonderful things. They're spinning this line on affordable housing, which isn't reality, and even if it were, it would all be federal money. Also the Best Start program, the child care program: This government promised \$300 million of provincial money to be invested in child care in Ontario. Well, it's not in the 2005 budget; it's not here in Bill 197. Again, they're going to take credit for something Jack Layton got happening in the federal government with Paul Martin. They're taking credit for that program, but it's important for people to understand that the provincial commitment to the Best Start program has not actually flowed from their own coffers. That's a concern for the people of Ontario.

The budget is a big disappointment. Liberals need to listen to the people of Ontario.

Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre): It's a pleasure to join the debate this afternoon and talk a little bit about Bill 197. Obviously, as we move forward to the next budgetary cycle—I understand the Minister of Finance will be out on the road very shortly to undertake budget consultations—it's time we dealt with last year's budget bill, Bill 197, and move it forward.

I've listened with great interest to the various comments that have been made today, especially by those in the opposition ranks. Although there is so much I'd like to respond to, I want to pick up on what was said by my neighbour, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, for whom I have a tremendous amount of respect. The two of us, along with Mr. Arnott, the member for Waterloo–Wellington, work hard to represent the community and put partisan differences aside. But there was something she said today that got under my skin. She said this government has let down Waterloo region. I've got to tell you, as a Liberal MPP from Waterloo region, that I disagree with that. She is wrong. Our government has done great things for Waterloo region, and our region has benefited under the leadership of the McGuinty government.

Let me take a moment. Let's give a framework. What did we run on? We ran on a three-point plan: education, health care and creating a prosperous economy. Let's take a look at education. Since being elected, I've visited 27 schools in my riding, and I have never seen such a spirit of optimism before in the schools of this province and the schools of Waterloo region. After years and years of cuts under the previous government, we've come in not only with new resources but with policies which are helping teachers make sure that our students are prepared for the future.

But education doesn't simply begin at the elementary school level; you go back to child care. This summer I was proud to stand in Waterloo region and announce funding for 720 new spots, once again showing how Waterloo region has benefited from our government.

Then you come to health care. Again, we ran with a pledge to reform the system, which had suffered so badly under the previous government. We brought forward measures that really are aimed at two tracks: first, health prevention, where we've seen resources go to things like public health, we've seen legislation to stop smoking, we've seen initiative after initiative to keep people out of the health care system. As for the system itself, what has been the focus of our policy? It's been to stop equating health care with hospitals. By that I mean taking the pressure off the hospitals and having people receive the type of treatment they need in the community or by increased family doctors.

1710

Waterloo region had suffered under the previous government when it came to community health care. It seems that every week I'm standing in the community and announcing increased funding, oftentimes—I say this

to my friends in the NDP—for the first time in 12 years, for things like community mental health, for home care, for home supports, those unsung heroes in Raise Home Support or Meals on Wheels who go around and help the elderly to stay in their homes and out of institutions.

Now, that doesn't mean we have forgotten hospitals. In fact, I was shocked that the member for Kitchener–Waterloo would stand in this place and not mention the recent announcement of \$72 million for Grand River Hospital, which is going to bring huge improvements in terms of mental health services and in terms of cancer care for our region. It's the regional cancer care centre. It's also going to bring a new ICU. And she dares to stand and say that Waterloo region has suffered under this government.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: St. Mary's.

Mr. Milloy: St. Mary's Hospital has also gone ahead with capital, as my colleague points out.

The third part of our program was making sure we had a prosperous economy. I point to some of the initiatives that have taken place in our area. What about infrastructure? Mr. Speaker, when you see our community, one of the lifelines of the community, one of the main arteries, is Highway 401, and the exit from Highway 401 over Highway 8. Ever since I was elected, I've constantly received calls and delegations asking, when are we going to widen Highway 8? When are we going to take this crucial artery and make it more effective? Several months ago, I had the pleasure and honour, on behalf of the Minister of Transportation, to say that that project is going ahead—and of course the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. We are moving ahead with widening Highway 401.

We also see that a new courthouse is going to come to our region, something that people have said has been on the books for 10 years while the previous government was in office and that they thought would never come forward. We are moving ahead, with the support of the Attorney General and of the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

There was a lot of talk by my friend from the New Democratic Party about those who are less fortunate. Since my election, I've spent a lot of time with those in the social service agencies, with those who work with the less fortunate, and they have told me that the first step, the key in addressing some of those problems, is housing.

One of the proudest moments for me as the MPP for Kitchener Centre was when the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, as well as his federal counterpart, came to Kitchener Centre to partake in the announcement of the federal-provincial affordable housing agreement. We had about 70 to 80 housing activists out there that day to applaud this initiative, to applaud the fact that we are going to be moving forward with housing projects in our area. The region has predicted that, rather than creating 1,000 units—they have increased the prediction to 1,500 new affordable housing units for those in our area. Is there more to do on that file? Of course there is more to do, but I would expect that people would stand

up and applaud the fact that we are taking action. Those are the types of benefits we have seen in Waterloo region. To stand up and say that we haven't is ridiculous.

We need to move forward with this bill. Let's pass Bill 197. We'll get on with the type of budget consultation that is going to lead to even more initiatives coming forward. So I support this motion, and I say it's time we move on to begin the next budget cycle.

Mr. Chudleigh: This debate on time allocation is indeed interesting. We had quotes earlier in the day about the government when they were over here in opposition. The member for St. Catharines was very vocal about time allocation. This is a quote from the member for St. Catharines: "Mr Speaker, as you know, I have been consistent in opposing time allocation motions which come before the House. I think there would have to be extreme circumstances before an opposition party or an opposition person would vote for a time allocation motion." He goes on to say, "I think that's unhealthy, whether it's the Conservative, Liberal, New Democratic or any other party in power." It is "unhealthy." Well, that's part and parcel of this government's approach. It was unhealthy and it was inappropriate when they were over here. But that was then and this is now, and now that they're over there, it's perfectly all right. Now they believe in time allocation. It's the double standards that this government seems to have.

I well remember that when Chris Stockwell, a former Minister of Labour, Minister of the Environment, Speaker of the House—when his riding association supplied him with a bit of money for travel, the Liberal opposition over here went nuts. They said, "This is a terrible thing to do." It had been done by every party; it had been done by most members; it's continuing to be done by many members. But in this case, it was terrible.

Now, however, when the same thing happens to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, when it's found out that his riding association is supplying him with certain items like clothing, a new suit, that sort of thing, the double standards applied. It was a terrible thing when Chris Stockwell did it when we were in power, but when the Minister of Economic Development and Trade was caught with his hand in the cookie jar in the same process, it was fine; there was not a problem—the double standards that this government has, the double standards that revolve around what we are debating today, the time allocation motion.

This is a substantive bill that was introduced in May, as was pointed out earlier in the debate. Since May 1, this bill has had three days of debate in this House—none at all last spring. This is a substantive bill with 13 different schedules. It runs 68 pages long, and yet it didn't receive one day of debate last spring.

Now, this fall, all of a sudden it's a very important piece of legislation that has to be time-allocated and rammed through this House. I'm not opposed to time allocation. I think time allocation is a reasonable thing to do, in many cases when legislation has to be put through, when a concerted effort has been made to pass the bill. That hasn't happened with this piece of legislation. There

has not been a concerted, consistent effort to pass this piece of legislation. However, time allocation has been invoked. Although it was a terrible thing to do when we were in government, all of a sudden we've had a conversion. That was then; this is now. Now it's OK to do. It wasn't OK then.

This government continues to have double standards when they talk about government advertising. Oh, my goodness, if there was ever any government advertising when we were in power, it was a terrible thing using taxpayers' dollars to promote government programs. Well, you know, on the way in to Queen's Park here yesterday morning, what do I hear on the radio? I hear an advertisement talking about how wonderful the greenbelt is—the piece of legislation that created the greenbelt around Toronto—how wonderful it is and how everybody in Ontario is going to be saved because this greenbelt legislation is in place. It was blatant government advertising. But this government says, “We didn't do that advertising. An organization by the name of Friends of the Greenbelt did that advertising.”

Let's have a look at what Friends of the Greenbelt is. It's a charitable organization registered in Ontario, and it is fully funded. Every penny that it has is fully funded by the province of Ontario, by this Liberal government. So whether that money is spent by the Minister of Municipal Affairs promoting a piece of legislation that he has introduced or whether that money is spent by the Friends of the Greenbelt, which is fully funded by the Ontario taxpayers' hard-earned money, the result is the same: It's taxpayers' money that is paying for that advertising, something that this government said they wouldn't do and which they railed unendingly against when we did it in our government.

I think a government should be able to do a certain amount of that promotion. So I take no exception to the fact that they are doing it. What I take exception to is the continuing double standards of this government. What is the difference between the Ministry of Municipal Affairs spending this money and the Friends of the Greenbelt spending this money? It's all coming out of taxpayers' pockets. In and of itself, it's not wrong, but it's the double standards that this government continues to have.

1720

It also goes on into other areas as to how they conduct themselves as a government, whether the integrity that we expect a government to have comes to the fore. Under the Royal Group issue that came up, the then Minister of Finance was involved with that organization as a member of their board of directors. He sat on the board of directors and chaired the audit committee. Well, we suspected there was something amiss when things were coming in for the crunch, and some 20 or 22 months ago we brought this to the attention of the House. We asked the Premier a number of questions about it, and he said, “No, no, there's nothing there.”

When we were in government, whether it be Runciman, Wilson or Sampson, all of them stepped aside when controversy first appeared. When the slightest hint of controversy appeared, they stepped aside until an in-

vestigation cleared their names completely, even though they themselves were not directly responsible. In two cases, it was a member of their staff who had done something inappropriately, and in one case it was an issue of a name being mentioned in a throne speech. So none of the three was directly involved, but they immediately stepped aside.

But in the case of the Minister of Finance, the member for Vaughan–King–Aurora, did he step aside? No, he didn't, because in defending him, the Premier said there was not a direct link. In so saying, at the same time, he also took away the responsibility of the Minister of Finance for the Ontario Securities Commission. Well, if there wasn't a direct link, why did he have to take away the responsibility for the Ontario Securities Commission from the Minister of Finance at that time? Obviously, there was a double standard. It was not OK for any other government to do it, but this government said, “Oh, it's OK for us, because we know what we're doing and we're the rightful governors of this province anyway.” The arrogance of this government in such a short period of time is really awe-inspiring. They've come on in such a rush that it's difficult to imagine where they are going to be in the next few months, or indeed years.

Some of the conditions that affect Ontario are part and parcel of that arrogance. They don't see the problems that are developing within Ontario's economy. They don't understand that manufacturing jobs are the lifeblood of this province. It's those double standards and the arrogance of this government that are letting these things slip away and are causing some significant problems to develop for the people of Ontario, the hard-working taxpayers of Ontario, the people who obey the law and go to work every day.

In the last couple of weeks, while the Premier has been on a junket to China, I would point out that the Prescott Shirt Co. in Prescott, Ontario, has announced it is closing. They're the makers of the Hathaway shirt. This is a Hathaway shirt that I'm wearing.

Ms. Scott: Take it off.

Mr. Chudleigh: No, I think I'll leave my shirt on, thank you very much. But that plant is closing, and it will leave 53 people out of work and looking at a very sad Christmas. Sleeman Breweries, a very successful entrepreneur in Guelph, have announced their first layoff since their inception in 1988—the first layoff they've ever had. Some 40 people have been laid off by Sleeman Breweries. ATS, Automation Tooling Systems, is a company that is based in Cambridge. It's a leading-edge, high-tech manufacturer. It's closing its plant in Burlington. Forty people are going to be left out of work. Glis of Corunna, just outside of Sarnia, is a garment manufacturing plant and it's closing, with 35 people losing their work. A garment manufacturing plant: Where do you think those jobs are going? Would they be going to China, maybe? Maybe the Premier met some of the people over there who are going to be manufacturing the garments that Glis isn't going to be manufacturing any more. Waterloo-based Dalsa is laying off 60 people. This is the first time this company has ever downsized. KUS

Canada Inc. is a piston manufacturer that manufactures pistons for car engines in Leamington, Ontario, a rather small town in Ontario. It's closing down. It has announced that it's closing down and 127 people in the rather small town of Leamington are going to be looking for a new job.

A sad one here: The famous World's Finest Chocolate factory in Campbellford, Ontario, is closing, with 125 full-time employees being lost. Campbellford is a very small town; 125 jobs is a very significant number of jobs in that town. The Hershey plant in Smiths Falls is laying off 50 people. Glenoit in Elmira is closing, with 75 jobs lost. This company, Glenoit, is moving all of their equipment, packaging it up, putting it in a container, and it's going to China. I don't know, maybe the Premier saw this equipment when he was over there last week, but China is getting all of those jobs. Rheem Canada is closing their Hamilton-based headquarters: 150 people out of work. Harrowsmith cheese factory is closing: 89 people out of work. Ferranti-Packard in St. Catharines, where the government House leader is: 212 layoffs in St. Catharines. Redpath Sugar in Niagara Falls: 20 people laid off. Bazaar and Novelty in St. Catharines is closing their doors, with 200 people gone, out of work, not looking at a very happy Christmas.

ERCO Chemicals of Thunder Bay is closing, with 26 jobs—26 very high-paying jobs—in the north. Didn't the Premier, when he was running for election, promise to create jobs in the north? Here are 26 jobs in the north, high-paying jobs that he didn't create, that his electricity, his power policies, are driving out of the province. Nexen, another chemical plant in Amherstburg, down near Windsor, is closing, with 20 jobs gone. And of course Hemosol, in Mississauga—Hemosol manufactures artificial blood substitutes—is laying off 50 people. That will leave 22 employees. Like Ontario, Hemosol is bleeding to death under the policies of this government.

Mr. Rinaldi: It gives me great pleasure to be here to speak about Bill 197, and of course to support it. It's kind of sad: I sat here for the last couple of hours listening to some of the people from the opposition and the third party talk about all the bad things. It was interesting to hear the member from Beaches—East York. Even though he admitted he wasn't part of a government that imposed closure, he said it was OK for them to do it. Those are his exact words: "We did it, but it was OK." Go figure. But then that's what we're doing now. Then those guys on the other side, the members of the Conservative Party, are admitting it. God knows how many times it happened to them, but that was OK and it's not OK now.

It hurts to hear that this budget is a bad budget. I'm just wondering whether they took the time to read it. I just can't figure it out, because that's not what I hear on the streets in my riding of Northumberland. I just want to talk about a few things that were in the budget that resonate with the people, that they can feel, touch and that make a lot of sense.

1730

We heard from previous members of our government about some of our priorities, such as health care. Let's

talk about family health teams. I'm going to be a bit selfish and talk about family health teams in my riding. I had the opportunity of two family health teams in less than six months. As you know, they were just announced in the spring. I want to give you a report, Mr. Speaker. One of the family health teams has two new doctors and one registered nurse. It's in Brighton, where I live.

In the community of Campbellford, in the municipality of Trent Hills, just up the road from Brighton, a family health team is engaged in hiring two nurse practitioners, who are going to take an awful lot of the load and be able to see a lot of people who didn't have a family doctor before. That was part of our budget. How can they say that budget isn't good?

This is really the highlight, when we talk about primary health care and the way we are trying to reform it: Some seven or eight years ago, in the municipality of Port Hope, which happens to be the community farthest west in my riding, that government closed the Port Hope hospital. I can tell you that just two and a half years ago when I was campaigning door to door in Port Hope, it was very fresh in their minds. Every door I went to, they talked about the loss of their hospital. Do you know what? Their hospital wasn't even old. It wasn't all that old, and it served their community. I listened to their concerns. A hospital is very important to a community. We hear this over and over again.

Just last week I had the opportunity, on behalf of the Minister of Health, to announce a new community health centre for the municipality of Port Hope. It's not a hospital; we just could not do that. But they're going to get a community health centre, and not only that; at the same time, we announced a satellite community health centre for the eastern end of my riding in the municipality of Quinte West, in Trenton.

Once again, it really bothers me when I hear that this budget isn't a good budget: "We should delay it. We should debate it some more."

I want to carry on in health care a little bit more. Quinte Health Care has four hospitals. One touches the east end of my riding. They had done everything right under the previous government to rebuild the Belleville hospital, which happens to be in my good neighbour Ernie Parsons's riding of Prince Edward—Hastings, but it served my community as well, so I need to tell you about it. They had, I believe, three rubber cheques delivered to them to rebuild. But do you know what? We delivered a real cheque with the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal and the Minister of Health not too long ago. Ernie, Leona and I were there to make sure that hospital gets rebuilt.

Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph—Wellington): A real cheque. You could take it to the bank.

Mr. Rinaldi: It's a real cheque. They are proceeding. The shovel is going into the ground probably in the spring—just unbelievable. So those are the types of things—and those folks tell us this budget's no good. I have no idea how to comprehend that.

Let me talk about what's in our budget to do with education. I have a lot of respect for teachers. I had the

opportunity to be a teacher, but I wasn't good enough; I couldn't do it. So I have a lot of respect for those folks. In the two short years I've sat in this House representing the people of my riding, I've had the opportunity to visit 40 classrooms, and I'm going to do some more this year. I speak to the kids, the teachers and the principals. I wasn't booted out of any school. I think they put out the red carpet when I show up. They really appreciate what we've done. There's a whole different approach when I go into a school now. I need to go back, though. The very first year that we were here and I started visiting schools, teachers, parents and principals were sceptical. When I went around this past year, it was a whole different perspective.

I don't have a college in my riding, but Loyalist College is in my good friend Ernie Parsons's riding of Prince Edward-Hastings, which borders my riding. A lot of folks use that great facility in Belleville. The president of the college, a very respected person in the community whom I know quite well—I visited the college about a month ago to do a little tour. They're just ecstatic. It's just unbelievable.

I'm going to repeat it again: When I hear that this budget wasn't good enough, I'm not sure that they had the opportunity to read it. I guess maybe they should take some time to read it.

Before I run out of time, because I have a long list here, I want to talk about a couple of statements that were made in this House just this past week. It kind of irks me a little bit—I guess that's parliamentary—that they make references to certain things, and they should really get their facts straight. My good friend from Beaches-East York mentioned some statements reported in one of my local papers, about a statement that I made in reference to MPAC, that I suggested seniors should sell their homes. Quite the contrary. Certainly the paper reported the way they wanted to report it, and it wasn't a quote. What I said is that I think it's every Ontarian's dream to own their own home. The statement I made—well, I have my own home, and some day when I get old and need some money, maybe that's my investment that I have to live on. The media interpreted it some other way, and so be it.

But I tell you, the seniors in my community are having a hard time meeting some of those increased costs to their property taxes. I tell you, both of my offices in my riding are working very, very hard to try to help them. It's tough. I'm delighted that the Ombudsman has taken the opportunity to review the operation of MPAC, and hopefully, at the end of the day we'll have a solution to help those things out.

I want to talk about a sad situation. It is sad, and I heard it repeated here tonight. One of the manufacturing plants, the World's Finest Chocolate in the municipality of Trent Hills, in Campbellford, just last Thursday announced their closure. It is sad to see some 100 jobs gone. I was informed just last Thursday night by Mayor Hector Macmillan from the municipality of Trent Hills, late Thursday night. We weren't able to connect; he left me a message. We finally touched base on Monday morning, and we discussed the situation. Of course, he

was heartbroken, because it's a small community. I tried to get some information about what happened: "How long have you known about this?" It was a shock to the community. It was a shock to the council, to the mayor, to their economic development folks. Totally blindsided—they had no idea this was going to happen.

I tell you, I offered the mayor my assistance as a member of this government to bring to the folks at the World's Finest Chocolate company, their principals—if there is anything I could do to help them with whatever. Unfortunately, the mayor hasn't gotten back to me. I believe the decision was made. So we've offered assistance. I'm not sure to what extent we could have helped, but the assistance was there. So those are some of the things that we need to put forward.

I'm going to go back to some of the comments they made—once again, I think they missed the point of the budget—about the lack of investment. I'm really being selfish here, talking about my riding tonight. I had the opportunity to announce this spring, as you know, 401 is six lanes to Port Hope, which is completed. Hopefully, this coming year—I know this coming year—I'll have the opportunity to announce that it will be six lanes from Port Hope to Cobourg, another section of the 401.

We talked about infrastructure. I share a lot with my neighbour from the east, Mr. Parsons, in the riding of Prince Edward-Hastings. We just announced a new consolidated courthouse for the Quinte area, which involves Belleville and the Trenton area, or Quinte West, which is in my riding. So it will be a joint courthouse to provide better security, better services to that legal framework. Once again, somehow those folks missed the point of those things that our budget will deliver.

One of things that's very dear to my heart is agriculture. I'm in a rural riding. They want to hear, "Well, you know, the budget was less." Well, the budget was more, \$50 million more on our baseline, plus all the money that we contributed to help the farmers with BSE—because it's one of those things that happen that we have no control over—and the oil and grain seed folks, who had a good crop but the prices were terrible. Our government came through to help them get over that hump. But I hear that we forgot about agriculture. The first Premier's summit with agriculture folks—I attended that meeting. Over 100 stakeholders had the opportunity to talk to the Premier right here at Queen's Park, and the Premier understands. I hear we're not dealing with agriculture. I think we are. I want to see this bill passed.

1740

Mr. Martiniuk: I'm pleased to address another time allocation motion brought by the government—this one on the budget bill. One of the most important assets of governing, of course, is a budget—it's probably the most important—and here we have another time allocation or closure, whichever you wish to use.

One of the problems with this budget is the lack of capital planning. There doesn't seem to be a plan put forth in this regard. About three or four months ago—this government seems to deal in announcements—there was this gigantic announcement of \$100 billion to be spent on

capital, not over the next two years, which is what this government has to go, not over the next five, 10, 15 or 20 years. No. It was over the next 30 years—\$100 billion. I was just amazed at the rounded numbers. How does one arrive at \$100 billion over 30 years? Well, you take \$3 billion and multiply it until you come out with a round figure. It could have been 40 or 50 years, but it worked out to 30. I called it a hoax, and I still think the announcement was a hoax, because it was no plan; it was a grandiose number thrown out to see if some votes could be garnered.

Why is it important to Cambridge that there is no plan? Cambridge is a city of 120,000 people, and growing rapidly. It is the home of Toyota and of the only Lexus built outside Japan, and the home of Canadian General-Tower and numerous other high-tech industries. We have many commuters who drive back and forth to Toronto. However, more people drive into Cambridge each morning to work than drive out.

We have a fine hospital; the Cambridge Memorial Hospital is renowned as one of the most efficient community hospitals in Ontario. But all we've had at the hospital since this government was elected is cutbacks. We suffered, of course, the cutbacks to chiropractic, physiotherapy and eye exams that the rest of the population has. But in addition to that, we had a very important service called a wellness centre at the hospital, which, due to inadequate funding by the Ministry of Health, had to be eliminated. Many people still have not found alternate methods of coping with their maladies.

One of our big needs was expansion of the hospital, because our municipality is growing rapidly, if not one of the fastest-growing areas in Ontario. We have three hospitals, and there is a regional health system. Way back in the early part of the last government's reign, the Health Services Restructuring Commission was established to go around the province, study each area and come up not just with recommendations but with detailed plans as to how each area should proceed.

That was done in our area. Certain recommendations were made to bring services back home to our region for the first time. Cardiac care was located at St. Mary's; a cancer centre was located in Kitchener, at Grand River; and for the first time Cambridge was to receive an increased number of beds, plus a psychiatric centre, which we have no facilities for at the present time. That was a mandate of that commission, and it was subsequently approved by the Ontario government, as it then was.

So what happened? We started preparing a site and monies were expended on site preparation. The next thing that happened was that plans were drawn up for this \$80-million expansion of improvements to emergency and a whole new wing. Individuals went out and raised money—a lot of money. The city of Cambridge contributed a sum of money. The region of Waterloo, because it was a regional centre, contributed a sum of money. Generous citizens within our whole region reached deep into their pockets to raise their share of the monies required for this hospital. Some \$23 million was raised, and that money is presently sitting in the bank.

What happened? Well, this government has decided that Cambridge does not need a hospital, or, in actual fact, they've admitted the need for the hospital expansion but said they can't at this time. Knowing full well that it had the approval of the former government, they continue to degrade the system of health within the region of Waterloo. They do this knowing full well that, first, the immediate cause is going to make it much more difficult to attract new doctors. We live in an underserved area, Kitchener-Waterloo, Cambridge and the townships. We don't have enough doctors, and now this government is preventing us from attracting new doctors.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

The first question to be decided is the amendment to the motion. Mr. Caplan has moved that the motion be amended by deleting the second paragraph and substituting the following therefor:

"That at 5:50 p.m. or 9:20 p.m., as the case may be, on the day that the order for third reading of the bill is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and"

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

The second question to be decided is the main motion, as amended. Is it the pleasure of the House that government notice of motion number 30, as amended, carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call on the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1749 to 1759.

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

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Duncan, Dwight	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Rinaldi, Lou
Bryant, Michael	Fonseca, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Cansfield, Donna H.	Gerretsen, John	Sandals, Liz
Caplan, David	Kular, Kuldeep	Smitherman, George
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Kwinter, Monte	Takhar, Harinder S.
Craitor, Kim	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Wong, Tony C.
Delaney, Bob	Levac, Dave	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Di Cocco, Caroline	McNeely, Phil	Zimmer, David
Dombrowsky, Leona	Milloy, John	
Duguid, Brad	Phillips, Gerry	

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

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Hudak, Tim	Miller, Norm
Chudleigh, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Hardeman, Ernie	Marchese, Rosario	Scott, Laurie
Horwath, Andrea	Martiniuk, Gerry	Witmer, Elizabeth

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 31; the nays are 12

The Acting Speaker: The motion, as amended, is carried.

It being past 6 p.m., the House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m., Monday, November 21, 2005.

The House adjourned at 1801.

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Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
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Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)		

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

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