



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)**

Wednesday 14 December 2005

Mercredi 14 décembre 2005

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

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Claude L. DesRosiers

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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

Wednesday 14 December 2005

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 14 décembre 2005

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GROVES MEMORIAL COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington): On Monday of this week, I was scheduled to ask the Minister of Health a question concerning the redevelopment of the Groves Memorial Community Hospital in Fergus. Unfortunately, I was unable to put my question because the government members deliberately dragged out their staged questions and responses, effectively killing the clock. I had intended to ask the minister why it's taking the government close to two years to give Groves Memorial hospital the approval they need to move forward on our ambitious and visionary plans for hospital redevelopment to improve health care for our residents.

There's been much talk in this House in recent days about wait times. The Ministry of Health now has a wait times Web site which showed that the waiting lists are growing longer and the situation is getting worse, not better, for most procedures. This is a fact that the minister has yet to categorically deny.

Now we see that there should be a Web site tracking the wait times of hospital redevelopment approvals. Surely the minister would agree that our community should not have to wait almost two years, or more, just to proceed to the next stage of planning for our new, re-developed hospital.

I've written the minister numerous times, I've raised this in the House, I've spoken to the minister privately, and I've asked him about this in estimates committee. Our community has raised some \$15 million in donations and pledges, an extraordinary amount of money for a small community and an extraordinary expression of support for the dedicated, compassionate health care that the staff of Groves provides.

My constituents have waited long enough for this minister to respond to our health care needs, which is ultimately what the Groves Memorial redevelopment plan is all about. I call upon the minister to grant this necessary approval before Christmas.

TRANSIT SERVICES

Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill): Last week, Toronto city council unanimously approved the Spadina

subway extension environmental assessment study. The people of the region of York feel they have moved one step closer to the realization of a subway line coming all the way up to York University and beyond. The subway extension is supported by the residents of Thornhill as well as residents and officials across the GTA.

As founding chair of the Spadina-York subway extension committee, I'm pleased to see this progress. Although I have not been a member of this committee since taking my seat here at the Legislature, it is still a project I strongly support, and I look forward to it one day becoming a reality. The committee, chaired by my wife, Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco, is pleased with the progress so far and will continue to support the implementation of the subway extension and the planning for a second phase from Steeles Avenue to the Vaughan Corporate Centre.

The Spadina subway extension would provide easier access to the region of York and York University, Canada's third-largest university, which accommodates nearly 50,000 students. The extension will reduce the gridlock and congestion on all arterial roadways, providing a safer ride home for GTA residents. In addition to these benefits, the development around the extension will boost the local economy and provide much-needed housing and jobs.

I'm pleased today to continue to support the construction of the subway all the way to Steeles. Not only the city of Toronto will benefit, but also the region of York.

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): I rise today to bring the attention of the members of the House to the plight of the severely developmentally disabled residents of Rideau Regional Centre and two other facilities.

Families of these residents have taken the province to court to fight the closure of these facilities. While yesterday's hearing did not provide a final decision, the judges did offer an extension to the injunction, preventing residents from being moved out of the facility without consent. This was a great relief for families that were facing the possibility of having their loved ones discharged from Rideau Regional Centre starting at the end of this month. These families can now enjoy their holidays without the immediate stress of worrying about what will happen to their loved ones.

We all recognize that many former residents have been successfully integrated into our communities. However, those who remain in the residences are the most challenged, with severe physical and mental disabilities. Neither social workers nor the McGuinty government knows what is best for these people. Let the families and the residents make their own decisions. Stop being Big Brother to these families of our most vulnerable citizens.

VISITORS

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe): I'd like you to join me in welcoming my staff from London today: Julie Misener, Steve Rollason, Zina Atta and Mariam Abdo.

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Our staff are unionized. We've got some cards to sign up if you want decent wages, fair pensions and good vacations.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): In the estimates committee, I pushed for assurances that a new \$10-million allocation of funds from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services would go directly to providing financial help to parents of special-needs children. I thought I had received such assurances. I raise the case of Treva Bassett, a severely disabled 17-month-old Hamilton girl whose parents are at high risk of caregiver burnout. The Bassetts receive only 25% of the amount they are entitled to receive to care for Treva's very complex medical problems. Little Treva has been in and out of hospital since nine days of age. She had open-heart surgery when she was two weeks old. She requires constant one-on-one, qualified nursing care.

The McGuinty Liberals promised, with their new allocation of funds this November, that help was on the way for parents like the Bassetts. About a month later, the ministry is saying the money is gone. Treva's parents and their advocates at the Hamilton Family Network are in a state of disbelief. Despite the McGuinty government's promises and the \$10 million supposedly earmarked for in-home services for children with severe disabilities, the Bassetts won't receive the help they need. The stress, expense, isolation and exhaustion are taking a heavy toll on the family. I could go on in great detail, but the bottom line is: To announce the funds and then leave dedicated parents like the Bassetts desperate for assistance is so cynical and so sick.

As the NDP critic for children and youth issues, I'm making it my mission to find out why this government continues to deny parents the in-home supports that their sick and disabled children so desperately need.

LEONARD GERTLER

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot): I rise to pay tribute to Mr. Leonard

Gertler, who passed away last Friday. Mr. Gertler was perhaps best known as a founder of urban planning in Canada, including the School of Urban and Regional Planning at his beloved University of Waterloo, where he taught for many years. Leonard's landmark study of the Niagara Escarpment opened the way for its protection under the Niagara Escarpment act and its eventual designation by UNESCO as a world biosphere reserve.

Mr. Gertler was pleased and proud to see the McGuinty government's commitment to preserving 1.8 million acres of farmland, streams and lakes, wildlife habitat and recreational lands fulfilled through the greenbelt initiative. For decades, 100,000 acres of tender-fruit orchards, fields and vineyards in the Niagara Peninsula have been under pressure. Finally, thanks to the pioneer efforts of Leonard Gertler, these lands will be protected in perpetuity and used for specialty agriculture rather than mindless urban sprawl.

The greenbelt is an important legacy. In many respects, it is Mr. Gertler's legacy as much as it is this government's. Leonard Gertler fought for years to have us open our eyes to the beauty and promise of our rich environmental heritage. With his passing, our world will never be the same; but because of his life, our world will always be a better place. Our best wishes are extended to Mr. Gertler's family during this difficult time.

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REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): Minister Papatello must have some real concerns about the case that the families of Huronia and Rideau regional centres have against her. Our tax dollars went to support a large cadre of legal personnel: five lawyers, one articling student and about half a dozen paralegals. Is it so important that you strike down these facilities that provide such an important safety net for the profoundly developmentally disabled of our province?

The minister's lawyers actually entered into evidence proof that when other facilities were closed, many of the residents were moved into the remaining facilities, and when a placement didn't work out, many more were transferred into the facilities that are still open today.

The ministry's lawyers also acknowledged that once the residents are moved into group homes, they are not covered under the health services act from whence the families' roles as substitute decision-makers flow. They go out into an even more grey area of legal rights and supports than they are in now, and that's saying something.

It is a disgrace that there have been no amendments to this act to address the legal needs of these individuals. It is an even bigger disgrace that the crown lawyers said the government refused to disclose to the court when the actual decision of cabinet was concerning these closures. The judges were aghast, as we all should be. What was the decision? To close all three, to leave one open, how to treat people?

The crown lawyers indicated that all they needed to show was Minister Papatello's press release, and thus her discretion to change the lives of 1,000 disabled and all their families would become a reality. Broad discretion, no plans and no responsibilities. No wonder the families are worried. It is disgraceful that the McGuinty government has made such an ill-conceived and mean-spirited decision affecting the lives of the most vulnerable people in our society.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. Tim Peterson (Mississauga South): I am pleased to rise today to talk about a unique Canadian technology whose head office is in Mississauga South. The company is Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. and its exclusive technology is known as the Candu nuclear reactor.

While many people were once nervous about nuclear power plants, they are the basis of 50% of the non-polluting, reliable and inexpensive power in Ontario. Candu nuclear reactors release no air pollution like coal or natural gas. Over the last 40 years it has proven to be safe and reliable, and at less than five cents a kilowatt, it is much less expensive than wind, solar, biomass or natural gas. As you all know, natural gas prices have increased threefold in three years and have gone from \$2 to \$15 in five years.

Candu reactors have a tremendous business potential for suppliers in Ontario. Each exported nuclear plant costs about \$1.5 billion. Of that, between half a billion and \$1 billion of business would be placed with Ontario companies. It is anticipated that China will buy over 40 nuclear plants in the next 20 years. Imagine the business potential for Ontario.

Here in the audience today we have three people from AECL and I'd like them to stand: Rosemary Yereman, manager of stakeholder relations at AECL; Dale Coffin, director of communications; and Ken Petrunik, senior vice-president and CEO of AECL.

Mr. Petrunik was responsible for building a Candu reactor in China—

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

BOOK DONATION

Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek): I recently was given a book called *A Dark Legacy: A Primer on Indian Residential Schools* by Bud Whiteye. Whiteye's book chronicles how he was plucked from his carefree boyhood with his family in southern Ontario. Without his parents' consent and allowed no goodbyes, Bud and his siblings were scooped up by white strangers in a black government car and driven to Brantford, to the Mohawk Institute. That's when the relentless abuse began.

A review of the book says, "Bud Whiteye's unforgettable story stands out as an important contribution to the general public's imperfect knowledge of Canada's Indian residential schools. Although there are many

books and larger volumes available on the subject, this survivor's primer is unequalled in its frank and fearless telling. Read it and weep."

I invite all members to read the book, as a copy has been donated to the legislative library by the reviewer, who happens to be in the House with us today and who is a distinguished Canadian himself.

G. Campbell McDonald went to war for his country and returned to a journalistic career that included newspapers, radio, television, public relations, government communications and teaching. For many years he provided valuable service in this place as director of communications for Premier Davis. His integrity and non-partisan nature meant he continued to work under the Peterson government, and his legacy of professionalism is recognized to this day.

G.C. McD is distinguished for many things, but he is distinguished by his unbridled and hair-trigger enthusiasm and sense of delight and fun. Welcome, G. C. McDonald.

DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL

Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): I rise in the House today to celebrate the passing of Bill 214, the Election Statute Law Amendment Act. Our government is bringing democratic renewal to Ontario. Unfortunately, the official opposition voted against this bill yesterday.

Through this legislation, for the first time in Ontario's history, we will have fixed election dates. It has become universally accepted that fixed election dates are a vital step toward strengthening democracy.

As well, the amendment to the Election Finances Act now endorses real-time disclosure of financial contributions. This increases openness and transparency in our political process, something all Ontarians deserve and something we have delivered.

This legislation also aligns the 96 southern electoral districts with our federal counterparts, but more importantly for the people of the north whom I represent, it preserves the 11 electoral districts in the north. Interestingly, the official opposition said they support 11 ridings in the north, but then chose to vote against it. They want to take away the voice of northern Ontarians and take away a northern seat in this Legislature. We support full northern representation, and that includes 11 seats, not 10. The leader of the official opposition has accused me of not standing up for the north. Well, I would ask him how, by reducing the number of seats in this Legislature and northern voices, he is supporting the north.

Our government supports economic development in the north through our investments in education, in health care facilities, in our northern colleges and universities, through GO North, grow bonds and through various projects under the northern Ontario heritage fund. I speak for all Liberal members of this Legislature when I say that the culture—

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

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated December 14, 2005, of the standing committee on government agencies. Pursuant to standing order 106(e)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): I beg leave to present a report on media tax credits from the standing committee on public accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Does the member have a brief statement?

Mr. Sterling: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The public accounts committee met some time ago, but drew a unanimous report with regard to recommendations to the ministry with regard to media tax credits.

We made six recommendations, but there are two of significant interest that we would like to stress. One is that we want the Ontario Media Development Corp. to pay a lot of attention to improving their process and further reducing delays in the payment process. We believe this is absolutely essential for the media industry. Secondly, we believe that the OMDC should publish information on all tax credits awarded. This information should include, but should not be limited to, the recipient's name, a project description, the amount awarded and the date of approval. This information should be posted upon awarding of the credit by the Ministry of Finance. In other words, the committee felt very strongly that the past practice of not publishing some of these particular awards or grants should no longer be tolerated. We believe that anybody who receives the taxpayers' money should have to agree to have their name and the amount that they are receiving published.

With that, I will adjourn the debate.

The Speaker: Mr. Sterling moves the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on regulations and private bills and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Todd Decker): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill Pr23, An Act to revive Sidoff's Cleaners & Tailors Limited.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Pursuant to standing order 60, the estimates of the Office of the Assembly, the Office of the Auditor General, the Office of the Chief Election Officer and Ombudsman Ontario, not selected for consideration by the standing committee on estimates, are deemed passed by the committee and reported to the House in accordance with the terms of the standing order and are deemed to be received and concurred in.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

STRONGER CITY OF TORONTO FOR A STRONGER ONTARIO ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 CRÉANT UN TORONTO PLUS FORT POUR UN ONTARIO PLUS FORT

Mr. Gerretsen moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 53, An Act to revise the City of Toronto Acts, 1997 (Nos. 1 and 2), to amend certain public Acts in relation to municipal powers and to repeal certain private Acts relating to the City of Toronto / Projet de loi 53, Loi révisant les lois de 1997 Nos 1 et 2 sur la cité de Toronto, modifiant certaines lois d'intérêt public en ce qui concerne les pouvoirs municipaux et abrogeant certaines lois d'intérêt privé se rapportant à la cité de Toronto.

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

Does the minister have a brief statement?

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I'll wait until ministerial statements, thank you, Speaker.

APPLE CAPITAL OF ONTARIO ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 SUR LA CAPITALE DE LA POMME EN ONTARIO

Mr. Murdoch moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 54, An Act to proclaim the Apple Capital of Ontario / Projet de loi 54, Loi proclamant la Capitale de la pomme en Ontario.

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

Does the member have a brief statement?

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound): I do have a brief statement, sir. If this bill is passed, it would proclaim Meaford as the apple capital of Ontario. We have numerous acres of apple orchards there with a farm gate value of \$12,000 to \$15,000 annually. We have many orchards and roadside markets up there and we also have the famous Grandma Lambe's apple pies that come out of Meaford. My good friend Mr. Chudleigh's company buys apples from our area also.

So if this is approved, Meaford will become the apple capital of Ontario.

that all committees be authorized to release their reports during the winter adjournment by depositing a copy of any report with the Clerk of the Assembly, and upon the resumption of the meetings of the House the Chairs of such committees shall bring any such reports before the House in accordance with the standing orders.

The Speaker: Mr. Bradley has moved that the following committee be authorized to meet during the winter adjournment, in accordance with meeting dates as determined by the subcommittee—dispense? Agreed. Shall the motion carry? Carried.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move motions related to committees of the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Bradley has asked for unanimous consent to move motions relating to committees of the Legislature. Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I move that the December 7, 2005, order of the House referring to Bill 27, An Act to amend the Arbitration Act, 1991, the Child and Family Services Act and the Family Law Act in connection with family arbitration and related matters, and to amend the Children's Law Reform Act in connection with the matters to be considered by the court in dealing with applications for custody and access, to the standing committee on justice policy be discharged, and that the bill be referred instead to the standing committee on general government.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Bradley has moved that the December 7, 2005, order of the House referring Bill 27, An Act to amend the Arbitration Act, 1991, the Child and Family Services Act and the Family Law Act in connection with family arbitration and related matters, and to amend the Children's Law Reform Act in connection with the matters to be considered by the court in dealing with applications for custody and access, to the standing committee on justice policy be discharged, and that the bill be referred instead to the standing committee on general government. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I move that the following committee be authorized to meet during the winter adjournment, in accordance with meeting dates as determined by the subcommittee, to examine and inquire into the following matter:

The standing committee on general government to consider Bill 27, An Act to amend the Arbitration Act, 1991, the Child and Family Services Act and the Family Law Act in connection with family arbitration and related matters, and to amend the Children's Law Reform Act in connection with the matters to be considered by the court in dealing with applications for custody and access; and

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

CITY OF TORONTO

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I'm pleased today to introduce the Stronger City of Toronto for a Stronger Ontario Act, 2005. Before continuing, I'd just like to introduce in the members' gallery today Mayor David Miller from the city of Toronto, as well as Councillor Howard Moscoe.

Today is a great day for the people of Ontario and for Toronto, its capital city. It is the dawning of a new era in municipal affairs in this province. This bill, if passed, would enable our capital city to determine for itself what's in the best interests of Toronto and its people. The city would have greater flexibility to address its needs and respond to the challenges it faces.

It is time to recognize the mature status of the city of Toronto and work toward providing it with the tools and means it needs to thrive in a global economy. I challenge and urge my colleagues across the aisle, now that we've passed the Respect for Municipalities Act, 2005, to take the next step forward and carefully examine the new approach for the city of Toronto government proposed in this bill.

Let me give you a brief overview of our proposed legislation. The Stronger City of Toronto for a Stronger Ontario Act, 2005, if passed, would give the city broad permissive powers for municipal purposes. It would provide for a strengthened accountability framework, with a more effective lobbyist registry, Integrity Commissioner, codes of conduct and an Auditor General. It would allow Toronto city council more flexibility to delegate powers and responsibilities to committees, boards and staff. It would give general authority to the city to levy taxes, but with limitations, such as no tax on personal or corporate income; no tax on wealth or payroll; no capital tax, no tax on gas or hotels; and no sales tax except for a tax on the sale of entertainment, alcohol and tobacco.

1400

Ontario has been a leader in fostering a strong consultative relationship with its municipal sector. We believe that the relationship between the province and the

city of Toronto should be one of ongoing reciprocal consultation. The city should be advised of proposed future provincial directions, and we would expect the city to consult with the province on upcoming decisions or policy directions that affect the provincial government. This is far removed from the paternalistic approach that the province has traditionally taken. Instead, it's a new kind of relationship—a relationship between peers, a true partnership. That's the kind of autonomy our government wants for the city of Toronto.

This bill would also lay the foundation for a new, more mature relationship between the city and other levels of government. The success of Toronto requires the active participation of governments working together in partnership based on respect, consultation and co-operation. This bill formally recognizes the city of Toronto's importance to Ontario and to Canada by expressly acknowledging the city's ability as a mature government to enter into agreements with the government of Canada.

This bill is a critical step in realizing the vision that is shared by our governments and the city's residents of a culturally vibrant, economically strong and environmentally sustainable Toronto. Our aim is to allow the city to better compete against other major urban centres across the globe.

If passed, this legislation would allow the city to pass bylaws regarding matters ranging from public safety to the city's economic, social and environmental well-being. These future bylaws would also deal with the financial management of the city and the accountability and transparency of its operations. These powers would permit the city to promote and support things that it wants to see happen and regulate or prohibit those that it does not. The city could control the demolition of rental housing or its conversion to condominiums to better protect affordable housing stock.

The bill, if passed, would also give the city broader authority to undertake economic development without seeking the province's approval, and boost Toronto's competitiveness worldwide.

While Toronto needs to be able to make its own decisions, it must still be subject to limits for matters within provincial jurisdiction. Generally, with the exception of the Municipal Act, 2001, all provincial acts that impact municipalities will continue to apply to the city.

The city would have more power to control its own destiny with the passage and enactment of this bill.

With these new powers comes an absolute requirement of accountability. As I mentioned, our legislation would provide for a new accountability framework, including the appointment of an Integrity Commissioner, an ombudsman, a stronger lobbyist registry, codes of conduct and an Auditor General.

The city's approach to its own governance structure is also key to enhancing accountability and transparency, so I'm pleased to note that the city has accepted in principle recommendations made by the Governing Toronto Advisory Panel to strengthen the mayor's role and create an executive committee.

The board of trade, the TD Bank and the Toronto City Summit Alliance, to name but a few, have been advocates of change. Community leaders, academics and interested citizens have advocated a new approach to city government.

Our government heard that call in September 2004, and the Premier took action. The joint task force to review the City of Toronto Act was established, and provincial and city staff worked long and hard for more than a year. That task force recently recommended that the city be given broad new powers and a strengthened accountability framework.

Over the past months, we have heard from many stakeholders and parties interested in this legislation and our review of the Municipal Act. We will be continuing our dialogue with the city, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and municipalities across the province over the coming months on these issues, including the fiscal challenge that all Ontario municipalities currently face.

During its work, the task force also consulted the public. For the first time ever, last June the province and the city co-hosted simultaneous public consultations at four sites across Toronto, linked by video conferencing, to seek public input on how to proceed. This consultation was supplemented by on-line consultations throughout June and July this past year.

In addition, Toronto city councillors and Toronto-area MPPs conducted their own discussion sessions with their local constituents. The citizens offered thoughtful and constructive ideas. There's no shortage of views and suggestions on how the province should change the way the city is governed and how the city should govern itself, and I expect that we will hear more of the views as we consider this legislation in this House and at committee hearings.

Our government believes that the city of Toronto is a mature government that can ably represent its needs for the benefit of city residents. It is time to move forward and give the city the tools it needs to compete on a global scale.

I began by saying that today is a great day for the people of Ontario and Toronto, its capital city: the dawning of a new era in municipal affairs. As I mentioned, many in Toronto and indeed across this province have been champions for change and have yearned for this day to arrive. It is indeed a golden day for Ontario. It is an historic moment for Toronto and indeed for all of Canada. It's an occasion in which we all have played a role, and all those who have played a role can take a tremendous amount of pride.

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

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): I rise on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party to respond to the introduction of the Stronger City of Toronto for a Stronger Ontario Act, 2005. Toronto is very much in need of a new relationship, a new series of solutions. I said so many times when I was running for mayor of the city; I said so as one of the founders of the Toronto City Summit Alliance. A lot of good work has been done by

many people in many places, and I want to thank all of those involved in the process. But I am concerned that the victory party has begun before that new relationship has really been achieved. We're pleased to accept the minister's invitation to carefully examine the bill and all that goes with it in terms of forging an overall new relationship.

There were a number of elephants in the meeting room when all these discussions began some time ago, and by that I want to make clear that I'm not making any reference to the mayor of Toronto. I avoided, in 11 months of campaigning with him for the mayor's job, calling him a name, nor did he ever call me a name. But there were a number of elephants in the meeting room when the discussions began, and I think it's fair to say that some of the small but important elephants have been addressed in this bill. I have said, for example, for many years that it makes no sense that speed bumps or something as important as a lobbyist registry should involve one of the biggest governments in the country having to come and beg and plead to Queen's Park to have permission to implement those kinds of things.

But right now, as we speak, there are two big elephants left sitting in that meeting room, and they're feeling a bit neglected as they hear the victory party begin. The first is the biggest elephant of all: the fiscal imbalance elephant. Toronto and all other municipalities need a proper balance between their responsibilities and their fiscal capacities. This is the first thing I would have addressed in terms of quantifying the size of the elephant, the size of the fiscal imbalance that exists between the province and municipalities, and then deciding what we could do about it. What tools, what actions, what steps do we have to try and address that? With that number established, we then could have done a review of who does what, something that I have established and committed myself and our party to doing.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Stop the clock. Order. The Minister of Community and Social Services. Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Oh. The member for Leeds–Grenville. Leader of the Opposition.

1410

Mr. Tory: With that number established, we could have done a review of Who Does What involving all three orders of government, given that the federal government is awash in surplus funds, many of them coming from Ontario and Toronto taxpayers, as we've discussed here many times.

Today, the victory party has begun, and instead of finding a way to deal with the \$500-million fiscal problem, we have decided that the answer may lie in letting government reach inside the pockets of Toronto taxpayers for what might be \$50 million, based on all the estimates I've seen. If all those taxes were imposed and if we reached further into the pockets of taxpayers, it would go a tenth of the way to addressing the real problem, but it leaves the rest of it for some other day, and I'm not

sure when that day is; not to mention what was done to the Taxpayer Protection Act, which, agree with it or not, the Premier signed on to of his own free will during the course of the 2003 election.

The second elephant that's left behind in that meeting room, feeling quite lonely at the moment, is the accountability elephant. Simply put, there are many people and commentators who agree that the city of Toronto needs a more accountable government. Some of the steps in the bill to do with the compulsory integrity commissioner, an auditor general and so on, are steps in that direction, but I think people feel there's more to be done in that area. That's part of what we have to do in having that careful examination of this bill that the minister suggested. We need that accountability immediately.

If you are looking for evidence, you need look no further than two very recent examples. The first is what I call the pay raise fiasco, where we had a pay raise getting approved by the city council and then at least half the members of that council claimed they didn't know what they had voted for. The second is very recent, and that's the St. Clair streetcar situation. Whatever one thinks of the project itself, it is beyond comprehension to a lot of taxpayers and to me that you can see the cost estimate for a project like that climb 50% in a matter of days.

On accountability, this bill is like a Christmas card that says, "Best wishes for a more accountable New Year." Quite frankly, I think we need a lot more than that.

We have changes for the better in terms of independence of action for the city, but Toronto will still face a shortfall of several hundred million dollars come budget time and will still continue to ship its tax dollars to Ottawa. And if Premier McGuinty, frankly, doesn't like the solution Toronto finds for its own governance, he still gives himself the right to impose one.

The elephants wait in the meeting room, and there is less change here than meets the eye. We will treat it as an unfinished piece of work. We will be looking for lots of time to have these discussions the minister talks about and hear what taxpayers and citizens have to say before we pass this most important piece of legislation about this very important city, which is indeed vital to a strong Ontario.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): I have been anticipating and waiting for this day for a long time. I want to tell you that this is an amendment to what I would only describe as the most hated bill ever passed by this Legislature. If you remember those days, the division bells rang day after day and week after week, and people sat in this House right through the night trying to stop it.

I will tell you that what it has done to this city, which I have lived in all my life, has not been good. The bill was passed over the objections literally of almost every single citizen in what is now the mega-city of Toronto, and against the wishes of all of the councils, all of the mayors, the board of trade, anyone else who cared about it and anyone else who spoke about it. And now we have a bill to amend that very hated bill.

This was a forced amalgamation. It literally led to the destruction of citizen participation in this city. It down-loaded services to a city that can no longer afford to pay for them. In fact, it has beggared the sixth-largest government in Canada, which every year has to come before this Legislature asking for money.

Today we were given a report as I entered the chamber. I have the report. It reminds me a little bit of going to a council meeting in Toronto, because it's handed to you, it's about 500 pages thick, and then you have to talk about it. But I promise you, over the weeks and months while this bill is being considered, I will read every single word in detail.

In the minister's speech, he started taking credit for what this bill is going to do and I had to chuckle a little. The lobbyist registry was established by the citizens and the committee and the city of Toronto already. The Integrity Commissioner was one of the first acts we did—we have members here in this Legislature—when the city was formed. The code of conduct was moved by my colleague at that time, Joe Mihevc, and still is extant at the city of Toronto. The Auditor General: I see the new member for Scarborough–Rouge River. It was he and I and one other member who established the thing in the first place, and it's working very well. I wonder how the credit is being claimed in this bill.

Much has been made about the ability to tax in this bill. That's what I've read about in the papers—about the hotels, alcohol, cigarettes, licensing and parking. But this does not amount to what the city really needs. The city has about a \$500-million deficit leading into this year, and this will give them, in all estimates, only around \$50 million. That means there's going to continue to be, in the city of Toronto, a \$450-million deficit.

On so many occasions I've heard the Premier stand up and talk in this Legislature about the \$23-billion deficit between Ontario and the federal government. I want to tell you that there is at least a \$3-billion to \$5-billion deficit between the city of Toronto and the province of Ontario, and that needs to be addressed in absolutely the same way. They cannot be coming here year after year as beggars in this province.

I want to talk a little bit about governance, because I was troubled over the weeks leading up to today by the Premier's statements that he was making his support and the support of his government conditional upon a strong mayor system. I don't know whether that is still his opinion, because it seemed to soften a little bit when he was in the United States yesterday, but to quote Mayor Miller, who is here today, Toronto doesn't need a strong mayor system; Toronto needs a strong mayor. I think he is that strong mayor and I support him.

Ditto for council. Council needs to be a strong council. It doesn't need to be centralized. What it needs to do is give the power back to the citizens: to the citizens who before had power, the citizens who belonged to the boards and committees, the citizens who could make deputations and who find it increasingly difficult to do so, the citizens who used to belong and to participate, the

ratepayers' groups. They have all become very much weakened.

What we need to do is decentralize that power. I am looking forward to the city of Toronto doing exactly that. If it is contingent upon a strong mayor system, I would much rather have a strong citizens system and to have you support it.

I am also looking forward in the weeks and months that come to other municipalities sharing in the changes that are being made. Ottawa deserves it; Hamilton deserves it; Mississauga and London and everybody else deserves it; and we're waiting for—

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

VISITORS

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I know you'll rule whether this is a substantive point of order or not, but in the members' east gallery today are my constituency assistant from Peterborough, Ryan Sisson, and his guest Kyllie Jansen. I'd like everybody to welcome them.

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

DEFERRED VOTES

BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2005 (No. 2)

LOI DE 2005

SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES (n° 2)

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 18, An Act to implement 2005 Budget measures and amend various Acts / Projet de loi 18, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2005 et modifiant diverses lois.

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

The division bells rang from 1418 to 1423.

The Speaker: Mr. Duncan has moved third reading of Bill 18, An Act to implement 2005 Budget measures and amend various Acts. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Hoy, Pat	Peterson, Tim
Balkissoon, Bas	Kennedy, Gerard	Phillips, Gerry
Bartolucci, Rick	Kwinter, Monte	Pupatello, Sandra
Bentley, Christopher	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Leal, Jeff	Racco, Mario G.
Bradley, James J.	Levac, Dave	Ramal, Khalil
Brotten, Laurel C.	Marsales, Judy	Ramsay, David
Brownell, Jim	Matthews, Deborah	Rinaldi, Lou
Cansfield, Donna H.	Mauro, Bill	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	McGuinty, Dalton	Sandals, Liz
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	McMeekin, Ted	Smith, Monique
Colle, Mike	McNeely, Phil	Takhar, Harinder S.
Cordiano, Joseph	Meilleur, Madeleine	Van Bommel, Maria
Craiton, Kim	Milloy, John	Watson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	Mitchell, Carol	Wilkinson, John
Dhillon, Vic	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wong, Tony C.
Duguid, Brad	Patten, Richard	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve	Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Martel, Shelley	Scott, Laurie
Bisson, Gilles	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sterling, Norman W.
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Tascona, Joseph N.
Horwath, Andrea	Munro, Julia	Tory, John
Hudak, Tim	Murdoch, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Jackson, Cameron	O'Toole, John	Witmer, Elizabeth
Klees, Frank	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Yakabuski, John
Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael	
Marchese, Rosario	Runciman, Robert W.	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 54; the nays are 25.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill be now passed and entitled as in the motion.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. Since the last time we discussed this, the number of lost manufacturing jobs in Ontario this year has now topped 52,000. November was a particularly devastating month, with the announcement that General Motors in Oshawa and St. Catharines, Domtar in Cornwall, and Cascades in Thunder Bay will be laying off a total of 5,300 people.

Premier, given that this is the first opportunity we've had to question you on this, why is your parliamentary assistant still in his job, given his unacceptable remarks that these people who have lost their jobs and these communities that have been devastated by these layoffs shouldn't come "as crying babies to the province"? Why is he still there?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): The leader of the official opposition described the comments made by my parliamentary assistant as being unacceptable, and I agree with him entirely in that regard. Having said that, my parliamentary assistant did in fact apologize. Those comments do not express the sentiments and understanding of this government. The fact of the matter is that, notwithstanding that during the course of the past two years this Ontario economy has generated some 215,000 new jobs, there are people who have been caught up in some of this downsizing and restructuring. Those people are feeling real pain and real anxiety, and it's going to be a particularly bleak Christmas season for them. Again, my parliamentary assistant has apologized. I accept that apology, and we're prepared to move on.

Mr. Tory: I'll merely quote the Toronto Star and what they had to say about this. They said that Tony Wong, who is the Premier's parliamentary assistant, "has made

remarks so outrageous that he is no longer credible in the post."

We moved a motion last week calling on your government to bring forward an immediate comprehensive action plan to help these 52,000 men and women who are, as you said, going to have a very bleak Christmas indeed—the women, men, families and communities that have been devastated by these layoffs. The House passed that motion unanimously, with support from government members. By what specific date can we expect that your government will come forward with this plan, with specific details as to what your government is going to do to help these men, women, families and communities devastated at the Christmas season by these layoffs and over the course of this year? When will we see it?

1430

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: We have, since day one, been working as hard as we can to lay down those conditions that will support strong economic growth. I like to think that, at least in part, that's one of the reasons why we have 250,000 net new jobs. Now, I know that the leader of the official opposition is inclined to do so, and in part that is in keeping with his responsibilities, but it's not all bad news. We've created 250,000 net new jobs. I have a very extensive list here, and I'll just begin to go through some, because I know you're going to cut me off. Kuntz Electroplating has hired 50 to 60 new employees, general labourers and polishers to meet increased demand in Kitchener. Research in Motion has announced plans to hire 1,200 new employees over the next year in K-W. Christie Digital Systems Canada, a Kitchener digital projection system, has hired 45 new employees since September and has plans to hire another 30 by early—

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

Mr. Tory: The Premier didn't answer my question. The Legislature voted unanimously, with support from government members, in response to a motion moved by the Progressive Conservative Party, to bring forward a comprehensive action plan to address, not the general state of the economy in Ontario, but the devastation felt by these communities. Some of them were named in the motion; we know where many of them are. That was what my question was: When is the plan coming forward to help these people?

The list does continue to go on on the other side as well, in terms of things that are happening that continue with the devastation: Mahle Engine Components in Gananoque, closed, 90 jobs; St. Mary's Paper in Sault Ste. Marie, 14 people on top of the 50 laid off; GDX Automotive in Welland, 150 people laid off: this Friday, La-Z-Boy in Waterloo will lay off 413 people.

I just wonder—it's an easy question—by what date will we see the action plan we all voted for in the Legislature, which we all offered to help put together, to put forward specific measures to help these people in these communities who have lost their jobs?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: One of the best pieces of news that we've had in this province in a long time is our new labour market development agreement, which is going to

put in place an additional \$1.4 billion over the course of the next six years. I wish the previous government would have struck that agreement with the federal government so we would have that foundation in place today, as people lose their jobs today. Notwithstanding that, we have made up for lost time; we've entered into this agreement: \$1.4 billion over the course of the next six years. That's to help people with their retraining and to make sure they get back on their feet as quickly as possible. That is in addition to the efforts we're making to ensure that this economy continues to generate new good jobs.

HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is again to the Premier. On October 24, you said of your new Web site meant to track wait times: "Ontarians will be able to see for themselves how long wait times are at local hospitals." You said that the Web site will provide "current information on recent wait times," calling this "unprecedented transparency, accountability and care."

Premier, will you confirm that the next posting of wait times data, data for August and September, shows wait times in all five of your so-called priority areas—cancer, cardiac, cataract, joint replacement and diagnostic scans—are going up and not down? Will you confirm that?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I can't confirm that because I have not seen the information myself. But I can tell you this: that we are very proud to be the first-ever Ontario government that has set forward, in two very specific and, I would argue, very commendable directions. First of all, we've agreed to take wait times on. We've got a specific plan to address those. Also, we've introduced brand new, unprecedented transparency, where Ontarians can visit a Web site and see what the wait times actually are.

At the time we introduced that proposal, cynics said that it would be of little—and at most, of passing—interest to Ontarians. We've had 425,000-plus hits on the wait times Web site since we first got it up and running. It turns out that the only people who are interested in the wait times Web site are the people.

Mr. Tory: The people will be very disappointed indeed, those 425,000 people, when they realize, by the government's own admission, that when they go to the Web site, what they there see is not reliable.

Now, in your next wait times posting, due out any day now, and given to us directly by the Ministry of Health, by the way, in all five of the priority areas the wait lists are getting longer.

Judy Brown of Woodstock tore the ligaments in her knee 15 months ago. In June, she was told that she'd have to wait six months to see a specialist. Ms. Brown wrote to you in August. You referred her to your Minister of Health, who has yet to respond. That was four months

ago. She is hoping she will have her operation in January, 15 months after she was first injured.

Premier, under your wait times plan, Ms. Brown is not considered a priority patient. Her operation doesn't fall within the five areas. So what we have is priority wait lists going way up and new wait lists being created that weren't even there before. Why are wait lists in all categories going up and not down on your watch? Why are you letting this happen?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: You know, it's passing strange that the member of a previous government which didn't have the internal fortitude and the courage to make wait times public is now purporting to, pretending to, condemn us for doing exactly what they should have done.

We have invested \$261 million specifically to purchase increased volumes. We've increased MRIs by 42%; CTs by 8%; hip and knee operations, a 28% increase in surgeries; cardiac operations, a 70% increase; cataract operations, a 60% increase; and cancer surgeries, an 11% increase. That's the result of a \$261-million increase.

I'd ask my friend opposite how it is that he's going to lend comfort to Ontarians who are concerned about wait times if his solemn commitment is to take \$2.4 billion out of the Ontario health care budget—

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

Mr. Tory: So \$261 million for longer wait times: There's value for money from the McGuinty Liberals.

Premier, today is the one-year anniversary of one of your much-heralded announcements of new surgeries in the priority areas. That one, a year ago today, was for \$26 million—\$26 million of the \$261 million—yet we've seen after this spending of money that the wait times are going up.

A year ago today, your health minister said, "[Our government] is driven by ... patients ... we process all of what we do through patients." It sounds nice, but the rhetoric doesn't match the reality—not for Ms. Brown of Woodstock, left waiting 15 months for an operation, not for Mrs. Horton, whom we talked about yesterday, waiting 10 weeks for a back operation, or Mrs. Lipp, waiting seven months just to see her orthopedic surgeon, and not for the patients in the priority areas, for each and every one of whom the wait lists have gone up on your watch, by your own information. They are seeing wait lists go up and not down. Why?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: We have never once pretended that reducing wait times was going to be an easy undertaking, but we are more than prepared to take this on. That is why we've made the additional investments. In fact, we've put \$4.8 billion more into health care than did the previous government. Again, the question that I would have for my friend opposite is, how is he going to improve wait times, how is he going to reduce wait times, if he takes \$2.4 billion out of our health care system?

We're proud to have in place, for the first time ever, this new wait times Web site. Undoubtedly, there are going to be some fluctuations from time to time. But I

think that what Ontarians are prepared to do—and my friend opposite may not be prepared to give us this slack—is to look at the trend over the long term. Our focus is to ensure that over the long term, wait times come down, and I am confident we're going to see that.

1440

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): To the Premier: Premier, earlier today you said that spending \$40 billion for expensive and unreliable nuclear power is on the table for the McGuinty government. This is after six months of backroom work by your former top advisers, now paid lobbyists for the nuclear industry.

My question today, a very cold day in much of Ontario, is about the high cost and the unreliability of nuclear power. Can you tell us, Premier, how well are the Bruce nuclear reactors working today, and what is the price of electricity today in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I appreciate the question, as usual, and I want to take the opportunity to thank the Ontario Power Authority for the advice they have provided us with. One of the things the authority specifically urges us to address is the fact that about 10 years from now we're going to be staring into the face of a serious reliability issue. For that reason, the authority is urging all of us to take this matter on.

As I said at a news conference earlier this morning, it would be easy just to duck this, as previous governments have done. That's why we found ourselves in such a difficult situation this past summer. We could duck it and say that's not an issue we're prepared to grapple with at this point in time; it's too controversial, too divisive, too tough. I'm not prepared to do that. We are prepared to do whatever it takes to ensure that we have a reliable supply of clean, affordable electricity. That's in keeping with the advice that we received from the Ontario Power Authority.

Mr. Hampton: The question was, does the Premier know how the Bruce nuclear reactors are operating today, and what's the price of electricity? I'm not surprised you tried to duck the question. At 8 a.m., when people were cooking breakfast and getting the kids off to school, the price of electricity was 36.9 cents a kilowatt hour, six times the so-called McGuinty government regulated price. Why did the price of electricity skyrocket? Because, of the nuclear plants that you want to put more money into, three of them are off-line at Bruce nuclear and we had to import 3,000 megawatts of electricity—expensive electricity—from the United States.

My question to the Premier is this: Given today's skyrocketing hydro rate due to the shutdown of nuclear plants in Ontario, due to the terrible history of expensive nuclear power, the unreliable nature of nuclear power, how can the Premier justify another \$40 billion for nuclear power without even trying energy efficiency and energy conservation?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The leader of the NDP is suggesting that we just throw up our hands and say that there is nothing we can do and that this is simply too great a challenge for us to overcome. I just don't come from that school of thinking.

There are no easy answers to this issue. We have in place a very aggressive plan to create more generation in Ontario. We've brought about 3,000 new megawatts on-line; there are 10,000 more in the pipeline. We have an aggressive energy conservation plan. We have the most aggressive plan to build generation from renewables—from wind, for example—in all of North America.

My friend opposite is suggesting that we say we're not going to even consider nuclear and that there are no possibilities of any kind to be found there. I'll note that when they formed the government, they continued to invest in nuclear. They did not shut down nuclear generation. They also cut all of their funding for energy conservation—

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

Mr. Hampton: I gather the Premier would advocate that after the Peterson Liberal government spent \$14 billion on the Darlington plant, it should have been shut down. That would really be financially responsible.

Premier, here's the issue: The Canadian Environmental Law Association says that your government talks a game on energy efficiency and conservation, but in fact you've done virtually nothing on energy efficiency and conservation. They want to know why you're so happy to endorse nuclear without even trying energy efficiency and conservation. Before you waste another \$40 billion on expensive and unreliable nuclear power, before you give your friends in the nuclear industry access to the pockets of every Ontario family to the tune of \$13,000 each, before we have more nuclear shutdowns, we should have the full, open, public debate that Dalton McGuinty promised. So my question is, will the Premier commit today to a full environmental assessment of the Ontario Power Authority report so that we can have—

The Speaker: The question has been asked.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Just to remind the leader of the NDP that when he was part of the NDP government, that was a government that cancelled every single conservation program on the books. They just voted against conservation legislation one more time yesterday. So they are hardly champions of energy conservation in Ontario.

I believe that we need to have a responsible supply mix in order to address our energy needs, especially starting in the year 2015. That means that of course we need to build new generation. Some of that has to be renewable. In addition to that, we have to conserve energy. We have plans in place and we'll have more aggressive plans to come. But to respond to the leader of the NDP opposite, we have had a consultation process as a result of the Ontario Power Authority's work. There is a posting on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry. But beyond that, we need to have—

The Speaker: Thank you, Premier.

CITY OF TORONTO

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): Just to remind the Premier that the most aggressive opponent of energy efficiency was the Liberal energy critic of the time, a certain Dalton McGuinty. He said we couldn't afford energy efficiency.

My question to the Premier is about this: Toronto budget chief David Soknacki estimates the city of Toronto's budget shortfall at between \$400 million and \$500 million in 2006. This is in line with the estimates of the Toronto Board of Trade. The McGuinty government's response is to OK new taxes on alcohol, surcharges on tickets to concerts and sporting events, and possible road tolls. But this torrent of new taxes will only cover about 10% of Toronto's \$500-million budget shortfall. Your government still has to tackle the issue of provincial downloading. My question is this: When is the McGuinty government going to assume financial responsibility for provincially mandated programs like child care, social assistance and social housing that have been downloaded on to the city of Toronto—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I'm just not sure that the leader of the NDP understands how significant the legislation is that my colleague introduced today. I don't think they understand how far we have come in terms of restoring a good working relationship between Queen's Park and the city of Toronto, a relationship based on respect and mutual understanding. We've taken a very important step forward today. We've taken that step in part inspired by the solid advice that we received from a good working group that consisted of people representing our government and the city of Toronto. We do not for an instant pretend that this is the answer to all that ails the city of Toronto, but I would ask that my friend at least acknowledge that for the first time in a long time within this precinct, somebody has stood up and said, "We're prepared to work with the city of Toronto, to the benefit of Torontonians and all Ontarians."

Mr. Hampton: My question to you is this: When is the McGuinty government going to work with the city of Toronto on the real issues? Again I'll quote the city of Toronto budget chief, David Soknacki, who said, "Levying new taxes won't solve the city's perennial budget woes, given the provincial downloading of welfare, public housing and transit costs." Again, a city of Toronto budget chief quote: "It looks as if we'll continue to have the revenue(s) of a 19th-century town that is taking on the responsibilities and obligations for a 21st-century city."

The question again, Premier, is this: The issue remains that the McGuinty government is downloading the costs of important and expensive services on to municipalities like Toronto. When are you going to address the downloading problem, the budget shortfall that comes as a result of your government and the downloading of your government?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Maybe I missed something, but I think it was the previous Conservative government that did the downloading. We're working as feverishly as we can to make up for that. We can't make it up all in one bill, but I'm proud to say that we have taken a few steps. I believe that the city of Toronto, for example, this year is receiving \$81 million—that's new dollars—for the gas tax. We are also working to upload public health so that we have the majority of those financial responsibilities.

1450

But beyond that, the Stronger City of Toronto for a Stronger Ontario Act introduces a strengthened accountability framework, and I think that should be characteristic of a modern, mature, responsible municipality. That means that Toronto is going to have a more effective lobbyist registry. It's going to have an Integrity Commissioner. It's going to have codes of conduct. It's going to have an Auditor General, and it's going to have an Ombudsman. All of that will enable it to assume these new responsibilities in a way that—

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Hampton: The Premier can try to duck the issue, but the problem remains fundamentally the same. As a result of the McGuinty government's downloading, Toronto has a \$500-million budget shortfall and the municipalities across the province have a \$3-billion budget shortfall.

The city of Toronto and other municipalities are struggling to pay for land ambulance, a provincially mandated service; seniors care, a provincially mandated service; child care, a provincially mandated service; public health, a provincially mandated service; social housing costs, a provincially mandated service. In opposition, Dalton McGuinty said this was wrong. You said it was unfair, and you said you would end it. Yet under your government virtually nothing has changed.

Premier, when are you going to deal with the real issue, the fact that your government continues to download \$500 million of costs on to the city of Toronto without the financial resources to pay for it, or do you now endorse Mike Harris's downloading?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I think it's important to know what other people are saying about this. We've heard from my good friend opposite.

This is what Alan Broadbent, chairman of the Maytree Foundation, said: "I salute Premier McGuinty for his clear thinking and political courage in recognizing the importance of cities in the 21st century and particularly the necessity of giving Ontario's largest city more permissive powers."

Here is what John Cartwright, president of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council, said: "The proposed City of Toronto Act is an important milestone in defining a new role for Canada's largest city. It has been a long time coming."

Anne Golden, president and CEO of the Conference Board of Canada: "The new City of Toronto Act would mark an important and positive step forward in the city's coming of age."

Enid Slack, director of the Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance at the Munk Centre, says: "A new City of Toronto Act fundamentally will improve the relationship between the province and the city."

I would ask the leader of the NDP to get in step with those Torontonians who are focused on—

The Speaker: Thank you.

TRUANCY

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is to the Minister of Education. Yesterday, the Minister of Education announced that he and the McGuinty government will be extending their reach even further into the lives of Ontario families.

Not content to focus on his job as education minister, he is now taking on the role of being the official parent to all of our children. Is your son or your daughter missing too many classes? This minister will ground them. He will take away their licence.

I'd like to ask the minister to inform the House how his government plans to enforce this latest parenting role that he has taken on. How many truancy officers does he plan to hire? What resources have been allocated to school boards to deal with this? What resources will be allocated to the Ministry of Transportation to take on the administration and enforcement of this new parenting role?

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): Well, it is unfortunate indeed that the member opposite doesn't see the value in supporting parents' ambitions for their kids. What parents want and what they get, and what the member opposite doesn't get, is that they want their kids to continue learning. Getting a licence doesn't depend on those parents; it depends on the kids. All we're saying to them is that they take on an obligation. What's that obligation? In improved high schools with more opportunities, with extra chances to do the things that students want to do, it's to stay learning. If we live up to our part of the deal—which wasn't lived up to under the last government, which let dropouts increase by 14,000 more a year. It didn't blink, it didn't do anything.

We're saying that for 16- and 17-year-olds, rather than go to the courts for truancy, which is what the last government relied on—500 people taken to the courts in the last year of the last government for truancy—we have a better approach. The approach is more realistic, more practical and better understood by students, which is to say that they wouldn't apply for a G1 licence unless they're in school doing constructive things that we, in this 21st-century economy, need—

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

Mr. Klees: Let me be very clear: Contrary to this minister and his government, we believe that there's a role for parents and there's a role for government, and this government is encroaching on the role that is rightfully that of parents. What he is not doing is considering the impact of his proposal on families in rural and northern

Ontario. He is not considering the impact of this proposal on parents who rely on their son or their daughter for transportation. He's not at all considering the practical impact of what he is announcing.

I'm asking the minister again, what will the impact be on families who in fact rely on their son or their daughter to provide transportation within their families? What is the implication to students who are home-learning, to students who are in private schools? Will this apply to them as well? What are the practical implications of issues like that? Have you thought about it?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: I'm glad to have the member opposite come back to what he really cares about. What he did to parents was take away their choice of having their kids educated in high-quality public schools. You had a 40% increase in private school enrolment because you failed so miserably.

Instead, what we're saying to parents is, "Your hard-earned tax dollars are going to work in school. We're going to provide a future for your kids. We're going to cut the dropout rate in half. We're going to fix the mess left by the last government," and we're going to improve on that. We're going to do that in rural areas. We're not going to take away their high schools; we're not going to shut them down the way you and your government did. We're not going to forget that you can't have a one-size-fits-all approach and not pay the price in rural Ontario. Rural Ontario deserves the same chances, the same options and the same level of optimism as the rest of the province. It wasn't provided under the past government; it is coming from ours. We are bound and determined to work together so that every student has a good outcome, no matter where they live in Ontario.

SCHOOL CLOSURE

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): A question to the Minister of Education: The Toronto-based French Catholic centre-south school board wants to shut down Jean-Vanier school and build a new school, but a mile and a half away. Niagara's two trustees don't agree; Niagara's student rep on the board doesn't agree; the students don't agree; the parents and the parent council don't agree; the francophone community doesn't agree; the taxpayers don't agree. Nobody in the community supports this decision, be it educators, be it members of the student body, be it their parents. The school is structurally sound, better situated and better equipped. Why is this government going to squander millions of dollars on a new school to replace one that is preferable?

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): I thank the member opposite for his question, and I just want to give him the context for my response.

The board in question received dollars from the previous government under what was then called a prohibitive repair plan. Sadly, that prohibitive repair plan didn't have any accountability built into it; it was simply provided. The building itself, on an independent measurement—I want to be clear; I think it was an in-

dependent expert that looked at it—had a high amount of repairs required, so that part should be understood.

What is in question here is the location. If the building does need substantial repairs and is a candidate for replacement, what location should it be at? The member opposite is suggesting that there is a fair bit of disagreement around whether that location should be where the building is currently, whether indeed the building could be repaired, or whether it should go somewhere else. I want to say that we have new rules for accountability, a new capital plan that every board now has before they can spend money. I undertake to the member opposite to see if that can't be applied in the case of the building that we're talking about today.

Mr. Kormos: Here today we have Diane Hall from St. Catharines, who's the president of that parent council; Daniel Fortier, Welland city council and francophone leader; and Raymond Tisi, a parent.

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You see, the Panici report, which is the one you're referring to, indicated—and this is the ministry's own data—that it would take \$5 million to upgrade the school, but it's a school of 129,000 square feet. The new school is proposed to be 75,000 square feet. I've consulted, and a very conservative cost of construction is \$180 a square foot. You see, that comes to \$13.5 million. When you add the \$850,000 for the land acquisition, you're spending \$14.3 million. By the time you amortize that over 25 years, you're talking about \$20 million when it takes but \$5.5 million to take a better building in a better location and upgrade it to current standards. Down where I come from, people think that's nuts. Why won't the ministry commit itself to protecting that francophone community and that school's integrity today?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: I want to commend the member opposite for an impressive display of mathematics and so on, and I'm sincere in that. There was \$10 million allocated to the school by the previous government. What we're saying is that in our case there really has to be accountability for dollars spent. There has to be a business plan and an education plan that makes sense.

I want to say, though, that we have taken a different approach. We're allocating dollars to repair schools that are too expensive to replace them. So, for example, there are six or eight of those schools in the English board in Niagara, for the first time, coming from this government. Buildings that were allowed to fall down under previous governments are now going to be replaced.

We would like to see, and we're going to talk to the board to see how this can be done, that that building be done under similar rules, where you have to have a business case and an education case and you talk to the communities first before your capital plan is finally approved. The member opposite will know that some decisions and some financial commitments have been made on the part of the board. I'll undertake to report back to him, to the interested community and to the province in general about how this particular instance of bringing it into the new accountability framework can actually work in the interests of all students.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding the OMB. Minister, yesterday's Toronto Star editorial stated: "Long criticized as ... costly and undemocratic, the Ontario Municipal Board is undergoing a substantial redesign. And that is reason for cities across the province to celebrate."

Toronto's skyline is changing—in fact, Toronto's neighbourhoods are changing—and residents wish to know and have input on how these new buildings will affect their streets and their lives. I have personally witnessed how many of my constituents came away totally disappointed when they appealed to the OMB. The cards were stacked against them. The OMB became another level of decision-making and not a board of appeal. Minister, can you tell my constituents how the proposed legislation will give more power to the local government and therefore more power to the local people?

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Let me, first of all, congratulate the member for being a real advocate on behalf of the residents he has represented here so ably for the last number of years. Our whole intent in our planning reform legislation is to give municipalities greater authority and greater power, and the citizenries as well, as to how their communities are developed. We've done this in a number of different ways. We've made sure that municipalities have the tools to determine what works best in their community as far as sustainable development is concerned. We've given them more tools to influence the look and feel of their communities by giving them greater architectural and urban design controls within their official plans. All of these are methods whereby the local councils, in effect, can make determinations that will really contribute something to their communities. This is all done by way of a complete application that we're going to insist on so that everybody knows exactly what developments are being proposed right up front at the planning process.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Supplementary, the member for Huron–Bruce.

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce): Minister, the changes you are proposing are not just for urban municipalities; rural municipalities will also benefit from these changes. My rural constituents keep on hearing about the proposed planning legislation and how it will apply to urban centres. What we want to know is how this new legislation is going to apply to our rural communities. Our towns have very picturesque downtown areas, some of which have heritage designations. They have their own character, and my constituents want to enhance those characteristics. They've told me they want to make decisions on architecture and design that will shape the look and feel of their community and protect their vibrant heritage resources.

Minister, please explain to my constituents what our government's proposed planning legislation would do to

help our rural municipalities improve their communities' appearances while protecting their heritage.

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: I want to congratulate this member too on the excellent work she's doing on behalf of her community. She always advocates on behalf of rural Ontario, which is something we all need to hear.

Municipalities have told us they need more tools to promote brownfields redevelopment, sustainable development and community design. That's absolutely imperative. It's not only important for the cities and the urban municipalities to do that, but also for the rural municipalities to do that.

Rather than on a site-by-site basis, which is what happened so often in the past, through the new regulations and the Planning Act, we've given new tools to communities large and small around this province so that they in effect can decide what gets built in their communities. We've empowered the councils to do that, and we've also empowered the citizenry to know exactly what the development proposal is going to be, whether it's large or small, before it's actually approved by the councils.

INSURANCE

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Kent Trusses is a leading manufacturer and distributor of trusses and engineered wood products situated in Sundridge, in my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. They employ about 100 people. Michael Kent, the president, called me to let me know that the insurance industry doesn't offer errors and omissions insurance for component manufacturers, which is required to obtain a building code identification number as required by Bill 124. Your government postponed implementation of this requirement of Bill 124 from last summer to January 1, 2006. But the insurance industry has still not developed the necessary errors and omissions insurance to cover this niche industry.

Minister, will you consider moving the deadline back to allow more time for the insurance industry to work with designers and manufacturers such as Kent Trusses to get the insurance they need to comply with Bill 124, or exempt component manufacturers from this bill?

Interjections.

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I thank the member for the question. My colleagues are quite correct, of course: This is a bill that was originally implemented by the previous government. As was indicated here today, we've already moved the implementation date back from July 1 to January 1, to make sure that all those individuals who had to be certified, whether they're building officials or the people who, in effect, prepare and apply the designs to the various municipalities, would be qualified by that point in time. I'm not familiar with his particular situation. I'm certainly prepared to look at that situation. But I can also tell you that we've already moved the date

back from July 1 to January 1 of next year, and we intend to implement the full measures of the act at that point in time.

Mr. Miller: Minister, it's not about certification; it's about being able to buy insurance. I have another significant business in Muskoka that's also affected. It's a manufacturer. That is True North Log Homes, which designs and pre-manufactures homes. It's a slightly different situation. They export more than 50% of their log homes to the United States. The insurance industry doesn't want to underwrite their business because they export to the United States. Even their current commercial and general liability insurance policy is written as a special risk policy. Errors and omissions insurance is only available for companies that provide design-only services. Countless companies across the province will be unable to comply with the January 1 deadline, through no fault of their own.

Minister, will you work with these companies and the insurance industry to develop errors and omissions insurance that will satisfy the requirements of Bill 124? It's very serious for these companies in my riding and all across the province.

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: Certainly this government will work with anyone who is involved in the manufacturing sector. I am somewhat surprised, though, that here we are 19 days away from the full implementation of the act, which has been well known to the entire industry—the building industry, the design industry, the architects, the builders etc.; everyone has known that—and this question, which I was not familiar with before, has only come to our attention at this point in time. We will work with the individuals involved, but it is the intent of this government to fully implement the act as of January 1 of next year.

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FIRST NATIONS

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is to the Premier. Premier, you promised to bring a new approach to aboriginal affairs in Ontario. You promised to consult with First Nations whenever government actions might affect their treaty rights. But this fall, the McGuinty government tabled two bills, one on child welfare, one on local health integration networks, without any such consultation. Grand Chief John Beaucage of the Anishinabek Nation says that “the government as a whole is not respecting First Nations concerns or the protection of our inherent rights. This does not bode well for this so-called ‘new relationship.’”

Premier, why have you failed to live up to your own promise to consult with First Nations whenever McGuinty government actions might affect First Nation treaty rights?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): To the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs.

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): First of all,

I'd like to say to the member that the McGuinty government understands its responsibility to consult with First Nations on issues concerning them and the government of Ontario. In fact, we are in active discussion as to how we should organize those consultations, ministry by ministry and issue by issue. I've had very detailed discussions this fall with John Beaucage and other grand chiefs in this province, and we're working out those protocols. Part of that discussion is how the First Nation grand chiefs and chiefs will have those consultations in their own communities so that we can be assured that we are sharing the right information.

Mr. Hampton: I hear the platitudes of the McGuinty government, but this is what Chief John Beaucage says in a letter of December 5. He says that this is not happening; he says that they're being forced to pursue judicial review because you will not consult with First Nations.

In a letter of December 4 from the Deputy Grand Chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation: "In spite of the government-to-government relationship that should apply in dealings between First Nations and the province, First Nations were not consulted in the development" of the integrated health network legislation. So whether it's on child welfare, whether it's on water or whether it's on health, the chiefs say you're not consulting. They say you're ignoring them.

I ask the question to the Premier again: When are you going to live up to the promise you made? Will you hold full consultations with First Nations before you try to proceed with the legislation—

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

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: We are setting up those consultations with the First Nations task force and a Metis task force to write a report in regard to LHINs. I was in dialogue last week with Health Minister Smitherman in regard to how we can do a fulsome consultation with First Nations in regard to the LHINs. We are organizing those meetings now. We're trying to get a few done before Christmas and do the rest early in the new year.

I'm just saying to the member that we are making progress on this. We think it's a very important and top priority in the McGuinty government to be doing full consultations with First Nations. We are acting on that and we're proceeding, and we will conclude those consultations early in the new year.

TRUANCY

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister—I'm sure he'll be here. There he is.

Before the new high-school curriculum was introduced by the previous government in 1998, the graduation rate was 78%. But by 2004-05, the rate had dropped to 68%, and over 51,000 students a year were dropping out. This is a startling decline in students graduating, particularly in a knowledge-based economy. We cannot afford to have Ontarians leaving school without a

diploma and skills. Our students are critical for Ontario's economy and competitive advantage.

Minister, I notice that you have some far-reaching proposals in regard to enforcing jurisdiction. I'm concerned for students whose livelihood may be tied to their vehicles. Can you address the—

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

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): Yes, in fact, the idea here is that students will be in a learning situation. The law, if passed by the Legislature, does not require that they stay in traditional classrooms but rather that they can be, for example, learning and earning at the same time. We've provided for situations where they could be in co-operatives, in farm or agricultural elements in the rural area; they could be involved in forestry in the northern area; they could be doing a range of things that draw them out and that right now, unfortunately, without the learning component, could be a dead-end job. Now they can be learning and they can be gaining a footing in the work world, or even getting credits for an apprenticeship or for college or university. That's the new high school we're offering.

We're encouraging that by asking them to take on the obligation of doing their part, but we're going to make sure that before any new enforcement comes into place, those kinds of programs will be there, encouraging students the way they should have been all along.

Mr. Wilkinson: Minister, it's good to hear that enforcement will not be detrimental to a student's success.

My second concern stems from students who live in rural areas, such as my riding. Many students are dependent on their vehicles in rural areas. This announcement may be a shock to those students who feel that their time is better served learning hands-on, such as on the farm. My second question is twofold: How would you respond to those students, and how are we supporting rural education?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: We understand, first of all, that there may need to be some exemptions. There may be circumstances for 16- and 17-year-olds to be able to continue to drive. However, we say emphatically that students in the rural area need to be learning, the same as students anywhere else. We have taken a step—in fact this week, we're providing \$10 million that will affect new programs for schools, to make sure they're able to offer those positive conditions.

Despite the naysayers opposite, we would say to them that this is what the people in the communities are saying:

From the Small Schools Coalition: "[P]articularly pleased with the agricultural component." That's the 4H program being able to count for a credit. "I think it's great."

Gary Mawhiney of Norfolk county says, "It's a gigantic step in government realizing there are specialized costs with rural education. If you want any kind of economic stability in a rural community, the two pillars you need are health care and education," and this does that.

We are responding specifically. We get it. It's not the same. We can't have a one-size-fits-all. We need a response to every student equally—

The Speaker: Thank you.

GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): My question is for the Premier. One of the key principles underlying our legal system in Canada is the concept of innocent until proven guilty. It is up to the state to prove an individual has broken a law, not up to the individual to prove his or her innocence.

The current government, in writing its laws, has turned this principle on its head. It has repeatedly placed a reverse onus on individuals to prove to the state that they have done no wrong. Why do you support this philosophy of reverse onus on Ontarians, guilty until proven innocent?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I'm interested, but I don't really know what the member is getting at. Maybe if she would outline in some detail specifically what she's talking about, that would be very helpful.

Mrs. Munro: The government wrote its spills bill demanding that companies prove they are not polluting. They told dog owners they would have to prove their dogs are not pit bulls. They demanded that birth mothers prove they have a right to privacy. Women who thought their privacy would be protected decades ago will now have to prove to the government why their privacy should be protected. Your government has decided selectively which groups in society you feel are guilty until proven innocent. Will you at least guarantee that your government will pass no further reverse onus legislation?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Well, it's interesting to learn that the creators of the omnibus bill have now become champions of civil rights in Ontario. I can assure the member opposite, as I can the people of Ontario, that each and every piece of legislation is certainly in keeping with the law. It does not contravene the Charter of Rights. Our intention with every single piece of legislation is to improve quality of life for the people of Ontario. Again, I say it's at least somewhat passing strange to learn that the Conservative Party has now become a fearless devotee and champion of civil rights in Ontario.

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FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): For the Premier: You have promised a new working relationship with First Nations, and your Minister of Natural Resources has gone across northern Ontario telling people that they should look at new processes for using wood fibre, they should look at innovative ways of using wood fibre to produce manufactured wood products.

When the Wabigoon First Nation came forward to your government over two years ago with a proposal for a partnership with a Finnish company that has done all of those things—provided innovative, new processes for manufactured wood products that have a market not only in Europe but in North America—they asked for an allocation of wood fibre from the McGuinty government. For two years they have been stonewalled.

Premier, you made the promises about a new working relationship. Your Minister of Natural Resources said, "Come to us with proposals for new, innovative manufactured wood products." They've done that—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): The minister responsible for aboriginal affairs.

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): I'd like to inform the member, and I guess I'd be pre-empting my own announcement, that we have solved this issue. The First Nation is going to be getting an allocation. We are working with them on that. We are assisting them with that. They are going to get a direct allocation from the crown, and we're also working with them in partnership to acquire a sawmill, also with its own allocation, so that they will have plenty of wood to produce this value-added product from Scandinavia.

Mr. Hampton: That's exactly the answer you gave almost two months ago, and the First Nation still hasn't seen any headway. Here's the situation: If we look at northwestern Ontario, the Dryden sawmill shut down. That made available 440,000 cubic metres of wood per year. The Devlin Timber sawmill shut down. That made available 24,100 cubic metres of wood. The Kenora Abitibi-Consolidated mill has shut down two paper machines. That made available 200,000 cubic metres of wood. When you add up all the paper machine shut-downs in the northwest, there should be about 784,000 cubic metres of wood available.

I want a commitment from you today, Minister, that what they have asked for in terms of an allocation they will get, both in terms of volume and in terms of the kind of wood fibre and the length of wood fibre they have asked for. Will they get all of those things? God knows they've waited long enough.

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: I'm sorry that I continue to disappoint the member, but I just gave him that commitment. We are making this happen. OK?

Mr. Hampton: The trouble is, we've heard all this before.

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: Well, I'm telling you that we're making this happen. As of about 10 days ago, we have acquired the crown commitment that is going to be directly committed to the First Nation. We have worked with the First Nation in acquiring a sawmill that also has a crown commitment to it and some private sector business-to-business relationships, and those are going to remain whole and go to the First Nation.

This is all going to happen so that they can have their own sawmilling business to create the product that they need to then produce the laminated product that will be sent as a post-and-beam building material to Japan.

WATER QUALITY

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, following the Walkerton inquiry, Commissioner O'Connor recommended, "The provincial government should develop a drinking water policy ... covering all elements ... from source protection to standards development, treatment, distribution and emergency response."

Last week, our government demonstrated its commitment to the implementation of O'Connor's recommendations when we introduced the Clean Water Act. I am fully supportive of the introduction of the Clean Water Act, but as a member who represents a rural riding, my constituents sometimes ask me if legislation developed at Queen's Park will truly reflect and recognize the circumstances that are unique to our rural communities.

All members of the assembly surely recall regulation 170, the impractical drinking water regulation that the previous government developed without consultation.

Minister, what assurances can I give my constituents that our government, with the Clean Water Act—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment): I want to thank the member for her question and congratulate her on being an incredible advocate for rural Ontario. We have many amazing advocates in this government who bring to my attention each and every day the subtle differences between our cities and our rural municipalities.

I can commit to those communities in rural Ontario that our government is not going to repeat the mistakes made by previous governments with respect to regulation 170. One-size-fits-all legislation will not meet the requirements in rural Ontario. That's why, in producing the Clean Water Act, we've travelled across the province. We've talked to communities across the province and we're making sure that this legislation meets the requirements of Justice O'Connor and, for the first time in our province, has us have an understanding of the quality and quantity of drinking water by protecting our sources of drinking water and ensuring that they don't get contaminated in the first place.

Mrs. Van Bommel: As a member who represents a rural riding, I sometimes hear suggestions that legislation like the proposed Clean Water Act could threaten the right of every Ontarian to enjoy his or her own property. I've even heard it rumoured that the province is considering installing meters on private residential wells, and conducting snap inspections of private residential properties. We all know that contaminated water doesn't respect boundaries, and we also know that one person's

overuse of the water on or under his or her property can adversely affect a neighbour's supply. I have no doubt that my constituents understand the need for legislation to protect water quality and quantity.

Minister, what assurances can I give my constituents that the proposed Clean Water Act won't result in meters being installed on private properties and wells, or snap inspections being carried out on private residential properties?

Hon. Ms. Broten: Thank you very much for the question. As I indicated during broad consultations across the province, we made it clear then, and I want to repeat it now, that our government has no interest in installing meters on private residential wells. We do want to ensure that all Ontarians across the province have clean, plentiful and safe drinking water, and that's what the Clean Water Act is all about.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to standing order 97(d), which requires ministers to answer written order paper questions within 24 sitting days, I would draw your attention to the fact that the Minister of Education has, once again this session, chosen to ignore the standing orders and failed to answer within the required time frame five written questions that I placed on the order paper on October 25, 2005.

In addition, the minister has also failed to respond to questions posed verbally and in writing to him at the standing committee on estimates, where he agreed to provide the information requested, both to me and to the critic for the third party.

Speaker, I ask your assistance in compelling the minister to abide by the standing orders and also in honouring his undertakings to the members of the standing committee of the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): That is a valid point of order. I want to remind the minister that he is required, under standing order 97(d), to provide answers to written questions within 24 sitting days. The responses are now overdue. I would ask that the minister give the House an indication as to when the answers will be forthcoming.

As to your second issue regarding committees, those are questions that need to be taken up at committee.

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I have a similar point of order. I believe I have four outstanding questions that haven't been answered from the Minister of Transportation, and one outstanding question or response required from the Minister Public Infrastructure Renewal. I'd ask to you look into the matter.

One of the problems, I'd just point out, is I'd like to put more questions on the order paper. I tried to submit four or five today, but because these questions are unanswered, I'm considered to have eight on the order paper already and I should have 10. It's inhibiting not

only the information I require to do my job but also future information that I would like.

The Speaker: The member for Simcoe–Grey has a valid point of order. I am not exactly sure which ministers are among those four, but I will remind those ministers that under standing order 97(d), they must provide answers to written questions within 24 sitting days. The responses are now overdue, and I'd ask the ministers to give the House an indication when they will be available. I see the Minister of Education is here. Perhaps he could give an undertaking to the member for Oak Ridges.

1530

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): I would say, Mr. Speaker, that I undertake to look into that this afternoon and give an answer to the member for Oak Ridges by no later than tomorrow before the House sits. I am not aware of the specific subject matter or any reason for delay, but I will convey either the answers or an acceptable reason to the member as to why it would be in delay.

The Speaker: The member for Simcoe–Grey, I see, had a question to the Minister of Transportation and to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, who is here. Maybe I could have an undertaking to respond to the question.

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I believe the question the member asked on the order paper required a great deal of time to go back and search the records. He asked for the date that every agency store in the LCBO was ever issued, when they were announced, where all of them are. There are literally thousands of—

The Speaker: Just provide an indication when you might be able to do that.

Interjection.

Mr. Klees: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: On this very important principle, we have very clear standing orders on the time frame within which ministers are required to respond to written questions. For the minister to stand in his place now and say he's going to respond at a reasonable time is unacceptable and is an affront to the Legislature.

The Speaker: I'm going to ask the minister if he could provide us with a date—that's what the standing orders require—when you will table the information.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: I can advise you that it was tabled last week.

The Speaker: It hasn't been recorded as being responded to. So what you're saying is imminently—like now. Could I have an undertaking that it will be done tomorrow? If you think it was tabled some time prior, you might investigate and indicate tomorrow.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: We'll investigate. The standing orders provide that the government reply, and we will reply. My understanding is that the information was tabled, and if not, we'll get to the bottom of it.

Mr. Klees: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: On this matter of how we do business in the House, the minister

has said the response was tabled two days ago, or last week. If that's the case, I would ask that the Clerk look into this and report back before the end of today's session, because if it was tabled, there must be evidence of it, and if so, we should hear about it. I think the responses we're getting from the minister are absolutely unacceptable.

The Speaker: The table will check it out and I personally will report back to the House.

I found the other two questions. They were both to the Minister of Transportation from the member for Simcoe–Grey. As soon as he's here, I will have him respond.

PETITIONS

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I affix my name in full support.

HEALTH INSURANCE FOR IMMIGRANTS

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): This is a petition signed by approximately 1,000 people.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Ontario's requirement for newcomers to wait for three months before becoming eligible for OHIP has created many hardships for them. Without health care coverage for the first three months, newcomers who needed medical services for unforeseen health issues can be burdened by huge expenses. Ontario hospitals and doctors require assurance of payment for services provided. To avoid costly medical fees, many newcomers forgo medical care, which may lead to more complicated health problems down the road. Therefore, the taxpayers and government eventually have to take up the increased medical costs.

"We, the undersigned, believe that Canada's principle of universality should be upheld, and that all residents of Canada should have access to health care coverage. The majority of other provinces provide coverage as soon as a newcomer establishes residency. As a matter of basic humanity and social justice, we call on the Ontario government to abolish the three-month waiting period and provide OHIP coverage to newcomers taking up residence here."

I support the petition.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): Before I read the petition, I'd like to acknowledge the people who gave me the petition, who happen to be here today, the folks from Community Living Campbellford/Brighton: Marion Fennell, Wilma Swan, Lesley Coles, Angela Clarke, and Chris Grayson, the executive director. These are hard-working people who look after the less fortunate in my riding, and I'd like to welcome them to Queen's Park.

"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'm going to ask Laura from my riding to deliver this to the Clerk's desk.

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly:

"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;

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

"That the government of Ontario address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental

services sector to address critical underfunding to 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 have also signed this.

1540

PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition that's been signed by 86 nurses who work at St. Joseph's Health Centre. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas sharp medical devices such as syringes, IV catheters, blood collection needles, suture needles, lancets and scalpels, put not only health care workers but also the general public at risk of injury and/or infection; and

"Whereas an estimated 33,000 needle-stick injuries occur in the health care sector alone in Ontario every year; and

"Whereas the annual cost of testing and treating needle-stick injuries in Ontario, in health care alone, is \$66 million; and

"Whereas, since the cost of using safety needles in all workplaces is relatively minimal, we can save \$8 million every year in Ontario by eliminating unsafe medical sharps; and

"Whereas safety needles protect health care workers and the general public, eliminating about 90% of sharps injuries where they are mandated by law;

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

"That the Legislature pass legislation requiring the mandatory use of safety-engineered medical sharps in all workplaces where workers are exposed to blood-borne pathogens."

I agree with the petitioners. I've affixed my signature to this.

MACULAR DEGENERATION

Mr. Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls): I'm pleased to introduce the following petition. It's addressed 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 (wet), there are other forms of macular degeneration (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 cost for this disease is astronomical for most individuals and adds 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 affix my signature in support of this petition.

ONTARIO FARMERS

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario”—it's from the riding of Durham:

“Whereas thousands of Ontario farmers and rural Ontarians have been forced to take their concerns directly to Queen's Park due to a lack of response from the Dalton McGuinty government; and

“Whereas the Rural Revolution believes that rural Ontario is in crisis and they demonstrated their resolve and determination at Queen's Park on March 9;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to deal with the serious issue of farm income, as brought forward by the Rural Revolution's resolutions to respect property and prosperity as follows:

“Resolution number 4: Federal and provincial governments have created a bureaucratic environment that legalizes the theft of millions of dollars of rural business and farm income. All money found to be removed from rural landowners, farmers, and business shall be returned.”

This is a very intense petition. I'm pleased to support it in respect to my constituents in the riding of Durham.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): I present this petition on behalf of my constituents in Wallaceburg and area.

“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 to this as well.

CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): I'm pleased to present a petition signed by Beverley and Al Kish, among others, from Port Colborne, Ontario, that reads as follows:

“Whereas elimination of OHIP coverage will mean that many of the 1.2 million patients who use chiropractic will no longer be able to access the health care they need;

“Those with reduced ability to pay—including seniors, low-income families and the working poor—will be forced to seek care in already overburdened family physician offices and emergency departments;

“Elimination of OHIP coverage is expected to save \$93 million in expenditures on chiropractic treatment, at a cost to government of over \$200 million in other health care costs; and

“There was no consultation with the public on the decision to delist chiropractic services;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the decision announced in the May 18, 2004, provincial budget and maintain OHIP coverage for chiropractic services, in the best interests of the public, patients, the health care system ... and the province.”

In support of my constituents, my signature.

GO TRANSIT TUNNEL

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I keep getting petitions on the St. Clair Avenue bridge. It's addressed to the Parliament of Ontario, the minister of infrastructure services and the Minister of Transportation and 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-Old Weston Road bridge;

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

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I have a petition signed by a great number of my constituents, primarily people who support the hard work and the good things done by Community Living Tillsonburg.

“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 agree with the petition, as I will affix my signature.

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): It's my pleasure to join with my colleagues from St. Catharines and Niagara Falls in this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

This is an excellent petition. I'm pleased to affix my signature to it and to ask page Janine to carry it for me.

GAMMA FOUNDRIES

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I'm pleased to present a petition that was submitted to me through Councillor Arnie Warner from the town of Richmond Hill, relating to the Gamma Foundries issue there. It reads as follows:

“Whereas all residents in the town of Richmond Hill have the right to enjoy their homes, property, neighbourhood and to breathe clean air; and

“Whereas Gamma Foundries, a division of Victaulic Co. of Canada Ltd., is clearly the identifiable and documented source of noxious fumes and odours in the Newkirk Road area of Richmond Hill; and

“Whereas Gamma Foundries has persistently failed to respond to the legitimate concerns of the community regarding these odours and emissions; and

“Whereas Gamma Foundries previously refused to initiate engineering solutions to these issues as identified in a report by Earth Tech and as ordered by the Ministry of the Environment; and

“Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has specifically directed Gamma Foundries to initiate engineered controls to address the adverse effects of these pollutants;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario and the Minister of the Environment to take all measures possible to enforce the director's order and to ensure that residents are afforded the right to enjoy their property and neighbourhood, as is their right.”

I support these residents of this area and I affix my signature in support of this petition.

1550

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): The time has now expired for petitions.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): First, on a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent to call orders for second and third reading of Pr bills concurrently, and for Ms. Matthews to move Bills Pr13 and Pr21 on behalf of Mr. Fonseca.

The Acting Speaker: Do we have consent? Agreed? Carried.

UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE ACT, 2005

Ms. Matthews, on behalf of Mr. Fonseca, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr13, An Act respecting The University of St. Michael's College.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Is it agreed? Carried.

UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE ACT, 2005

Ms. Matthews, on behalf of Mr. Fonseca, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr13, An Act respecting The University of St. Michael's College.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Is it agreed? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

RONALD McDONALD HOUSE
(LONDON) ACT, 2005

Ms. Matthews moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr17, An Act respecting Ronald McDonald House (London).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Is it agreed? Carried.

RONALD McDONALD HOUSE
(LONDON) ACT, 2005

Ms. Matthews moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr17, An Act respecting Ronald McDonald House (London).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Does the bill carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

1376037 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2005

Mr. Murdoch moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr20, An Act to revive 1376037 Ontario Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Does the bill carry? Carried.

1376037 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2005

Mr. Murdoch moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr20, An Act to revive 1376037 Ontario Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Does the bill carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

PONTIFICAL INSTITUTE OF
MEDIAEVAL STUDIES ACT, 2005

Ms. Matthews, on behalf of Mr. Fonseca, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr21, An Act to incorporate the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Does the bill carry? Carried.

PONTIFICAL INSTITUTE OF
MEDIAEVAL STUDIES ACT, 2005

Ms. Matthews, on behalf of Mr. Fonseca, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr21, An Act to incorporate the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Does the bill carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

SIDOFF'S CLEANERS & TAILORS
LIMITED ACT, 2005

Mr. Craitor moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr23, An Act to revive Sidoff's Cleaners & Tailors Limited.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Does the bill carry? Carried.

SIDOFF'S CLEANERS & TAILORS
LIMITED ACT, 2005

Mr. Craitor moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr23, An Act to revive Sidoff's Cleaners & Tailors Limited.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Does the bill carry? Carried.

Be it resolved the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND FORFEITED
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT STATUTE
LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'EXÉCUTION
DE LA LOI ET L'ADMINISTRATION
DES BIENS CONFISQUÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 18, 2005, on the motion for third reading of Bill 128, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to enforcement powers, penalties and the management of property forfeited, or that may be forfeited, to the Crown in right of Ontario as a result of organized crime, marijuana growing and other unlawful activities / Projet de loi 128, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les pouvoirs d'exécution, les pénalités et l'administration des biens confisqués ou pouvant être confisqués au profit de la Couronne du chef de l'Ontario par suite d'activités de crime organisé et de culture de marijuana ainsi que d'autres activités illégales.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Further debate? Is there any further debate? Seeing none, the minister may close.

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): The minister doesn't want to.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND FORFEITED
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT STATUTE
LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'EXÉCUTION
DE LA LOI ET L'ADMINISTRATION
DES BIENS CONFISQUÉS

Mr Kwinter moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 128, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to enforcement powers, penalties and the management of property forfeited, or that may be forfeited, to the Crown in right of Ontario as a result of organized crime, marijuana growing and other unlawful activities / Projet de loi 128, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les pouvoirs d'exécution, les pénalités et l'administration des biens confisqués ou pouvant être confisqués au profit de la Couronne du chef de l'Ontario par suite d'activités de crime organisé et de culture de marijuana ainsi que d'autres activités illégales.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Is it the pleasure of the House that the bill carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

PRIVATE SECURITY AND
INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 SUR LES SERVICES PRIVÉS
DE SÉCURITÉ ET D'ENQUÊTE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 17, 2005, on the motion for third reading of Bill 159, An Act to revise the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Licence Appeal Tribunal Act, 1999 / Projet de loi 159, Loi révisant la Loi sur les enquêteurs privés et les gardiens et apportant une modification corrélative à la Loi de 1999 sur le Tribunal d'appel en matière de permis.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): On the last occasion, the member from Niagara Centre had finished his statements and was open for questions and comments. Questions and comments?

Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington): Your viewers will obviously not have their minds attuned to this bill, not because of the excellent summary that I'm sure the member from Niagara South gave, but simply that it has been some while since we debated this. Just to let your viewers know, this is the first time in 40 years that the legislation concerning private investigators and private security guards has been updated. We are putting in place requirements that there be standards for both private investigators and private security guards. There was an inquest that identified the lack of any such standards as a serious problem for our province. So I am pleased to say that we are following the suggestion of the coroner's inquest in bringing those standards to the province.

Along with those standards, there will be an improved public complaint process, because there really hasn't been much of a public complaint process where security guards are involved, and that will be made available. We will be setting up advisory committees so that we can work with the stakeholders on the details of the standards that will be put in place. Particularly with respect to security guards, we will be putting in requirements for such things as uniforms, what sort of weapons they're entitled to have and what sort of training they're required to have. Within the bill, we've allowed for differential rules, depending on the level of sophistication that is required.

I think this is quite a thorough bill, and I'm pleased to be supporting it on behalf of Minister Kwinter today.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): The Progressive Conservative caucus will also be supporting the legislation, with some reservations. We will be monitoring the implementation of the act, because of some concerns we have with respect to the impact, especially on those smaller security firms across the province, and whether it jeopardizes their existence and really leaves the field wide open to the large corporate firms. That is obviously a concern of ours.

1600

This whole process, as the previous speaker indicated, is long overdue. The legislation hasn't been changed for some time. The review process, although the former speaker didn't acknowledge this, was begun by the previous government, with the intent to bring the legislation forward. Again, whether the legislation that was tabled by the Liberal government is comparable to what would have been the case if we had remained in office is open to question. I suspect it would have focused on some of the more urgent concerns, such as the uniform issue and the identification of cars, the confusion that security firm individuals—employees—and the automobiles they utilize in the conduct of their business were causing and are continuing to cause among the public with respect to who is or who is not a police officer and what is and what is not a police car. Hopefully, as a result of this legislation, those kinds of issues will be addressed appropriately.

I wanted, at this point, to acknowledge that we are supporting the legislation, with those reservations and a few others. We will continue to monitor, indeed, how the government implements it. Thank you for the opportunity.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): This bill, as my colleague from Niagara Centre, our critic on this issue, says, is really about a sort of—well, not a sort of; it's a privatization of some police services. The way the bill is structured, it really is a bill that goes a lot further into regulating private security firms than I think most people would see as reasonable. There are a number of companies across Ontario, as there are in communities that I represent, where a corporation or a business hires a person, in retirement to come in and keep an eye on the place at night, to make sure the lights are on—the night watchman kind of job. This particular bill, if passed the

way it is—and it's going to pass—makes it almost impossible, quite frankly, for companies to do that kind of hiring, and that affects a lot of people in communities like mine. Many people, because they don't have good pensions—because there is not a portable pension system in this province as we need in order to allow people to vest and build pensions as they go to multiple workplaces through their work life—are found in a situation where they retire and they can't afford to retire. They don't want to work a regular job where they work hard physically all day, so they look for something a little bit easier. A number of people end up in a job as the watchman. In my area, a number of people are hired to watch logging roads to make sure that security is followed. Another example is old mining camps, where an elderly gentleman and his wife might be hired to be security at a mining camp. All they're really doing is keeping an eye out to make sure there are no fires, no damages, and so people know there is somebody there so that people who want to go in and vandalize the area have a bit of a deterrent. Under this particular bill, those people will not be allowed to work because the system's going to be so onerous that they're not going to be able to meet those. I think that's rather sad.

This is a question of the government being far more interventionist, I think, than they need to be in order to deal with this issue.

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): I appreciate the opportunity to talk about this bill. I want to do a little bit of a history lesson here that includes myself a little bit, but mostly the co-operation and the understanding of the municipalities and police services across the province, who are very concerned about it. The member from Leeds–Grenville was commenting on the uniforms, the cars, the badges; that security guards were coming desperately close to municipalities' police services in the type of look. I want to remind him that because municipalities didn't have the money for police services, there was a recommendation, and somebody mused about allowing the downtowns to be patrolled by private security guards. I was a little bit concerned about that.

Let me suggest to you that, before the Shand inquest recommended that we take a look at security guards and how they're trained and everything else, I introduced a bill back in 2001 called the Private Investigators and Security Guards Amendment Act that talked about the very thing the member talked about earlier, and that was to re-identify, put some type of restrictions on the type of cars to be used, the uniforms, the badges. It didn't get anywhere. We also talked about training and all of the things that we're doing today in this government's bill.

There's an awful lot of good that's going to come as a result of this bill. There are some questions that we have to answer, and I respect what the member had indicated in terms of where we need to take this, how far we want to go with it, but also realizing that this was in response to the police services and municipalities across the province that were asking that we make some sheer distinctions between the two, but also about funding, which

the previous government attempted to do and we're attempting to do, to ensure that there are adequate police services in our communities to do the job that police—and no other organization—should be doing, and making a distinction between the two.

I appreciate this bill. I think it's a good direction in which to go. We'll flesh out the details as we move forward.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Great. Yeah, we'll fix the problems after we create them by passing the bill.

Look, had it been Dave Levac's private member's bill, which New Democrats supported, it would have been good legislation. Had it been Garfield Dunlop's bill—the member for Simcoe North—where he proposed controls over the design of uniforms and cars so that private security staff couldn't pass themselves off or be misperceived as public peace officers, we would have supported the bill.

You guys have created a monster. You've been incredibly, overly broad in terms of the scope of the bill. You want to regulate everything from the night watchman, who has no responsibility other than to call the police if something untoward happened, all the way to the internal security staff of the Toronto-Dominion Bank up on the 34th floor of the TD tower.

What is the matter with you? You're creating a regulatory regime that some of the lowest-paid workers—security guards—are going to have to support financially through the annual licensing fees. You've made a bouncer—the college or university kid who gets hired by a tavern or a social club to act as doorman on the weekend and take care of the occasional unruly guest—necessarily trained in a rigorous program and licensed, so he's got to pay to earn a couple of bucks on a weekend trying to support his way through college or university.

You've also institutionalized private policing, because at the end of the day that's what this bill is all about. That's right; you're underresourcing police services across this province. Your 1,000 new cops that you've never delivered, and now the need for basic police core services, up to 1,700 new police officers, means that more and more communities are relying upon organized private police forces, the very police forces that you are going to regulate, institutionalize and accredit with this legislation. New Democrats would have nothing to do with that privatization nonsense and nothing to do with your attack on some of the lowest-paid workers in this province.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Bisson: I just want to take a couple of minutes on this bill, because I think it's important to go on the record. I echo the comments made by the member for Niagara Centre. I just say to the government that the problem is that we need to recognize that you're going much further with this bill than you actually need to. At the end of the day, there are a lot of people who make a

living after retirement as night watchmen at the mining property, the forestry company, the small strip mall or whatever it might be who use that as an income in retirement. What you're doing by way of this bill is saying that these people need to pass a certain requirement when it comes to training, when it comes to licensing, that they may not be able to meet, which puts that kind of employment out of reach.

I repeat what the member for Niagara Centre said: If we're trying to deal just with making sure that we don't have security guards trying to pass themselves off as cops, I think we can all agree with that. But this bill goes further, and I think it's a sad thing. On behalf of the constituents who I know are going to be calling me on this issue, I want to make sure I'm on the record as saying that this is not a good idea.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments? Seeing none, further debate? Is there anyone else who wishes to participate in debate? No.

Mr. Kwinter has moved third reading of Bill 159, An Act to revise the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Licence Appeal Tribunal Act, 1999.

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

Mr. Kormos: No.

The Acting Speaker: I heard a no, quite clearly.

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

There being more than five members, call in the members. There will—I don't think there will be a 30-minute bell because I see the chief government whip here.

This reads as follows:

"Pursuant to order 28(h), I request that the vote on the motion by Minister Kwinter for third reading of Bill 159, An Act to revise the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Licence Appeal Tribunal Act, 1999, be deferred until the time of deferred votes, December 15, 2005."

Signed by Dave Levac, chief government whip.

Orders of the day.

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

Mr. Kormos: The Liberals don't want to work.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. A motion of adjournment has been made. All those in favour? Carried.

The House stands adjourned until December 15 at 10 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1610.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. Brown
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma–Manitoulin	Brown, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (L) Speaker / Président	Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Haliburton–Victoria–Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)
Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Beaches–East York / Beaches–York–Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton East / Hamilton–Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Bramalea–Gore–Malton– Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Brampton Centre / Brampton–Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton–Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Brampton West–Mississauga / Brampton–Ouest–Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Hastings–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Huron–Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener–Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Chatham–Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Don Valley East / Don Valley–Est	Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy government House leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement t	Lanark–Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Don Valley West / Don Valley–Ouest	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	Leeds–Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Dufferin–Peel– Wellington–Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London North Centre / London–Centre–Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London West / London–Ouest	Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Eglington–Lawrence	Colle, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (L) Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration	London–Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Elgin–Middlesex–London	Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Erie–Lincoln Essex	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga–Centre	Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke–Centre	Crosier, Bruce (L) Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga East / Mississauga–Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke–Nord	Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L) Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie	Mississauga South / Mississauga–Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga West / Mississauga–Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
	Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement	Niagara Centre / Niagara–Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Niagara Falls	Craiton, Kim (L)
Guelph–Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)

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

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

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

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