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Jeudi 15 décembre 2005

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 15 December 2005

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 15 décembre 2005

*The House met at 1000.
Prayers.*

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
AND HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT
AMENDMENT ACT (ASSISTANCE TO
MUNICIPALITIES), 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR
L'AMÉNAGEMENT DES VOIES
PUBLIQUES ET DES TRANSPORTS EN
COMMUN (AIDE AUX MUNICIPALITÉS)

Mr. Yakabuski moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to the assistance that the Minister provides to municipalities / *Projet de loi 3, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun à l'égard de l'aide apportée aux municipalités par le ministre.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona): Pursuant to standing order 96, the member has 10 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): It is a pleasure to move second reading of Bill 3. Before I start, I'd like to turn your attention to the members' gallery, where I have as my guests today my good wife, Vicky, and the warden of Renfrew county, who is also the chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus, His Worship Bob Sweet.

The reason I introduced this bill is because when the present government brought in a gas tax rebate program, they extended it only to the 105 municipalities, out of some 445, that have a public or rapid transit system operating in their municipality. We feel this is a fundamental issue of fairness with respect to the way rural Ontario is treated. One of the great problems in rural Ontario today is the ability to keep in good condition the infrastructure they're responsible for, such as the county roads, the municipal roads, and the bridges, which in my county is one of the biggest challenges we have. Warden Sweet could certainly let you know that we have over 250 bridges in Renfrew county alone.

As you know, Renfrew county is the largest county in the province of Ontario. But when I speak of this bill, I

speak not just of Renfrew county, while that is the county that I call home; it is in regard to every rural municipality and rural county in this province. As I said, we feel it is a fundamental issue of fairness, because when you go to the gas pumps in rural Ontario, it doesn't say "Rural: gas tax exempt." No siree. You pay the 14.7 cents a litre tax in rural Ontario the same way they pay it in every municipality in this province, because that's equal treatment. However, when that tax rebate is divvied out on behalf of rural Ontarians, only those in the province of Ontario that have a public transportation system or a rapid transit system receive a portion of the rebate.

We understand very clearly that public transportation needs to be supported in this province, and public transportation is supported and subsidized to a great degree by the taxpayers—not by the users, but by the taxpayers. Of course the users pay, but the taxpayers also subsidize public transportation systems. Well, we do have a public transportation system in Ontario's rural communities. It is called Township Road 37 or County Road 58, or a bridge traversing the Bonnechere River or Byers Creek or whatever. That is the public transportation system. In my county of Renfrew, we have 17 rural municipalities that could benefit greatly from receiving a share of this gas tax.

I must point out that while I would be the last one to support and promote the federal Liberal government in this House or anywhere else, that government has actually recognized that rural communities have a right to share in the gas tax, so the federal gas tax is actually being shared by all municipalities, not just those with public transportation systems. They recognize that rural communities have significant challenges.

The government will say, "We have the COMRIF program," but that's a three-way split—federal, provincial and municipal—and, "We have the Ontario municipal partnership fund." Well, with the challenges facing rural Ontario communities today, COMRIF simply doesn't cut it. The applications for support and funding far outstrip the ability of the governments to fund them at this point. If municipalities are going to go ahead with planned projects, whether they get funding or not, they're going to be doing it on the backs of their taxpayers at home, and that simply is too much for them to bear at this time. Taxpayers across this province feel that the weight of taxation is too severe already. When there is an ability to reduce some of that load for rural municipalities, I think it behooves this government or any other government to act quickly and fairly and equitably to adjust that load so

that the people of rural Ontario share in that enhanced funding.

1010

We have to realize that the ability of rural people to pay—for starters, they pay a far greater share per capita of the gas tax here in the province, because it is not a five-minute bus ride from Barry's Bay to Renfrew. It is not like getting on at Danforth and heading up to Bathurst or wherever. It is a long ride—an hour—and you can only accomplish it by some sort of privately operated mode of transport. It's a 100-kilometre trip, and you know that with gas prices today, it is not cheap. The bus simply doesn't pick up people in Quadeville and let them off in Palmer Rapids. It doesn't happen.

Those challenges exist for the people of Ontario in such a way that the amount of their discretionary income, which is lower in places like Haliburton county and my county—among the lowest in the province—they have less income to spend on gas, but they must spend more of it because they have only one choice of how they get around for work, for family activities or for discretionary activities. They can only get there by private vehicle. So they pay a disproportionate share of the gas tax and they have a disproportionately lower income than people in other parts of the province.

That is being addressed very well, I must say, by the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus. They have addressed that inequity, as we see it in eastern Ontario, with respect to other areas of the province. My colleague, Norm Sterling, of Lanark–Carleton has introduced a private member's bill to bring in a heritage fund, similar to the northern Ontario heritage fund, to address the difficulties that people in eastern Ontario face. That is a fundamental challenge that is not being addressed by this government with respect to the way they have treated rural Ontario. So this is an opportunity. I say to all the members on the opposite side who serve rural constituencies: You feel and sense our pain; you understand what it is like in a rural community where incomes are not at or above the provincial average, but many times below—in my particular county, significantly below; one of the lowest three in the province—and the challenges they face.

This is an opportunity for you to stand together, as rural members and rural representatives, and say, "We do want to see this kind of support for rural Ontario." We're not giving them anything but their own money back. They deserve to get back some of the taxes they pay at the pump every day, every week on a continuous basis. I say to members on all sides of this House that this is an opportunity to stand up and support rural Ontario at a time when your support has never been needed more.

I want to speak again to the fundamental fairness of this bill. We are not asking to you to create a special category, to say, "Let's help out the rural folk;" we are asking you to do something that is being done today in 105 municipalities across this province. We are only asking for fair treatment so that when people from rural Ontario ask themselves, "Do we feel engaged? Do we feel as though we are equal partners in this community of

Ontario?" they can say, "Yes." And we can, because the government wants to recognize, through a private member's bill, that they contribute to this province in ways that are immeasurable. They only want to share in the wealth that is being distributed so that people in rural Ontario do not sense there is a divide in this province between urban and rural. We are one province working toward the same goal. This is a tremendous opportunity today to stand together and say that when it comes to gas tax rebates, everybody in Ontario will be treated exactly the same.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): I'm glad to get an opportunity to get on the record on this particular issue. Like the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke—that's a mouthful—I also represent a riding that's quite large; in fact, I would argue, quite a bit larger than Nipissing–Renfrew-whatever; Pembroke—I'm sorry, but names of ridings elude me. I know my own and that's about all.

I'm the member for Timmins–James Bay, and I know well what the member talks about when it comes to the entire issue of being able to service one's constituency, especially in a rural setting. There's a feeling out there, and I think that's what the member is trying to speak to: Many communities in rural and northern Ontario feel as if they're being left out. They feel they are not getting the attention from this provincial government—or the federal government, for that matter—when it comes to properly supporting their communities. We have seen a move on the part of the federal government and we have seen a move by the provincial government of downloading services on to municipalities. We've transferred ambulance services down to the municipalities and we've transferred a number of other services down to the municipalities which have become an increasingly greater financial burden for those municipalities, to where now communities are having to pay for a lot of soft services that quite frankly should be provided by the province and not by municipalities. I know that the warden, who is here today, would agree with me that the province, rather than doing what it has been doing as far as the downloading exercise and trying to cry to the federal government, "Stop picking on poor Ontario, because we have this huge gap," should try fixing what is in their own backyard; that is, addressing the gap that they have created with municipalities when it comes to the download.

We have seen a move of services that the province used to provide themselves transferred down to the municipalities; taking ambulance services that used to be 100% paid by the province and transferring ambulance services partly down to the municipalities to where, in some cases, the municipalities are paying as much as 70%. In my particular constituency of Timmins–James Bay, the province now pays only about 38% of the entire ambulance cost. That's what we mean by downloading. I think what we need to do is figure out ways of re-uploading back to the province those things that we're best at delivering and allowing the municipalities the

room financially to deal with the issues that they are best able to deal with.

Now, on the transportation side, I want to echo what the member says: In many communities across rural and northern Ontario, there are no transit services. I support the initiative of using the gas tax to create a pool of dollars that will assist municipalities to provide better transit services, but I want to remind members of the government, especially the Liberal members who are here now for the first time, that there used to be dollars from the province, way before you guys came along, that supported transit services. I remember being part of the NDP government that gave up to about 70% dollars to municipalities to buy new buses. We used to be able to provide capital dollars to assist them, and we also used to provide dollars to help them operate their transit systems. That was eliminated, and that's what this gas tax, 1.5%, is all about: trying to find some way of dealing with the huge financial crunch that that has put on municipalities. I would argue that the province really needs to look at its responsibility of making sure that we properly support those services that we as a province want to mandate the municipalities to do. If the province is saying, "We believe in public transit," which we should, I think we need to pony up and put the dollars there to make sure that happens and to develop the policies.

On the issue of roads, this is one of the hugest issues in most of our constituencies. There used to be a time that the province provided capital dollars to municipalities to repair municipal roads. I remember the roads programs of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines and the roads program of the Ministry of Transportation. I forget what the capital budget was, but it was fairly huge. I think it was about \$2 billion or \$3 billion a year that we used to spend on roads—I don't quite remember the number now—as far as capital, not only supporting provincially owned highways but on assisting municipalities to reconstruct roads. For example, municipalities in my riding—I can think of Kapuskasing, Hearst, Moosonee, Timmins and other communities—applied at one point for dollars from the province, and the feds used to get involved at times too, depending on the programs that were available, in order to fix their own municipal roads. Now there is almost nothing available in order for municipalities to get provincial dollars to fix roads.

They're in a situation where the province has downloaded a whole bunch of services on to the municipality: We've transferred roads and highways, for example, in Timmins. We've downloaded I forget how many kilometres of provincial highways on to municipalities and said, "You maintain those roads, snow-clear them, make sure the lines are painted, and fix the bridges and roads when they've got to be fixed." The municipalities don't have the money. A good example is what is currently happening on Highway 67. The bridge on Highway 67 in between Iroquois Falls and Timmins is not about to fall, but the city engineers are worried that heavy truck traffic will lessen the life of that bridge and put the municipality

in a position of having to replace a bridge they can ill afford to replace. As a result, they've put a limit on the weight of that bridge. Consequently, all transport trucks that now go between Timmins on the Highway 101 side and Highway 11 up to Cochrane or Iroquois Falls or wherever it might be are now having to detour back up through Highway 11, up in Matheson, really putting them out of their way.

1020

It seems to me a really stupid thing that the province did in downloading these highways in the first place. That's not a municipal road; it's a highway. It connects two cities: It connects the city of Timmins with the Highway 11 communities of Iroquois Falls, Matheson, Val Gagné, Cochrane and others. Where the province gets off saying that's a municipal road is beyond me. I think that's what this member is trying to speak to, saying that municipalities, especially rural and northern municipalities, are feeling left out of the attention that the province should be giving in supporting their communities. They're saying to themselves, "We're having to pay for more and more services every day," and the province and the feds—especially the province, because we're the primary funder—are not there when it comes to helping them.

For example, the town of Moosonee up on the James Bay—do you know what they would like to have, just a very simple little thing? A little bit of asphalt on the roads, or pavement, as other people would call it. In the summer months, the dust that comes off the roads in the town of Moosonee is just atrocious. It makes the grass turn grey from the dust from the vehicles driving up and down Bay Road and other roads up in Moosonee. The community there, the residents, along with their municipal council—Wayne Taipale, who's the mayor, and the council have been asking the province for dollars in order to pave the roads. The province has been very slow in responding to any kind of request that the town of Moosonee has put forward. They're saying, "What about us, what about a little bit of pavement on our roads so that we can cut the dust down?" It has become a health issue. We know there's a bigger issue nowadays with children who are asthmatic, and we're finding there's a health effect of all of the dust in that community because of the conditions of the municipal roads not being paved. Why don't we have dollars to be able to assist the town of Moosonee to do something very basic?

I look at Hearst. Hearst has applications currently before the province in order to assist with the reconstruction of some of their municipal roads, because they are aging as well. I've got to say, the town of Hearst has done quite well on their own, trying to upgrade the roads in their community, but there's only so much that they can do. Mayor Sigouin, along with his councillors, Rheume and others, have been out lobbying the provincial government to get dollars to fix their roads, and there's no money coming forward.

The resentment that Mr. Yakabuski brings forward in regard to his bill today, I think, is one that is felt by a lot

of rural and northern municipalities. They're saying, "Listen, we want the provincial government to help us deal with the issues that face our community. We are tired of being picked on as communities. We are tired of the province saying, 'Here's another soft service that we're going to transfer over to the municipalities so you can pay,'" and at the end of the day be in a position where the municipality is having to pay for more and more services that used to be provided by the province. The province is taking it off their own backs and throwing it onto the backs of municipalities and feeling they really have the squeeze.

Yesterday was quite interesting. The province introduced an act in this Legislature with regard to the city of Toronto. I have to say, here's the biggest exercise in instituting downloading in the history of the province of Ontario. The Liberals, in opposition, used to go apoplectic—I remember Sandra Pupatello, George Smitherman, Dalton McGuinty and others, and the now Finance Minister, getting up in the House, totally appalled by the downloading exercises that were going on at that time by the government of the day. They were just absolutely beside themselves. They were saying, "Oh, my God, you've got to stop transferring all those services on to the municipalities." And they were saying, "If we're government, we're going to be different. We're going to create partnerships with the municipalities and re-upload those services back on to the province. What did they do yesterday? They introduced an act that said that the city of Toronto will now be able to levy its own taxes on a whole bunch of things that they never used to be able to tax before. For example, the city of Toronto could collect a tax on cigarettes, they'd be able to collect a tax on sports tickets, they would be able to put up tolls on municipal roads—a whole range of taxing powers given to the municipality of Toronto as a way of dealing with their financial crunch.

First of all, this is a bad idea, because what it does, in my view, is institutionalize the downloading. It basically says to cities that are now going to look at Toronto, which is sort of the pilot project of this new genre of institutionalizing the whole issue of downloading—and they're wondering what that is going to mean for them. If you are the town of Hearst, I'll tell you that there are not a lot of taxes you can get by way of new taxing powers for municipalities. First of all, they're never going to get the money they need, and more importantly, it will take the province off the hook when it comes to their uploading services back on to the province, where they rightfully belong.

I think what Mr. McGuinty did yesterday to the city of Toronto is, in the long run, somewhat of a disservice. The issue for Toronto is a very simple one. Yes, there are things in that bill that are probably OK for Toronto in regard to some of the powers—I would argue that the taxing power is not a very good one—but the real issue for Toronto is that they have a \$500-million deficit to deal with, and this ain't going to do it. The province is more or less saying that they might look at doing some-

thing very short-term, but they're not going to do anything long-term to fix the financial problem that the city of Toronto has. I would expect that they may give some money to Toronto to help them address their \$500-million deficit this year, but I wonder what would happen after that. I think that this government, in introducing this bill, is going to hurt the cause of the city of Toronto and others in the longer run by saying, "Don't look at us to re-upload services, because you now have taxing powers. If you have a revenue problem, go raise the money." That's basically what they're going to say. The problem with that is that it's the province's responsibility to maintain a lot of those soft services that have been transferred to the municipalities.

The other issue for smaller communities is that even if you gave them taxing powers, what is there to tax? If you are in the community of Hearst or in a small community in my good friend Mr. Wilson's riding of Simcoe-Grey—if you give the municipalities in your riding taxing power, how much is that going to raise? Is that going to fix the problem?

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey): Dogs and cats.

Mr. Bisson: Exactly. Are you going to tax the dogs and cats? That's about where we're at, right? There is not a lot. I look at the town of Hearst. There are three hotels. You can put a hotel tax on the three hotels in Hearst, but that is not going to raise a lot of money. It's going to make citizens pretty mad, those people who have to go out and rent the hotel rooms. Sports tickets: We sell a \$5 ticket to watch the hockey game in the arena in Hearst, and what is the municipality going to do: raise it again? That's going to make them very popular. First of all, there is a downside politically for the local councils, but second, you're not going to raise a lot of money for those smaller communities.

I applaud the member for bringing this legislation into the House today because I think it really speaks to the problem that exists: that the province has to start addressing the financial problems of all communities but, I would argue specifically in this case, of small rural and northern communities. They are increasingly in a very tough spot financially as a result of the province's transferring on to the backs of municipalities services that used to be paid by the province. The government needs to do something to address that. For the province to say, "You can go out and tax something else"—I'm not sure that's really the way of doing it; not by transferring tax powers on to municipalities. The province has to look at what it is best suited to do when it comes to properly delivering services and what the municipalities can properly do, and make sure we re-upload those services that belong to us.

The last point I want to make: It flies in the face of the argument the Premier makes against the federal government in regard to the gap. I would say that, yes, there is a gap between Ottawa and Canada. There is no argument about that; we've been saying that for years. But how can you go to the federal government and argue, "Treat me fairly," when you don't treat your own municipalities

fairly? I think there is a double standard and a little bit of hypocrisy—I don't think it's unparliamentary to say that—in regard to the position the government and the Premier are taking. I would urge that government members look at this legislation for what it is and understand that the member is trying to say, "Small communities need help. We are asking the province to do so. You haven't done it. Please listen to us." That's what this legislation is all about.

1030

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): I'm pleased to speak to Mr. Yakabuski's Bill 3, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act. This bill, proposed by the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, would require the minister to make provisions for portions of the gas tax funding to go toward maintenance and operation of public highways in Ontario municipalities. This is purely and simply grandstanding and hypocritical. He well understands how this legislation came forward. All the legislation, all the funding came forward fairly for the municipalities in Ontario.

In response to his proposal, I'd like to remind the honourable member that the McGuinty government has created a variety of supports for municipal funding and also to suggest that the gas tax was implemented for the sole purpose of maintaining and encouraging the use of public transit in municipalities. In 1998, his government, as we all know, took that 75% funding that was there for public transit and reduced it to zero. They were going back to the Stone Age, the one-passenger vehicle on our highways, and they were going to build us out of congestion that way. As we know, congestion has increased a great deal. I was looking at some of the figures for the 401. These increases show that roads cannot solve the transportation problem in Ontario. We have to get the public transit dollars.

This money was specifically allocated to public transit. That two cents per litre, which it will be at the end of the period, will help 83 transit systems benefit from this funding, and their services will extend to 110 municipalities. The funding provided by the gas tax is significant. It amounts to \$234 million between 2005 and 2006, and over the five years, it will be over \$1 billion—a real commitment to public transit, a real commitment to sustainable cities in our province. Those dollars were allocated for that purpose. To make this investment in our public transit, in our air quality, in our sustainable cities—to take those dollars and use them for another purpose is just not what should happen.

The improvements to transit that stem from this funding were intended to relieve congestion and gridlock on our highways, to decrease the greenhouse gas emissions caused by this congestion and provide quicker, easier forms of transit for commuters. Bill 3 would undermine the goal of this funding and limit the province's ability to meet these important provincial priorities.

Bill 3 aims at improving the public highways in municipalities. However, we have already allocated funding to municipal roads and bridges through the COMRIF pro-

gram. COMRIF allows for \$900 million over five years to municipalities that apply. In the first round, 57 road projects and 123 bridge projects were approved for funding, and that funding was dedicated to those exact municipalities for that purpose. It was done at the same time as the funding was considered for public transit.

The municipalities that require most assistance are usually smaller rural and northern communities. To this end, we introduced the Ontario municipal partnership fund, which gives priority to such communities. I'd just like to read where some of the funds went. Arnprior is now receiving \$889,000 for 2005—an increase of \$386,000 in the member's riding. This is great. The Madawaska Valley is now receiving \$916,000 for 2005—an increase of \$267,000. These are real improvements in the funding for those municipalities that was done at the same time as these funds were allocated. The Ontario Strategic Infrastructure Financing Authority was also put into place for that purpose, and it is helping municipalities of under 100,000 to finance their projects.

It is important that we step back and review just how much this government has done to improve the infrastructure in our municipalities. The previous government had a history of downloading, and provincial highways and bridges were just some of the projects that were downloaded on to rural municipalities that couldn't possibly afford them. Those eight years of downloading, those eight years of taking money from those municipalities, have put them in a serious situation. We are working with our new programs to alleviate that. In the 1998 downloading of all the funding for public transit, all of a sudden the cities found out that, from 75%, they were being reduced to nothing. The buses got older, and whole bus fleets had to be replaced in 2003, 2004 and 2005. That was a setback. The ridership dropped. Making our cities more sustainable took a very, very bad hit in 1998 when the Harris government Tories took away all that funding. In 1998, the Tories downloaded GO Transit to the municipalities—another action that didn't help public transit.

After having suffered from downloading for so long, I think it's only fair that infrastructure and public transit systems in the municipalities should benefit from the funding programs set up by the McGuinty government. Similarly, the funding from the gas tax should remain focused on improving public transit, which will in turn decrease congestion and gridlock, and improve air quality and the quality of life for all Ontarians.

Mr. Wilson: I don't normally speak on Thursday mornings but I wanted, in spite of the fact that we had a caucus Christmas party last night, to be here to support my friend John Yakabuski, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. John is doing an excellent job. Almost daily he asks questions—he certainly does petitions daily—on behalf of his municipalities and the people of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. He's also got a terrific sense of humour, although this morning's topic isn't that funny. What he's really doing is helping the Liberals, I say to the member for Ottawa–Orléans, who just spoke, fulfill one of their 231 campaign promises.

I sat through seven all-candidates' meetings in my riding, and I'm sure there were hundreds and hundreds across the province in 103 ridings. The fact of the matter is that consistently, at every one of those meetings, not only the impression but the fact that the Liberal candidate purported to put forward was that this government—the Liberals, if they came to government—would make sure that every municipality got a share of the gasoline tax. There were no strings attached. They come to office, and only 105 of the 445 municipalities are actually receiving any share of the gasoline tax.

You can talk about COMRIF funding. To the people at home: That's the Canada-Ontario municipal funding program, infrastructure program. That's not what this bill deals with. This deals specifically with your campaign promise that every municipality would get a share of the gas tax. They come to office and say it's only about a quarter of the municipalities, and then they say it's only those municipalities that have public transit. As Mr. Yakabuski and Mr. Bisson pointed out, public transit in rural Ontario is our highways; it is our bridges; it is our automobiles. You've cancelled Highway 26. What happened to the \$34 million for that highway?

You can at least live up to one of your campaign promises. Mr. Yakabuski is doing you a favour to get up and get off-topic and talk about other infrastructure programs—which, by the way, the federal government is helping to pay for. The federal government didn't make this promise the way you made it. In fact, they didn't make the promise but they actually brought in the program. They didn't talk about it in 2003. They knew that AMO and other municipal organizations across the country had resolutions in this regard, but the federal government is actually sharing their gas tax now with every municipality, and it's a big help. I know we're in the middle of a federal campaign and I don't want to endorse anyone but the Conservatives, but the fact of the matter is that it's a big help and they did bring in a program.

I want to support the legislation. I hope all members will; I don't know how you can't. You absolutely have to vote for it or else you'll just be slamming, once again, rural Ontario. You're not doing very well out there right now. People feel neglected in rural Ontario and they feel that you've let them down. This morning, this bill gives you an opportunity to correct what you've done wrong to rural Ontario.

Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill): I want to thank the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for introducing Bill 3. I understand that he represents an area and he wants to bring as many dollars as possible to his riding. That, generally speaking, is the right thing to do for any honourable member. I also understand that his wife is here today; I want to welcome her to this House.

The gas tax objective was to deal with a major issue that the Tories created in Ontario, and that was to address public transportation issues. Unfortunately, the Tories in 1998 started reducing not only the operating costs of public transportation but also the construction of new subways, new busing and so on.

Therefore, what we promised during the campaign was to bring two cents over our mandate to address public transportation. For us to now start removing some of this funding from an area that is in such need would be the wrong thing to do.

We have other programs that address the needs and wants that the member suggested in Bill 3. That has been done. In addition to that, there is discussion going on between the province and the feds to also come up with new money to assist and improve conditions outside and within the big cities. Therefore, I believe that that will give more than what the member would be asking for under Bill 3.

1040

The cities, and in particular Toronto and the GTA—my area of Thornhill, Concord, the city of Vaughan, the town of Markham; the region of York and all four regions that make up the GTA—these areas are suffering significantly because of the poor public transportation that, unfortunately, the Conservatives before us created. As I said, in 1998, they started the process which I think took three years, brought the municipalities' subsidies to zero, and therefore many municipalities had to stop investing the money they had been investing in new busing, expansion of the subway system and maintaining the system that was there.

We know that the city of Toronto keeps on saying to us, over and over again, that they need more money just to bring the service to the level that is needed, yet we are looking for new money to expand the Spadina-York subway extension; we are also looking at a connection to Scarborough that would also allow a connection along that line to the town of Markham, we are looking at Yonge Street public transportation improvements that would bring the line to Newmarket; and at a system where people who fly at Pearson International would be able to connect to downtown Toronto.

Those things happen in other cities such as Paris; such as Rome, Italy; such as Tokyo; Frankfurt, Germany. Those types of services already exist. Why can't we have them in Toronto? One way of doing it in the GTA is by starting to look at funding for that specific purpose. That is what we did. In fact, we promised before the election—and we did deliver—the two cents per litre of existing tax; we already did one and a half, and the other half cent will come in next October. It's my hope, and certainly I will champion as much as I can, that as we balance the books that unfortunately our friends from the Conservatives left with a major deficit, we might even be able to look at increasing that two cents to a higher amount, so that public transportation will become more important, as it should be, because most of the pollution that we are getting is because of poor public transportation.

I had the fortune of being in China recently. When I visited, for instance, the Hong Kong subway system, what a difference. People there go to weddings in tuxedos. Normally, they go by public transportation. The reason is very simple: They are comfortable using it. It's

quite comfortable. Even if it's packed, because of the way the system is built, because of the first-class service they provide, people use it.

We must do that in the GTA in particular, but also in other cities like Ottawa, London and major cities in Ontario. It can be done. The only thing we have to do is convince ourselves that more public money must be allocated. What this bill will do, in fact, is take money away, money that we specifically allocated for public transportation. Even if I congratulate the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for the objective of bringing more money to these areas—because that's our job—I think he is asking to take the money from the wrong account, and therefore I cannot support it. I encourage him because his riding and his constituency will benefit when we have a strong Toronto, a strong GTA, which will be able to operate more economically and more efficiently, because all the province of Ontario will benefit when the GTA does well. There is lots of revenue in this region. There are lots of taxes that are paid because we are able to have a better economy.

We all should do whatever we have to to make this area even more economically viable, because when that happens, more investments take place here and more taxes will be paid to the province of Ontario—and to Ottawa, our friends who are getting \$22 billion more than they are investing in this province. When we are able to get some of that money, and more taxes from you and I because the economy will do better, then we can certainly allocate more funding in other areas, and all of us will benefit.

I have more to say, but I understand that a colleague of mine wishes to add more.

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): It's a pleasure to rise today to speak on Bill 3, the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act (Assistance to Municipalities), 2005, brought forward by my friend and colleague the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who is very articulate in bringing forward the concerns of rural Ontario. I was quite disappointed by the Liberal member who is speaking against this bill—soon to be voting against it, I guess—because it isn't fair, and rural Ontario wants a fair shake. This is why the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has brought the bill forward to address the concerns in rural Ontario.

There has been talk about the federal election going on. This is a big topic in my riding. It has a lot of media attention. The Conservative candidate, who is the MP in the riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, Barry Devolin, has also worked a lot with municipalities on this and has gotten petitions signed, because it is unfair what's going on with the gas tax sharing for rural Ontario. I want to thank him for that and wish him luck in the upcoming election. I know I'll be there supporting him.

The issue is that we need to improve our gas tax system, not just because there is public outcry but because it is the fair thing to do. I'm going to use that word a lot through here, because what's happening in rural Toronto isn't fair. The daily financial pressures on the constitu-

ents in my riding, whether they're farmers, seniors on fixed incomes, small business owners, young and growing families or professionals—the dramatic increase in the price of gas is a significant extra expense for them, this year especially. Many people are frustrated, and they're frustrated because they know there are considerable taxes placed on the price of the gas that they must purchase. We need to remember that most Ontarians have no choice but to buy gas to get to and from work, take their kids to school or hockey team practices, and transport goods for businesses. We all agree that the taxes are too high, but we have the potential to use this asset to benefit all Ontarians equally.

That's what this bill does. It addresses the current uneven distribution of the gas tax head-on to make the gas tax benefit all Ontarians. We need to ensure that the needs of rural residents are not undercut by the requests of urban residents in this province. I've thanked the member for speaking up on behalf of rural ridings many times. I've thanked him for recognizing that roads and highways travelled by residents of rural Ontario are no less important than the streets in Toronto's financial district or the public transit system that runs underneath this building. Currently, the Gasoline Tax Act refers to and leans toward uses like the ones I mentioned, for extending or improving subway lines, bus routes and public transit infrastructure.

But the residents of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock are less concerned with the TTC than they are with safe roads to travel to work, to school and on the highways and byways that crisscross my riding. Winter is a long season, full of dangerous and difficult driving. We need to ensure that the roads they travel every day are well maintained, well serviced and continually improved. In Kawartha Lakes, one part of my riding, nine Kawartha Lakes roads were nominated for the worst road in the province in 2003. None of them made the top 20, I'm thankful, but the fact that over 11,000 Ontarians voted in this contest says something about the critical mass worried about the local highways and roads.

We should all answer this call. Adapt the Gasoline Tax Act to address these concerns. Support the bill proposed by my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. The member himself said it best when he said that local roads, highways and bridges are, after all, the public transportation system in rural Ontario. I have the stats from my communities. The member from Peterborough is not here, but it takes in Peterborough county, the county of Haliburton, Brock township and the city of Kawartha Lakes: Over 80% use roads to get to work every day. This is our infrastructure. I can't say it enough. We rely on a fair share of gas tax to build our roads.

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Kawartha Lakes councillor Dave Marsh spoke in the local newspaper about the requirement for the gas tax that the \$50,000 be spent on new bus shelters in the town. Now, I understand that we're working to improve public transport and that we encourage residents of our ridings

to make environmentally sound transportation decisions, but to ask that a town spend \$50,000, a significant amount of money, on a bus system that's marginal at best instead of keeping our high-traffic highways and roads safe, clean and modern is a terrible mistake and could easily be remedied by this bill brought forward today.

It's not just a vanity project for municipalities. It's the safety of Ontarians that's on the line. Rural ridings need to work extra hard with limited resources to keep the roads clear in the winter and safe throughout the year. There's a big storm coming tonight. Except for Brock township, all the municipalities I mentioned in my riding are part of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus. Bob Sweet chairs that, and is here today. They have been very involved in eastern Ontario, promoting the special needs there. We supported the member from Lanark-Carleton, Norm Sterling, when he brought his private member's bill back in, that eastern Ontario needs its fair share.

I think the best way is for us to realize the differences between rural and urban transportation issues, because we don't want a split between rural and urban Ontario. We all want to work together. Mayor Barb Kelly said in the local paper, "For the city of Kawartha Lakes, we have 72,000 people but we have 2,400 kilometres of road. We probably have more roads than Toronto ... They're getting millions. Over five years, we're getting \$11 million, but compared to what Toronto is getting, it's not close. It's not as fair as it could be." She's right on.

I encourage all members to approach this bill as a matter of fairness for rural Ontario. It's time this was acted on. I'm certainly going to support this, and I thank the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for bringing this bill forward.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): In the short time that's left, I'd like to address this bill as well. First, I want to extend my congratulations to the members from the rural ridings who have stood up for their communities. That is the role and task of all members in this House. However, the tool that's being chosen here to provide the funding for highways in rural areas would have an impact on my own urban community of Oakville.

Oakville has long recognized, as a growth area in this province, that that growth could be stymied if we didn't have a proper transit system. In the 1980s, we talked about building communities that would have a transit-modal split of about 25%. What that means is that on a daily basis, 25% of the people in Oakville, who are getting up in the morning and going to school or to work or just going about their business, would use transit. In fact, because of downloading and various other funding issues, my own community has only been able to achieve to date a transit-modal split of between 5% and 7%. That simply isn't enough in a modern economic community.

So to suggest that we should take further money away from municipalities, having implemented a policy where we've agreed as a government to provide a certain portion of the gas tax for public transit in municipalities such as mine—to stand in this House and suggest that that number should be reduced I don't think is in the best

interests of this province or its economy. In fact, I think a very strong argument could be made that that funding for public transit should be increased.

While I appreciate the member standing up for his community, I don't want to see the gains that may be made in rural Ontario come at the expense of my own riding of Oakville. They have sent me down here to do a job, and that is to provide public transit. As a government, I think we're doing that.

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): It's my pleasure to rise today to speak in support of Bill 3, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act, brought forward by the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

First of all, I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the member for his hard work in this House since his election in 2003. His arrival here just over two years ago, along with the member for Haliburton-Victoria-Brock, created a spark in our caucus at a time when it was needed. The enthusiasm and dedication of both of these members in their new roles has had an energizing effect on our caucus.

It's a pleasure for me to speak in support of Bill 3 this morning because I've been an advocate for fair gas tax funding for all our municipalities for a long time. In fact, I spoke about this issue during members' statements on October 13, 2004, and worked with our municipal affairs critic of the day, the member for Erie-Lincoln, to advocate for a solution to the inequity experienced by rural municipalities. Our caucus has certainly done much work on this topic, and I congratulate the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for bringing the issue forward once again today, as a private member's bill this time.

I'd like to just highlight again the importance of private members' business in this Legislature. It's an opportunity for all members to raise awareness on particular issues that the government might otherwise want to ignore, and offer solutions to problems around our province. It's also a time for members to challenge the government to take action on a wide range of concerns facing Ontarians.

Bill 3 addresses an issue which I know is of vital importance to rural communities all across this province: the lack of provincial gas tax money being invested in rural municipalities, those without municipal transit systems.

As members of this House are aware, the McGuinty Liberal government announced in October 2004 that it planned on investing more than \$680 million of the provincial gas tax into transit systems across Ontario. This money would be directed to 78 transit systems in 105 municipalities. The problem is that there are 445 municipalities in this province, meaning that 340 municipalities will not see a single penny from the gas tax, despite the fact that all Ontarians pay this tax every time they fill up at the pumps.

The government's plan has completely ignored the transportation needs of rural Ontario. It is interesting to

note, however, that the federal government, as has been pointed out, does not discriminate between municipalities, large and small, with their gas tax plan. In fact, the federal government distributes their gas tax funding to each municipality, bypassing the provincial government entirely, by working with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and they base it on population. I'm told that, in my riding, for example, Wellington county is in line to receive more than \$6.5 million from the federal gas tax over the next five years, Centre Wellington expects to receive about \$2 million, and Minto township is counting on receiving over \$600,000 by the year 2010.

How is it possible that the McGuinty Liberal government can ignore municipalities like these while their federal counterparts are distributing their gas tax in a fair and equitable way? How does the provincial government continue to sustain that sort of discriminatory position?

The vast majority of my riding is not serviced by a public transit system. This is true of dozens of ridings across rural Ontario. Because of this, almost everyone needs a car to get around, since public transit is simply not an option. I would submit that because of this reality, rural Ontario residents probably pay more gas tax per capita than urban residents do.

Consider this: The provincial gas tax is 14.7 cents a litre. If the average motorist fills up a 50-litre tank of gas once a week, this totals almost \$400 per year in gas tax payments. If this person lives in rural Ontario, they are not seeing one single penny of this gas tax invested back into their community. There are a great number of transportation needs in my riding that I continue to advocate for through the Waterloo-Wellington Transportation Action Plan.

I call upon this government to pass Bill 3.

I want to leave some time for my colleague the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I'm glad to have a minute to add my support to the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for his Bill 3, which would see some of the gas tax go to all municipalities, not just those with transit, as has been put forward by this government.

In the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, there are some 26 municipalities, and only one—that being Huntsville—is getting its share of the gas tax. I ask, how is that fair? For rural areas, public transit is roads and bridges. For a very small municipality—I have some that have only 500 people—building a new bridge is a huge challenge. I would say that it's only fair that they get a share of this tax.

I have other things I'd like to say but only 17 seconds to say them in, so I would just like to reiterate that I do support Mr. Yakabuski and this Bill 3, and I look forward to other members supporting it as well.

The Acting Speaker: The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Yakabuski: I want to thank the members from Timmins-James Bay, Ottawa-Orléans, Simcoe-Grey, Thornhill, Haliburton-Victoria-Brock, Oakville,

Waterloo-Wellington and Parry Sound-Muskoka for speaking to my bill this morning.

I want to address the fundamental issue we have here, and that is sustainable, reliable funding for rural Ontario municipalities like my county, Renfrew county. I do appreciate Warden Bob Sweet's joining me here today for this debate.

I want to speak a little bit to the positions taken by the government members. This is not about a battle between rural transportation funding and public transportation funding in urban municipalities. There are significant subsidies and government support for those entities in places like the city of Toronto. This gas tax is a small portion of that funding, but this gas tax is an issue of fairness. We are relegating rural people to a second-class status if they don't share in some rebate of that tax, which they pay on every litre of gasoline equally to what every resident and every business and every entity in Toronto or Ottawa or London pays. It is a fundamental issue of fairness, and it must be addressed.

I ask the members opposite, those in rural ridings and those in urban ridings, to ask yourselves: Do your constituents believe in an Ontario that represents fairness or unfairness, where you create second-class citizens in rural Ontario and have a program that only supports a public transportation system in the city of Toronto when it is a specific tax being used to pay for that? I say no. There are other programs that support public transportation and we support that, but this gas tax, which this government, when they were campaigning, purported to be for everyone, should be for everyone equally across this great province.

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LOBBYISTS

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I move that, in the opinion of this House, former employees of the Premier's office be barred from lobbying any and all ministries and government agencies for a period of one year from the termination of their employment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona): Pursuant to stand order 96, the member has 10 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Hampton: I want to read the resolution again, because it is a very pointed resolution: That, in the opinion of this House, former employees of the Premier's office be barred from lobbying any and all ministries and government agencies for a period of one year from the termination of their employment.

Let me give a brief history of why this resolution is needed. Currently, it is the case—it might seem absurd to Ontarians—that someone can work in the Premier's office, can have cabinet ministers and cabinet ministers' staff reporting to them, can have deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers reporting to them on certain issues, and, under the rules as they now stand, they can leave the Premier's office one day and the next day go to

work for a private company that is lobbying the government for a contract or for some special deal. They can go around and lobby the very cabinet ministers, cabinet ministers' staff, deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers that, the day before, were reporting to them. Those are the rules as they now stand under the McGuinty government. I think anyone who thinks about this would say, "That's terrible. That shouldn't happen."

You should not have a situation where someone can work as a right-hand adviser or left-hand adviser to the Premier, be privy to all this information, be privy to all the knowledge and all the nuances, leave the Premier's office on Thursday and go to work as a paid lobbyist for the very companies who have been trying to get access to cabinet ministers and access to assistant deputy ministers and deputy ministers and access to people in the Premier's office. They can go to work the very next day and then be lobbying those deputy ministers who used to report to them, be lobbying those cabinet ministers and cabinet ministers' staff, people who used to report to him or her.

I want to say that there are a number of people who support me in my resolution. One of them is the now Minister of Natural Resources, David Ramsay. This is what he has said about clamping down on lobbyists and how important it is: "One of the big problems we've seen with this government is assistants to ministers and assistants to the Premier who have worked on a first-hand basis on different briefs, different cases, different issues with the private sector. All of a sudden you find an announcement and they're gone to the very company they were advising from the government standpoint, and now they're working for that company. I think that should be absolutely outlawed." That was David Ramsay; that's his view.

I want to quote someone else who I think supports my position. This would be Dalton McGuinty: "Senior staffers are privy to highly sensitive and confidential information. They not only know what you're going to do tomorrow, but they know what you're going to do next week and in many cases they know what the government is going to do next month and even what it's going to do a year away.

"That information can be exceptionally valuable to people who want to do business with the government."

Then Dalton McGuinty then finished with this question: "Do you not feel that there is a very serious problem here and that there ought to be some restriction placed on senior political staffers who were formerly employed through your office?"—meaning the Premier's office.

I want to quote another authority. The former Conservative government wrestled with this issue. They brought in a bill called Bill 69, which said that you couldn't go back and lobby the office that you worked in but you could lobby all the other offices. I want to quote Mike Colle, now a member of cabinet, who was very critical of this. He said, "This bill will do nothing to control what the lobbyists do. There's not one lobbyist in this province who's shaking in their boots, I'll tell you.

They've probably got a big smile on their face as they smoke their big, fat cigar and eat their blue steak in the bottom of some fancy restaurant down here in Toronto. They're smiling at this. You haven't heard one complaint from a lobbyist about Bill 69, because Bill 69 is essentially a piece of cake for the lobbyists. It should be called the Lobbyists Protection Act. It is meek. It is meaningless. It does nothing. It's not only too late; it's much too little." So said Mike Colle.

I want to turn the clock forward to the situation we face today. The situation we face today is this: The McGuinty government has come forward and said that it would be in favour of spending at least \$40 billion on expensive, unreliable nuclear power. If history is any guide in the province of Ontario, a cautious person would say that this will double; it will likely be \$80 billion. What does that mean for the average family? Well, if it's only \$40 billion—I say "only"—that would be \$13,000 that every family in Ontario would pay for these nuclear power plants. If history is a guide here and it's \$80 billion, it means \$26,000 out of the pocket of every family for Premier McGuinty's nuclear fantasy.

What's going on here behind the scenes is this: The former right-hand advisers of the Premier, who worked in the Premier's office, who had access to all this information, who were privy to all the knowledge, guess what they're doing now. They're working as paid lobbyists for the nuclear companies who want these \$40-billion contracts. They have all this inside information. They know all the nuances. The Minister of Energy used to report to them; the Minister of the Environment used to report to them; the deputy ministers used to report to them; the assistant deputy ministers used to report to them; the Minister of Finance used to report to them. Now these right- and left-hand advisers of Dalton McGuinty are acting as paid lobbyists, going to the very cabinet ministers, the very deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers on a daily basis and lobbying them. I think this is terribly, terribly unsightly. Just think about it. The two people who were right-hand advisers to Dalton McGuinty over the last two years left their work as the Premier's advisers and now are paid lobbyists for nuclear companies, and they go around and they lobby the very cabinet ministers who used to report to them.

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I want to read the Premier's words again:

"Senior staffers are privy to highly sensitive and confidential information. They not only know what you're going to do tomorrow, but they know what you're going to do next week and in many cases they know what the government is going to do next month and even what it's going to do a year away.

"That information can be exceptionally valuable to people who want to do business with the government.

"Do you not feel that there is a very serious problem here and that there ought to be some restriction placed on senior political staffers who were formerly employed through your office?"

Let me say that I heartily agree with what Dalton McGuinty used to say. His senior staffers have all kinds

of inside knowledge of the nuances of energy policy, of what the government may be looking at, what the government may favour, or what the government may want to do. It is terribly inappropriate that the people who worked as the principal advisers to the Premier, who have all of this inside information, are now paid lobbyists for companies that are seeking this \$40-billion expenditure. It is completely inappropriate that they be allowed to lobby the cabinet ministers who used to report to them, the deputy ministers who used to report to them and the other senior ministry officials who used to report to them. So that is the reason for this resolution. I'm calling Dalton McGuinty, David Ramsay, Mike Colle and all the other Liberals who said that this is inappropriate and it should not be permitted.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Peterborough.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): I don't want you reading a speech.

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I'm not reading a speech.

Mr. Bisson: Don't let the Premier tell you what to say. Say what you really feel.

Mr. Leal: I certainly will. It's an opportunity for me to reflect on the member from Kenora–Rainy River's resolution this morning.

I first came to this place in 1985. I had the opportunity to be on the staff of the late John Eakins, who was the member from Victoria–Haliburton from 1975 to 1990 and had two cabinet positions in the Peterson government. He was Minister of Tourism and Recreation and Minister of Municipal Affairs during the five years of the Peterson administration. He was also my political mentor. He chatted to me about the need to have the highest ethical standards in public life, and he indeed exhibited those standards as a councillor in the city of Lindsay, the mayor of the city of Lindsay and then the member of provincial Parliament for some 15 years prior to his retirement in 1990. In fact, his integrity as a minister was duly recognized by the Premier of the day, Mr. Rae, who appointed Mr. Eakins to sit on the Ontario Place board for a period of time during his administration.

What has transpired over the last 20 years is interesting. I don't want to dwell on what may or may not have been said by others who were here prior to 2003, but my time here is since 2003. It's interesting to see that there's now almost a reverse onus taking effect—the member from York North very ably touched upon this the other day—that we're now assuming the very worst in everybody; that people indeed are guilty. We go about and we question integrity almost constantly, and if you reflect back some 20 years ago—we used to have great debates. I used to sit in that gallery right there. It was an opportunity to watch debates about principle, about concepts, about ideas, and I thought that was appropriate for this chamber.

All parties over the last 20 years I think have been somewhat guilty of this, particularly during question period, when we stand up and question the integrity of

individuals. It's interesting. I've learned that we have full immunity, I believe, when we stand up in this place. Others make suggestions here during debate, but they're reluctant to step outside this chamber to make the same kinds of statements.

We do in fact have some protections in place—I have respect for the leader of the third party, the member for Kenora–Rainy River—that guard the possible impact of lobbying. The Honourable Lloyd Houlden is the current Conflict of Interest Commissioner within the Ontario Public Service Act, as so defined, and this deals with both former cabinet ministers and people who serve on staff. The COI Commissioner is the designated official for conflict-of-interest matters involving staff in the Premier's office or in a minister's office. Regulation 435/97 of the Public Service Act deals with conflict of interest, and the MBC Conflict of Interest and Post-Service Directive extends conflict of interest to post-service situations. The role of the COI Commissioner is to review and investigate conflict-of-interest matters, make rulings, provide advice and set terms and conditions on any post-service restrictions.

It's interesting. We put these protections in place. A short time ago, there was an issue in this place regarding the issuing and procurement of an advertising contract. Even when we put protections in place, we question when some people of impeccable integrity come forward who have these positions within the Ontario government and provide statements that things were completed in a very ethical and straightforward manner. We all stand up and say, "Well, that can't be believed either." I think that's becoming most unfortunate in this area.

We spent some time this morning dwelling on what might or might not be in terms of the OPA report as we move forward. I want to comment on the conclusions of that report. It says:

"The advice in this report is intended to set Ontario on a course to:

"Maximize conservation and build on its potential in the future;

"Pursue an aggressive course for renewables within current constraints, while looking at ways to reduce these constraints;

"Adopt a 'smart gas' strategy that takes advantage of the benefits of natural-gas-fired generation but limits exposure to its price and supply risks; and

"Benefit from supply options that need long lead times, such as nuclear, large-scale wind generation, hydro imports and gasification."

It would be a distortion of the OPA report to say that the plan puts all the emphasis on one particular side of the energy equation. There will be a discussion over the next number of months. There will be people involved who will be chatting about this and what sort of options might take place, but to me this emphasis on questioning people's integrity and character, what they may and may not do—I don't want to spend time dwelling on the past. I'm sure that if I went to the member for St. Catharines—he probably has 15 books in his desk over there that I could dig out and dwell on the past.

I happen to think there are provisions in place that provide protection. The standards of the day—we all have to make decisions in this place. We all have to conduct ourselves in an appropriate manner. I happen to be one who believes that in most cases people exhibit ethical standards to the highest degree in doing their tasks. There are a lot of examples.

I could go back to the mid-1950s when Mr. Frost was Premier. There was the famous scandal here in the Ontario government. It was the NONG scandal, the Northern Ontario Natural Gas pipeline issue. That was part of the great pipeline debate that was going on across Canada at the time of the extension of the TransCanada Pipeline from western Canada through Ontario.

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Mr. Frost, who set the standard of the day—there was a question of whether some insiders were actually providing tips on buying stock in the company that was to construct that portion of the gas pipeline through northern Ontario. In his day, he exhibited the highest standards possible, and certainly removed at least three cabinet ministers at that time who looked like they had a conflict of interest in dealing with that.

During my short two and a half years here, I have observed people on all sides who I believe have exhibited the highest ethical standards and certainly conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. It seems to me that from time to time the debate in this House is getting away from an opportunity to talk about principles and policy into what I call this reverse onus, spending a lot of time questioning character. Even when it's proven, through various officers of this Legislature, and they provide the evidence that shows that correct procedures have been followed, whether it's in procuring advertising contracts or others, we still keep questioning that. Why do we take the time through rigorous debate to put these structures in place, to report back to the 103 members here, to provide observations and data in support that say things are done in a clearly transparent manner, and we keep questioning that?

In terms of a number of things, we're building on activities that previous governments have begun. We brought forward a transparency act, to increase the view that we as members and the outside public have on activities of the Ontario government. I think we've brought transparency. It really goes back to the mid-1980s in terms of how we allocate advertising contracts here in Ontario, creating arm's-length agencies that look at procurements to make sure they're done in an appropriate manner. One of the things we have done is ban partisan advertising, which I think by and large is an appropriate thing to do, and I think we've gone a long way. Justice Coulter Osborne, the Integrity Commissioner, who reviews the activities of members in this province, certainly has gone a long way, I believe, to reassure the public of activities that we're involved in each and every day.

This could be a better place. I appreciate the comments of Mr. Tory, the leader of the Conservative Party, when he came here to perhaps enhance the quality of

debate and the direction we're going in. I think there are sufficient protections in place to make sure that the interests of Ontarians are protected.

The Acting Speaker: I'd ask the members to welcome Len Wood, MPP for Cochrane North in the 35th and 36th Parliaments. Welcome.

The Chair recognizes the member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): I'm pleased to briefly join the debate and discussion this morning on Mr. Hampton's resolution, "That, in the opinion of this House, former employees of the Premier's office be barred from lobbying any and all ministries and government agencies for a period of one year from the termination of their employment."

I think we would all agree that it is important that people behave appropriately, that there is not perceived to be any conflict of interest at any time because people have the opportunity, based on their former employment, to have access to information and be able to accomplish things that other people cannot.

I just want to speak briefly this morning about the fact that when we were in government, we recognized the importance of having in place some very strong government-wide conflict-of-interest rules. We did introduce those rules in 1997, and they were entitled the Conflict of Interest and Post-Service Directive, by Management Board Secretariat.

At that time, a conflict of interest was determined to be "any situation where an individual's private interests may be incompatible or in conflict with their public service responsibilities." This focused largely on the public service, but certainly we can extrapolate, and we can ensure that all people who have worked in former offices are in a similar position where they are not in conflict.

The purpose of that post-service directive at that time was to enhance public confidence in the integrity of public servants and the decision-making process in government by setting some clear rules of conduct for conflict of interest in post-service practices that would apply to all public servants. We were also trying to reduce the possibility of conflict between the private interests and the public service duties of public servants. We were trying to provide a means to resolve such conflicts in the public interest.

That particular directive applied to "senior public servants," including:

"(i) the secretary of cabinet

"(ii) deputy ministers

"(iii) senior staff in the Premier's office and ministers' offices

"(iv) public servants (except for clerical and secretarial staff)

"(v) the senior management group

"(vi) any other individuals designated under part 3 to whom the post-service employment restriction will apply."

It is important to recognize that our government did recognize the importance of putting in place this conflict-of-interest and post-service directive for public servants,

in the best interests of all of the people in the province of Ontario.

It went on. Really, the bill was all about ensuring that “the government of Ontario maintains a legal interest in the post-service activities of former public servants. As such, public servants shall not, after leaving employment of the crown, take improper advantage of their past offices.” For example, they shall not do the following:

“(a) allow prospects of outside employment to create a real or potential conflict of interest while in public service with the crown;

“(b) seek preferential treatment or privileged access to government after leaving public service with the crown;

“(c) take personal advantage of information obtained through official duties and responsibilities that is not available to the public;

“(d) use public office to unfair advantage in gaining opportunities for outside employment.” Certainly, this did move activity forward.

Part 3 of the document was specifically dedicated to looking at the mandatory requirements for post-service restrictions for senior public servants. It said, “For 12 months after leaving the service of the crown, a former senior public servant is restricted from lobbying for or on behalf of any person, entity or organization, to any ministry or organization with the crown with which the individual worked in the 12 months prior to leaving the service of the crown.

“Where a former senior public servant lobbies the crown on behalf of an organization in contravention of the requirements of this section, the crown reserves the right not to do business with that organization with respect to that particular issue or transaction.”

I think what’s extremely important here—and I’ll conclude—is simply that, given this government’s commitment to transparency, accountability and democratic renewal, the Premier and this government, who talk about transparency and accountability, should at all times hold all staff to the highest standards of integrity.

Mr. Bisson: I am so happy to be part of this debate, because it gives us a chance to talk about the Liberal way. We are in a federal election right now, and everybody will know that one of the key issues federally in regard to the election that will play out on January 23 is the largesse that Liberals like to show to their friends when it comes to things that have happened over the years, when it comes to favours that Liberals do for each other when they’re in government, for their friends in the private sector, and their friends generally.

1130

We would know right now, for example, that this whole issue around the Gomery inquiry has been pretty categorical in saying that the Liberal government in Ottawa did a whole bunch of things that, quite frankly, were not very moral and, I would argue, not even legal, when it comes to helping their friends along: little brown envelopes with thousands of dollars in them given to people at suppers; contracts being given out to their friends in order to get contributions back to the political

party—all kinds of stuff like that. I’ve just got to say, you know, it’s the Liberal way. It’s the way it is.

We have this thing: We politicians talk among the parties. I don’t like what the Conservatives do, but I know where they’re coming from. They have a principle. I don’t agree with it, but they stake themselves out on the right of the political spectrum. I would argue that the Conservatives don’t agree with us New Democrats, and we stake ourselves on the left of the political spectrum. Liberals will just do what has to be done to get elected. It’s not about ideas. It’s not about anything other than, “How do I get power? If I have to be a left-winger today and a right-winger tomorrow and, in between, switch three times and do whatever, so be it.” It’s all about power, because once you’re in power, you can help your friends.

We have, for example, Mr. Lopinski, who was the director of issues within the Premier’s office—in fact, was one of the key advisers to the Premier on a whole bunch of issues having to do with what happens here in the Legislature and what happens generally within the government. Lo and behold, after gaining inside knowledge about what happens in this place and what the policies of the government are, all of a sudden he ends up as a paid lobbyist for Bruce. Now, surprise, surprise, Bruce gets a \$6.5-billion deal by the provincial government to refurbish Bruce—as Howard would call it, the fixer-upper at Bruce—where they’re going to refit a number of generators at the Bruce nuclear station.

It’s just interesting that the government doesn’t seem to see this as a problem. It’s OK for inside staffers—good, loyal Liberal partisans—to come into government, to be in key positions, gather information, know what the government direction is, and then all of a sudden it’s OK for them to leave and become paid lobbyists for whom-ever. In this particular case, Mr. Lopinski, who was a key adviser to the Premier—I think “director of issues” was his actual title—ends up going from the Premier’s office in the know, knows what’s going on in the nuclear file, and all of a sudden gets big bucks working for—I think it was Hill and Knowlton where he ended up, and at Hill and Knowlton getting big bucks to help their customer, Bruce Power, to lobby the government to get dollars. And all of a sudden it happens.

What I find really remarkable—well, I don’t find it remarkable. I find it—I can’t say it because it would be unparliamentary, and I don’t want to be unparliamentary. You know me; I’m a great one for making sure I keep the decorum of this House when it comes to what I say. But what I find interesting is that in opposition, when the Tories were there and they passed their legislation on lobbyist registration, the Liberals were jumping up all over the place saying, “Oh, my God, it’s terrible. You’ve got to stop this.” You had Michael Colle—I remember him standing up in the House: “Oh, my God, you can’t allow this to happen. Insiders have inside information and they’re going to profit.”

Dalton McGuinty was up in the House asking questions to both Premier Harris and eventually Premier Eves.

Most of the ministers who are in cabinet now were in the opposition and really decried the Conservatives when it came to what they did on lobbyist registration, saying it didn't go far enough. They were really upset. I think the only thing they were upset about was that they couldn't get into power themselves at the time and help their friends. Now that they're there, oops, "It's OK. No, no, we don't need that kind of legislation. We have to trust these people because they'll do all the right things."

At the end of the day, I say no wonder voters are cynical. We're seeing this pattern develop in Canada over the years and, I would argue, in most of the democratic world, where more and more voters are disconnecting from politics and politicians because they look at this kind of stuff and say, "Oh, my God, look at that. There they go again. Oh, well, what do you expect? Gomery? All right, they passed an envelope of thousands of dollars; more Liberal friends got payoffs. It's more of the same." They say, "I'm going to stay home, and I'm not going to vote."

I'm saying, at the end of the day, the very people who could make the difference in sending a message to politicians not to do this are the very people who stay home and don't vote. This serves the interest, I would argue, of the Liberal Party of Canada and the Liberal Party of Ontario. They like it when you have low voter turnout, because the people who show up are those who are partisan, people like you and I who are engaged in the political process, who live and breathe this, or at least are mildly interested. Those are the people who go and vote. So it's no wonder we keep perpetuating the same problem, when the very voters who can make a difference and say, "Stop this kind of stuff. We don't like what happened with Gomery. We don't like that the Liberals did what they did with taxpayers' dollars, paying off their friends. We don't like the idea of insiders of the Liberal Party who are staffers to the government going out and working for the private sector and costing the taxpayers a lot of money on the other end"—the only way to stop that is for voters to say, "Enough is enough. I'm not just going to stay home and say 'I'm mad and I'm not going because all politicians are the same.'"

Go to the ballot box and vote for the party or the candidate that you think is going to make a difference and not do that. Send a message, at the very least. Can you imagine if, at the January 23 election, all the people who are dissatisfied with government, who say, "All politicians are the same. They're on the payoff. They're not looking out for my interests," would get up one day—almost 50% of entitled voters in this country, because we're down to about a 50% turnout—and say, "I'm going to go and vote for one of the parties in opposition to the Liberals in order to make sure that I send a message"?

I would argue, vote for Jack Layton; vote for the NDP. Vote for Carol Hughes up in Kapuskasing. Vote for Charlie Angus in Timmins-James Bay. I think that would be a good message to send, because it would mean that the Liberals would have to take the public seriously for a change—the Liberal government in Ottawa, which thinks

that it's their God-inherent right to be government. Imagine, Canada would have a government other than a Liberal government. My God, they should just have a constitutional change so they're always the government. Imagine if you sent that message. All of a sudden, every party would have to take voters seriously because the message sent by Canadians would be, "Hey, you can't get away with this stuff."

I think it's rather sad. When governments like the Dalton McGuinty government do what they've done, allowing political insiders to go and work as lobbyists, lobbying the very government they worked for for money, where they know what the inside scoop is, it really sends a terrible, terrible message. I just say that, at some point, voters have got to stop this "I'm not going to go out and vote" thing and get out and vote and make a difference. At the end of the day, it would make a difference.

The other thing I want to touch on very quickly has to do partly with David MacNaughton, who was the former principal secretary to Dalton McGuinty and who now works in the nuclear industry. I think he's involved with the Candu reactor. It gives me a chance to say something that has not been said by many people, but I think it needs to be said: This government is going down the road of developing new nuclear power generation in Ontario, even though we know that, every time we've gone down this road, it has cost the taxpayers up to three times as much money as what the estimates said. If you remember Darlington, by the end of the day it was three times higher in cost than it was supposed to be in the very first place. Now we're going to say that \$40 billion worth of generation could end up costing taxpayers up to \$120 billion.

Aside from all the other issues, there's one thing I want to put on the record. This government is saying, "We're not necessarily going to go to Candu reactors." Not that I'm a big fan of nuclear power, but hang on a second, you guys. You'd better understand what you're saying. I know a little bit about this. I'm an electrician by trade, and a technologist as well. There are a couple of things that you've got to take into consideration: Candu technology is one of the only technologies with which you cannot produce weapons-grade plutonium. Did you know that? If you buy a French reactor or an American reactor, you can take the spent plutonium and make weapons-grade plutonium with the residual waste of those reactors. Candu is one of the only technologies that doesn't allow that to happen because of the technology we developed. Canada believed that we had to design nuclear reactors in such a way that people would not use the spent fuel in order to make weapons of mass destruction, as George Bush likes to call them. So do we as a province, if we ever went down this road—and I'm not in favour of going there—really want to say that we're going to a French-style reactor or an American-style reactor whose spent fuel can be used to make nuclear weapons? I don't believe for a second that Canada or Ontario is in the business of making nuclear bombs, but my point is that we should not be supporting that kind of

technology. The second thing is, I want to say very clearly for the record, that I am not in favour of this government going down a nuclear path.

Here's the other issue, and this is how dumb this is: There are currently within the Ontario hydro system technicians, engineers and specialists who understand our current technology used in nuclear reactors, the Candu. If you suddenly go out and say, as Premier Dalton McGuinty has, "Oh, well, we're open to anything. We'll buy a French reactor. We'll buy an American reactor. God, we'll even buy a Russian reactor"—remember Chernobyl?

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My point is that the technology to keep those reactors going has a whole infrastructure behind it. If you bring in a new technology, you have to hire people from outside of Canada who know something about that form of technology and how it works and how the machinery works. So you will end up with a more expensive infrastructure because you will not be able to use the one we have here now, which is the Candu infrastructure, as far as technology goes. You will have to import all kinds of people to do the training and support that are necessary to support the new technology, whatever it might be: French, Russian, American or whatever. I'm saying to the government, you're wrong to go down the nuclear path in the first place, but you're even more stupid to go down the road of saying, "We're open to any kind of technology," on the principles that I've mentioned: (1) You don't want to build a second infrastructure to support a technology that we don't currently support in Ontario, because we support Candu; and (2) does Ontario really want to send the message that we're for buying reactors whose spent fuel you could use to make bombs? I think it's a pretty dumb thing.

The government would be best served to follow the advice that Howard Hampton has put forward, that we need to do a number of things. There's not one answer for the energy crunch that we're in. We have to deal with the whole issue of energy efficiencies. There's all kinds of stuff we can do around insulating buildings and utilizing energy that would really go a long way to lowering the crunch.

We have to deal with the issue of other generation. There are all kinds of different technologies we can use that are a lot safer.

There's a whole issue of run-of-the-river generation that my good friend Len Wood, who's here today, would know very well. It's been used very successfully in his old riding of Cochrane, now Timmins-James Bay. There is minimal impact on the environment, it is very reliable, it works, it is there for a long time and it is able to go into the base or peak load, depending what river you're into.

The issue of wind generation could be used. We have to look at how we can subsidize the construction of wind generation and develop the capacity, as a province, to build that particular technology here in Ontario. I look at James Bay—Len Wood would know well—at the communities of Peawanuck and others that have to generate

electricity by diesel. What a dumb way to do it. If Ontario were in the position of saying, "We will assist those First Nations who use diesel generation for electricity to build windmills to augment their capacity to lower their reliance on diesel," that would go a long way. Peawanuck, Attawapiskat, Martin Falls and other communities would be absolutely ecstatic. Imagine our old friend Eli Moonias—do you remember Eli, Len?—Chief of Martin Falls, I think the longest-serving chief in NAN territory, has been on that for a long time. He says, "I'm tired of paying." They're paying over 25 cents per kilowatt of electricity in Martin Falls. Certainly you can put wind generation in that community for less than that. There are things that the government can do.

Back to the point of this motion: I think the government should do and say what it did in opposition. In opposition they said, "We need tough legislation that will stop, at the end of the day, the influence of political insiders going off to work in the private sector as lobbyists." There should be legislation that says there's a cooling-off period of at least a year or two so that people have some distance between themselves and a knowledge of what goes on in government before they come back, because the temptation is there. If you're in the nuclear industry or whatever industry and you're looking for a paid lobbyist and, "If I talk to the principal secretary to the Premier and offer him or her enough money, they're going to work for me a day after they leave the Premier's office," you've got a pretty good in. They know all the political staffers and they've got all the connections. They have the personal connection with the Premier, with cabinet ministers, with backbenchers and others. I think it's a temptation that you have to remove. Dalton McGuinty was right to ask, when in opposition, that the government do that. Now that he's government, he says, "Oh, well. I don't know. We have to trust these people."

I just say, shame on Dalton McGuinty. He should do what he said he was going to do in opposition. This is an example of another broken Liberal promise.

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I'm pleased to rise in support of this resolution. I want to say at the outset that I will be supporting it. I would like to bring to the attention of the Legislature, as well as the public, further to the comments by my colleague for Kitchener-Waterloo, that the previous government did introduce legislation to this House that dealt with issues of conflict of interest. I have here a copy of the directive issued by the Management Board Secretariat that deals with the Conflict of Interest and Post-Service Directive. While, as the member for Kitchener-Waterloo indicated, this is primarily related to members of the public service, it does, in fact, capture precisely the issue that Mr. Hampton is addressing in his resolution.

The member for Kitchener-Waterloo read the definition of "conflict," and she also referred to section 3 of this directive, which deals specifically with post-service responsibilities. What she didn't do and what I'd like to add to the record is that there is an appendix A attached to this directive. Appendix A makes very specific reference to the additional members of the staff,

and it deals with those individuals who are, and have been, employed by the Ontario SuperBuild Corp. It goes on to refer to appendix B, which is part of this directive. Appendix B deals with positions that may be involved in one or more privatization matters. We wanted, as a government, to capture all of that.

Here is the issue that I believe Mr. Hampton is attempting to capture in his resolution, and it's appendix C of the directive. It refers to "Senior positions in the Office of the Premier and ministers' offices (or positions of equivalent responsibility) that are designated as being subject to the post-service restrictions as detailed in Part 3." It very clearly lists:

"a. In the Office of the Premier:

"(i) chief of staff;

"(ii) principal secretary;

"(iii) department heads and staff equivalent to department heads;

"(iv) staff in the policy department, except administrative staff."

Under section B of this appendix it refers to ministers' offices and speaks about executive assistants; and special assistants:

"—legislative assistants;

"—press secretary/communications assistant;

"—policy advisers.

"(iii) any other person employed in a minister's office in a senior position whose duties routinely involve advising the minister or any other official or employee of the crown."

I'm not sure if it's a matter of the leader of the third party not having done his research to determine that, in fact, all of the employees to whom he was referring in his debate are already caught under the responsibilities and the requirements of this directive, so this isn't a matter of requiring additional legislation. It's not a matter of calling on the government to implement some new statute or issue new directives; really what it is about is calling on this government to simply enforce a directive that is in black and white today, which very clearly states that individuals who are employed in the Premier's office in any of these capacities are restricted from taking on the kind of lobbying assignments or employment or be engaged in any of those activities to which the leader of the third party referred.

What we have here is an example of a government that simply is refusing to enforce the directive that's already in place. I join with the leader of the third party. I will certainly vote in favour of this resolution because it reaffirms this 12-month period of time that's already contained in the guidelines that, surely, the government would want to comply with. I call on the Premier, I call on this government to simply enforce the guidelines that are in place today and, if they choose not to, to provide an explanation to this House as to why they are not enforcing those requirements.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate. I can't imagine any member of this House not supporting the resolution. But at the end of the day, what is important here is that the Premier enforce the guide-

lines and ensure that the people who have worked for him, or in any minister's office, comply with these regulations that are in place today.

1150

Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek): I'm pleased to speak to this resolution. It's interesting, because what I have learned in my role in the media and my role in politics is that there's a big difference between substance and optics. Optics are something quite malleable and open to spin and manipulation, and substance is quite another thing. While this is worded in a fashion of, "Of course, why can't you support something like this?" I'll tell you what I don't support: I don't support the tone of this.

We're our own worst enemies in politics. You wonder why people out there are a little jaded, a little ticked off, and are throwing up their hands and going, "Oh, those guys. Oh, you guys. The whole lot of you." It's because people get up here like monkeys with machine guns and spray misinformation and spray things that malign people and indicate that things are all terribly seamy and awful and everybody is on the take.

Do you know what? My experience here at Queen's Park—I've been here for two years—is that I would say the vast majority of members in this House are here for the right reason. They are here because they believe in something and have become political as a result, and so are the people who are working in the halls and offices throughout this area.

I am actually having my faith in humanity and politics restored. People might find that quite surprising, but it's because I am running into people who work very hard, often just for the sake of issues they believe in, and they are not on the take. That's my experience, from the private sector to here, and I would say, that's in the civil service and on the political side. I am finding good, honest, hard-working people.

The tone of this resolution maligns people. That's the optics of it: "Great. The usual game. You guys, you're terrible. You're dreadful. You're all on the take." So we've just made everybody a little more jaded, a little more cynical out there. That's what we've accomplished with this resolution so far this morning.

Substantively, there are a number of things in place already that deal with this issue, and new ones have been brought in by our government. There are very strict rules governing public servants and post-service activities, and there is a Conflict of Interest Commissioner. There is conflict of interest in vendors' rules and regulations, all contracts having conflict-of-interest clauses. There's an increased level of accountability in government advertising. There is a ban on partisan advertising, which the NDP voted against.

I want to talk quickly about the Advertising Review Board—one second about this. The man who created the Advertising Review Board was the communications director for Bill Davis. But they didn't bring it in. Peterson recognized the intelligence of this man, G. Campbell McDonald. He recognized the non-partisan

nature of what he was trying to do and made him the founding chairman of the ARB. That is an organization that helps and has helped successive governments in here to keep things at arm's length and of a non-partisan nature.

I'm going to leave our last few seconds for my colleague here from ADFA.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I don't have a lot of extra time to speak here today, but I want to say that I will be supporting the resolution by Mr. Hampton. I think the whole area of lobbying governments needs to be—I think we're seeing a stronger growth all the time in this particular area and we're becoming much more Americanized as we go down the path with our political parties and our system here in Ontario. I hate to think of some of the things that have actually happened because of the influence that a minister, a Premier or an organization may have on a particular political party.

I think of June 2004 when the Honourable Sandra Pupatello, the Minister of Community and Social Services, spoke to Community Living Ontario. To a round of applause, she told the organization that she would close down the three remaining regional centres in Ontario, and that was without any consultation whatsoever with parents.

I wanted to put on the record that just this week, on December 12 and 13, in Ottawa, the Superior Court of Justice heard the case and actually put forward a stay for at least 30 days for a future decision by the court. In the meantime, it has cost these families a tremendous amount of money to fight the legal case. On top of that, they've had to battle a team of lawyers from the provincial government. I think it totals approximately 12 people who are up in Ottawa fighting to make sure that we can evict the most vulnerable people in our society from their homes.

I've just got a few seconds left. I want to say a few thank-yous today. First of all, I want to thank and congratulate the pages for a job well done. I think they're a great group of kids. I also want to, on behalf of the Huronia Helpers, the people who represent the parents, families and friends of the clients at the Huronia Regional Centre—I want to thank them for the hard work they've done and for a job well done and wish them all the best in the future. I also want to say that we have with us Randy Panchoo, who is an employee here at Queen's Park, a very friendly guy; you see him around. His mother, Clefida, is here in Canada from Grenada, and I wanted to wish Clefida Panchoo a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I hope she has really enjoyed her time in Canada.

Thank you very much for this opportunity.

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot): I was here even longer ago than my friend from Peterborough: back in 1975-77. Since then, there has evolved a system which has worked very well.

I don't want to support this motion, because I value public service. I don't want to say to people who have

chosen public service, "That was a mistake. You shouldn't have done that because you're going to be penalized." I don't want to say to people, "Your expertise doesn't count because you can't use it, and the skills you've acquired and the knowledge you've gained aren't transferable." That's not fair, that's not just and that's not the way we do things in a country like Canada, where we have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

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

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
AND HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT
AMENDMENT ACT (ASSISTANCE TO
MUNICIPALITIES), 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR
L'AMÉNAGEMENT DES VOIES
PUBLIQUES ET DES TRANSPORTS EN
COMMUN (AIDE AUX MUNICIPALITÉS)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona): We will deal first with ballot item number 15, standing in the name of Mr. Yakabuski. The member has moved second reading of Bill 3, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to the assistance that the Minister provides to municipalities. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell, which we'll do after we deal with the next question.

LOBBYISTS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona): Mr. Hampton has moved private member's resolution number 9. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1200 to 1205.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
AND HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT
AMENDMENT ACT (ASSISTANCE TO
MUNICIPALITIES), 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR
L'AMÉNAGEMENT DES VOIES
PUBLIQUES ET DES TRANSPORTS EN
COMMUN (AIDE AUX MUNICIPALITÉS)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona): Mr. Yakabuski has moved second reading of Bill 3.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Bisson, Gilles	Leal, Jeff	Scott, Laurie
Brownell, Jim	Levac, Dave	Van Bommel, Maria
Dunlop, Garfield	Marchese, Rosario	Wilkinson, John
Hampton, Howard	Martel, Shelley	Wilson, Jim
Hoy, Pat	Mauro, Bill	Yakabuski, John
Hudak, Tim	McMeekin, Ted	
Klees, Frank	Miller, Norm	

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please rise.

Nays

Arthurs, Wayne	Marsales, Judy	Racco, Mario G.
Balkissoon, Bas	McNeely, Phil	Smitherman, George
Delaney, Bob	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Zimmer, David
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Prue, Michael	
Kwinter, Monte	Qaadri, Shafiq	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 25; the nays are 13.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to standing order 96, the bill is referred to the committee of the whole House.

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): The standing committee on justice policy, please.

The Acting Speaker: Shall this bill be referred to the standing committee on justice policy? Agreed.

We will now open the door for 30 seconds.

LOBBYISTS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona): Mr. Hampton has moved private member's notice of motion number 9.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
Barrett, Toby	Kormos, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Scott, Laurie
Dunlop, Garfield	Martel, Shelley	Wilson, Jim
Hampton, Howard	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.	

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please rise.

Nays

Arthurs, Wayne	Leal, Jeff	Qaadri, Shafiq
Balkissoon, Bas	Levac, Dave	Racco, Mario G.
Brownell, Jim	Marsales, Judy	Smitherman, George
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Van Bommel, Maria
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted	Wilkinson, John
Hoy, Pat	McNeely, Phil	Zimmer, David
Kwinter, Monte	Millroy, John	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Mossop, Jennifer F.	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 17; the nays are 22.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, I do now leave the chair. The House will resume at 1:30 p.m. today.

The House recessed from 1210 to 1330.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**DIABETES**

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): This morning, I was pleased to attend the Canadian Diabetes Association's Healthy for the Holidays Breakfast, promoting healthy lifestyles to prevent diabetes, here at Queen's Park.

Over 700,000 Ontarians currently live with diabetes, and another 53,000 people in our province are diagnosed with the disease every year. These people face annual costs for medications that are two to three times greater than for those without diabetes. We all know that the costs for those with diabetes and diabetes-related complications are projected to grow 78% by 2016.

Earlier this month, the Canadian Diabetes Association released its report for 2005, entitled *The Serious Face of Diabetes in Canada*. According to the report, the single greatest challenge for Canadians living with diabetes is affordability and the access to the diabetes medications, devices and supplies they need to reduce the risk of costly health complications.

They have presented recommendations to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Two of the recommendations are:

- (1) Reduce the waiting times for structured diabetes education and care in the province by improving access; and
- (2) Improve access to eye exams and treatment of retinal complications.

Unfortunately, we know that wait times are not decreasing and that optometry services have been delisted. It is important to listen to the recommendations of this report.

CAREFIRST COMMUNITY

Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill): Last Friday, I had the pleasure to attend the Carefirst volunteer recognition night and holiday party. The Carefirst Community is a non-profit social service agency serving upwards of 6,500 clients a year, with the help of over 1,200 active volunteers.

Established in 1976, its membership is primarily made up of senior Chinese Canadians, although their services are available to anyone in need of them. They provide a wide range of services to their clients, including Meals on Wheels and home care as well as social and recreation events in a program to promote active lifestyles, known as the wellness program.

Throughout the evening, the Carefirst Community members entertained us with singing and dancing to Chinese and Canadian music. Many of these people have not been in our country very long, but it was clear that they are very proud to be Canadians and Ontarians. The event brought together 450 people and raised funds for a proposed multi-purpose facility for seniors and youths.

I would like to commend the Carefirst Community and the volunteers for the support and generosity they provide to people across the GTA.

This is a good example of the type of social activity—seniors entertaining themselves, and us—that this House should be much in favour of assisting and promoting. That is the way to go.

BRIAN ADKIN

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): On January 7, people will gather at the Holiday Inn Select at the Toronto airport to honour Staff Sergeant Brian Adkin on the occasion of his retirement from the OPP.

Brian was a member of the OPP for 32 years and had an outstanding career serving in many locations throughout Ontario. But he is unquestionably best known for his time as president of the Ontario Provincial Police Association. Brian served from 1994 to October 2005 and holds the distinction of being the longest-serving OPPA president.

As Solicitor General and Minister of Public Safety, I had the opportunity of working directly with Brian, and over the course of six years our relationship became one of mutual respect and, ultimately, friendship.

Brian always had the best interests of his members and the improvement of public safety at the forefront of his agenda. We frequently had the same goals in mind, but occasionally disagreed on the way to get there. Fortunately, those disagreements were infrequent, as Brian is a difficult guy to disagree with. At 6'6", he can be very persuasive. In later years, even on those rare occasions when we agreed to disagree, we knew we'd done our best, with the public interest always uppermost, and we could put it behind us with a good cigar and a wee dram of scotch.

On behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus and our leader, John Tory, I want to extend our congratulations to Brian on an outstanding career and to wish him and his wife, Janet, all the best for the retirement years ahead.

WATER RESOURCES AGREEMENTS

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): I rise in the House today to recognize our government's historic accomplishment this past week. Premier McGuinty and Minister Ramsay, alongside the province of Quebec and eight states that border on the Great Lakes, signed the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement. These agreements include a good-faith commitment between the provinces and eight states,

as well as a binding compact between the states alone. Ontario is already a leader in implementing regulations to protect our water basins. This agreement between provinces and states proves that our government is committed to protecting our environment and considers the health of Ontarians and of all our neighbours to be a top priority.

The agreement signed on Tuesday bans diversions, with strictly regulated exceptions for communities that straddle the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River basin boundary. The province already regulates water withdrawals and protects natural ecosystems, but these agreements ensure similar protection from all Great Lakes jurisdictions. It will also strengthen water conservation through programs in each state and province involved, as well as establish new environmental standards for regulating water uses across the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River basin states and provinces. The Great Lakes form part of a delicate eco-system which needs to be protected for the use of future generations. It is important to achieve regional collaboration on this initiative, since it affects 10 different regions in two separate countries. Such co-operation is difficult to negotiate, and I am proud that our government was instrumental in bringing this agreement to fruition.

PREMIER'S ATTENDANCE

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): It is improper and unparliamentary to refer to a member's absence. However, in view of this government's own legislation—An Act to amend the Executive Council Act, Bill 17, by Michael Bryant, the Attorney General of pit bulls and fouled-up appeals—it is necessary to reflect upon the attendance of cabinet ministers. The act, in fact, compels their attendance. I want to announce clearly that Mary Anne Chambers is the undoubted winner of this fanciful lottery, having been here for 97% of question period.

A dismal failure has been the Premier. Although his Web site states that he was here for, oh, 68% of the time, his Web site is Harnicking the people of Ontario. We did the numbers, and he was here for only 63% of the time. I say to the Premier that it's time for him to obey his own law. He knows that there's a monetary penalty imposed by Bill 17 for not being here often enough to work, receiving your full pay. It's time for the Premier to ante up. His absence had better cost him some money, because it's his government that passed this phoney bill. It's time for the Premier to cough up. Put the money on the table. Put the money where your mouth is, Premier.

LOUISE HARRIS

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I rise today to pay tribute to an individual who has served the people of Ontario with distinction in various capacities for 30 years, most of them here at Queen's Park. Louise Harris, during her time at Queen's Park, has worked in both government and opposition, with six party leaders, directly for three MPPs and served as chief of staff in two minis-

tries. She has the distinction of working in one of the first constituency offices in Ontario, starting in 1975.

While special assistant to the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable James Snow, it is little known that Louise was the driving force behind implementing mandatory child car seats in Ontario. In 2002, Louise assumed responsibilities as my chief of staff in the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, and in 2003 found herself in the same office in which she had started her career in 1975, only this time not as a special assistant but as my chief of staff in the Ministry of Transportation.

1340

In 2003, Louise was honoured by the Ontario PC Party with the Trillium award for the distinction as Campaign Manager of the Year for her outstanding job of getting the member for the riding of Oak Ridges elected for a third time.

I have been privileged to work with Louise Harris throughout my time as an elected member. I and the Ontario PC caucus have had the benefit of her experience and untiring dedication. Above all, Louise will be remembered for her unwavering loyalty.

I ask all members of the House to join me in expressing our appreciation to Louise and to wish her well as she assumes her new responsibilities as the director of advocacy, government relations and communications with the Ontario Bar Association.

Thank you, Louise Harris. Your service and loyalty will not be forgotten. Godspeed.

ALIGHT AT NIGHT

Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh): The holiday season is almost upon us. It's time for the people of Ontario to enjoy their families, to relax and to appreciate the subtle joys in life. I know that I will be taking my family to Upper Canada Village in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh to experience the beauty and tranquility of the Alight at Night festival.

If any of you have thoughts about discovering or re-discovering Upper Canada Village, now is the time. Away from the hustle and bustle of big-city life, Upper Canada Village recreates life in the 1860s village. Located in Morrisburg, it is conveniently accessible via Highway 401.

Far from the lights of metropolitan night, every star is visible. Take your family in a horse-drawn carriage through the serene streets of the village, past historic buildings twinkling with Christmas lights. Breathe in the fresh air laced with the scent from a wood stove, inviting you to the village bakery for freshly baked bread.

Give yourself a special gift this year: Partake in an experience that captures all the best qualities of rural Ontario—its history, its charm and its unique character. While you are in the region, you could even catch a play, such as the classic "Anne" of Anne of Green Gables fame, being performed at the Upper Canada Playhouse in Morrisburg.

I just had the opportunity of walking over to the House, and I met one of Minister Bradley's staff members. She indicated to me that she is heading down to the Alight at Night festival this weekend. That's going to be an exciting time for her.

Whatever your interests this season, you can find something to satisfy them in eastern Ontario. It's "Yours to Discover," as the motto goes. Thank you, and best wishes for the holiday season.

FIREFIGHTERS' MEMORIAL

Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre): I rise this afternoon to recognize the important contribution made by firefighters in our province. Each and every day, these brave men and women risk their lives to protect the safety of others. Most amazingly of all, those who they risk their lives for are usually complete strangers.

On Saturday, November 12, along with hundreds of others from Waterloo region and across the province, I attended an event in my riding to honour those firefighters who have paid the ultimate price. A 13-foot bronze statute sculpted by local artist Timothy P. Schmalz entitled Protecting the Memory was unveiled in a local Kitchener park, along with a new playground that will teach children about fire safety. This statute is in memory of Kitchener's fallen firefighters as well as the 343 New York firefighters who lost their lives on September 11, 2001. In fact, the statue is the first permanent remembrance outside the United States to pay tribute to these courageous men and women.

I wish to congratulate the Kitchener Fallen Firefighters Memorial Committee for their efforts, beginning with its honorary chair, Peter Benninger of Coldwell Banker Peter Benninger Realty, as well as chair Kevin Schmalz, Randy Kalan, Peter McGough, Darcy Metzger and Steve Jones. It was only through their tireless efforts that this dream of a permanent memorial could become a reality.

We are a society in need of heroes, and I thank all those involved for providing us with role models who were prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice.

HOLIDAY MESSAGE

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): From time to time, we're asked to read things and do a few things in this chamber. I want to tell you, I think this one probably takes the cake, so I'm apologizing in advance for this.

This is a little jingle that was written by a Liberal assistant somewhere in the back offices who I think probably had a little too much time on his hands. Here it goes:

"The Night before Christmas

"Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the land,

"Lots of creatures were stirring; a federal election is at hand!

"The right stockings were hung by the chimney with care,

“Harper hoped that Flaherty and Baird soon would be there.

“John Tory was nestled, snug in his Rosedale bed,

“While visions of the right wing trounced through his head.

“The problem he wrestled caused him much dismay,

“That strong right-wing rump always got in his way.

“Now that Flaherty and Baird made their exit all right,

“John thought he could win the ‘Toronto guy’ fight.

“But Ontarians know when something’s amiss.

“They remember the old days, with scary Mike Harris.

“So Harper be warned, John Tory here too—

“We watch what you say, and we know what you do.

“But enough of this jingle. ’Tis Christmas that nears;

“We should celebrate peace and give thanks for the year.

“I wish all in this House well, as we break for some cheer—

“I just had to remind Santa, John Tory isn’t what he appears.”

I apologized in advance, and I apologize afterwards— a little bit of levity for the House.

In all seriousness, I want to wish each and every member a very happy holiday and all the best for 2007.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I would like to have members acknowledge the fact that today will be the last day that we are served by this particular group of pages. I know all members would want to join me in congratulating them on their hard work and on their perseverance. I know they would prefer to be here through the holidays, but the members are going home.

Applause.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MOTOR VEHICLE ORIGIN AND COMPONENTS DISCLOSURE ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 SUR LA DIVULGATION DE RENSEIGNEMENTS CONCERNANT L’ORIGINE ET LES PIÈCES DE VÉHICULES AUTOMOBILES

Mr. Ouellette moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 55, An Act to require the disclosure of the country of origin and the components of motor vehicles sold in Ontario / Projet de loi 55, Loi exigeant la divulgation du pays d’origine et de la liste des pièces des véhicules automobiles vendus en Ontario.

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

The member may have a brief statement.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): This bill requires advertisers and persons or bodies that sell or offer to sell motor vehicles in Ontario to clearly indicate in the advertising and sales contracts the country in which the vehicle and its constituent components were produced and the portion of the vehicle that each component makes up. This bill is designed to aid and further Made in Ontario products and work to level the playing field in auto sales.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À LA GESTION DES SITUATIONS D’URGENCE

Mr. Kwinter moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 56, An Act to amend the Emergency Management Act, the Employment Standards Act, 2000 and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 56, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la gestion des situations d’urgence, la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d’emploi et la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l’assurance contre les accidents du travail.

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

The minister may have a brief statement.

Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services): I’ll make a statement during ministerial statements.

1350

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I rise to seek unanimous consent for second and third reading of my Bill 45, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to protect workers from harassment in the workplace.

The Speaker: Agreed? I heard a no.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I would like to bring members’ attention to a guest we have in our members’ gallery east: the honourable Steve Mahoney, the member for Mississauga West in the 34th and 35th Parliaments.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: With your indulgence, I’d also like to recognize on behalf of the House the Humberwood Sikh Seniors and the Democratic Sikh Seniors who join us in the gallery here.

Mr. Tim Peterson (Mississauga South): On another profound point of privilege, Mr. Speaker: Everyone knows that in Mississauga South the air is cleaner, the water is purer and the men are stronger. A delegation from Mississauga South is led by Peter Smith, the chairman of GO Transit and a Member of the Order of Canada, and several other distinguished businessmen. If you’ll all rise and be acknowledged, it would be appreciated.

The Speaker: Thank you. Welcome.

Motions? The Government House Leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I do not have any motions for night sittings this evening.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

PROGRÈS DU GOUVERNEMENT

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): Mr. Speaker, as the temperature dipped below minus 15 this week, I couldn't help but think of your predecessor, who, is at this very moment, struggling to cope with the heat of the Dominican Republic. He will always have our affection but I'm not sure he'll be getting a card from me this year.

I rise, as this House is preparing to adjourn for the holidays, to review the results that we have achieved together in 2005 on behalf of the people of Ontario.

This is the year in which we launched Reaching Higher, a \$6.2-billion investment in higher quality, more accessibility and greater accountability in our universities, colleges and training programs.

In our schools we have established peace and stability. We have started to repair the buildings and we have renewed the spirit of learning in our public schools. We are reducing class sizes in the early grades, improving teacher training and providing extra help for struggling students, and test scores in reading, writing and math are up.

In our high schools we have launched an ambitious plan to increase the graduation rate that would require students to keep learning, whether in a classroom, workplace setting or apprenticeship, at least until age 18, while providing young people with the resources that they need to succeed.

In health care we are tackling wait times by delivering more than 67,000 additional procedures in 2004-05 in five key areas. We've opened a new medical school in the north, launched 69 new family health teams and begun work on new hospitals. We've placed a new emphasis on health promotion and illness prevention with the creation of Ontario's first-ever Ministry of Health Promotion.

This has been the year in which we stood up for Ontario and helped to narrow the \$23-billion gap between what Ontarians contribute to the federal government and what they get back in programs and services.

Bien qu'il reste encore bien du travail à faire, notre campagne pour l'équité, pour un Ontario fort dans un Canada fort, a produit des résultats: de nouvelles possibilités pour les nouveaux arrivants au Canada, pour les travailleurs et travailleuses qui cherchent à se recycler et pour les familles qui sont à la recherche de garderies.

Although there is still work to be done, our campaign for fairness, for a strong Ontario and a strong Canada has

in fact yielded results: the opportunities for newcomers to Canada, for workers seeking retraining and for families seeking daycare.

In fact, Ontario has attracted \$5.5 billion in new investment in the auto sector, including the first new greenfield plant in a decade.

This House has considered historic legislation designed to end mandatory retirement, to treat municipalities with the respect they deserve and to give Toronto the autonomy it needs.

Our economy has created more than 215,000 jobs since October 2003 and we are working to keep Ontario's prosperity growing by modernizing our infrastructure and working to create a reliable supply of clean and affordable energy. And we are creating a culture of research and innovation, marked by the opening of MaRS right across the street this fall.

Hard-working Ontarians have powered an economy that has reduced our projected deficit for 2005-06 to \$2.4 billion, down from the \$5.5-billion deficit our government inherited.

We are always and ever very mindful, as well, of Ontario workers who have lost their jobs, and we pledge ourselves to work with them and their communities to ensure that both can enjoy prosperity.

Mais tant que les Ontariens chercheront du travail, que des élèves veulent acquérir des connaissances, que des patients auront besoin de soins, que des personnes vulnérables auront besoin d'aide ou que des familles seront inquiètes pour leur sécurité, nous avons des défis à relever et du travail à faire. Je sais que nous nous engageons tous et toutes à poursuivre ce travail au cours des mois et des années à venir.

Still, as long as there are Ontarians seeking work, students seeking knowledge, patients needing care, the vulnerable seeking help or families concerned for their safety, we have challenges to overcome and work to do. I know that we pledge—all of us—to continue this work in the months and years ahead.

Before I conclude, at a time of year when we traditionally count our blessings, I want to count three of Ontario's.

First, we are truly privileged to live in this, the finest province in the greatest country in the world. Our Canada has combined the wisdom of aboriginal peoples with what the British called peace, order and good government and what the French describe as liberty, equality and fraternity. We then mixed these values with the best the rest of the world has to offer: the Confucian philosophy of harmony from China, a doctrine of non-violence from India and a love of freedom and tolerance from those who knew war and even bigotry in Europe, to name just a few. In this way, we have together built something here that is uniquely, beautifully, even magically Canadian. We have every reason to celebrate, whatever its flaws, its magnificence.

Second, I want to acknowledge all members of this House. I want to wish you a joyous holiday season and thank you for your work. It takes a special combination of courage and commitment to public service to put your

name on a lawn sign and put yourself and your family on the line. An especially deep commitment is made by those, like Mr. Tory and Mr. Hampton, who seek and fulfill positions of leadership. While we may have our differences from time to time, as it should be in a parliamentary democracy, I know that every member of this House is dedicated to the people of this province.

That is whom I want to thank most of all: the people of Ontario. The progress we have made this year belongs to them, for they raise the families, they pay the taxes, they take the risks, they provide the jobs, they do the hard work. They make untold sacrifices. They do this to build a better life for their children and their children's children, and they make untold contributions to a stronger province and a better Canada for all of us.

The author Herman Melville once wrote: "We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibres, our actions run as causes and return to us as results." For the results that we have achieved this year, I thank the members of this House, but most of all, I thank the people of Ontario.

1400

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services): Today, I am honoured to introduce the Emergency Management Statute Law Amendment Act. This legislation, if passed, would change the way we approach emergency situations in Ontario.

First, let me express my personal gratitude to Commissioner of Emergency Management Julian Fantino, who continues to serve our province well. He is sitting in the members' east gallery. After a distinguished career as the chief of the Toronto Police Service, Commissioner Fantino took on the new challenge of ensuring that our province is emergency-ready. To that end, Commissioner Fantino is responsible for providing coordination and leadership in all aspects of the government's emergency management strategy.

This bill is based on Bill 138, which was developed by the standing committee on justice policy. The committee undertook extensive research to fully understand the issues. The committee worked hard to listen to and take advice from a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives from all levels of government, interested associations and the private sector.

We intended to call this committee bill for second reading but did not receive the required all-party support to do this. This bill is really too important to play politics over. Ontarians deserve effective measures that will allow their government to best protect them during times of emergency, and they deserve to have this as soon as possible. That's why we decided to make it a government bill. We have taken the lessons learned from the committee and incorporated a number of improvements to ensure that this bill strikes the right balance between

government protection of Ontario and the civil rights of all of its citizens.

Clearly, times are changing, and we must all get used to a new reality. We've learned that we are all vulnerable. The world has changed, and governments everywhere have been forced to change as well. Terror attacks such as the one in Madrid last year, the London bombings on July 7 and the attacks on western hotels in Jordan this year serve as reminders that terrorists can and will strike anywhere. Such events demand an unprecedented awareness and vigilance and a determined approach to deal with this new reality. We have to face the facts: Modern weaponry, travel, technology and the interconnected global economy have increased the scale of risk substantially, and threats to our safety come from a variety of sources.

We have also witnessed the crisis caused by the 2003 SARS outbreak in Toronto. Worldwide outbreaks of disease are now a reality. We hear almost daily on the news about the threat of a global pandemic, including the avian flu. And of course you remember the August 2003 power outage across the province. That was no terrorist act, yet once again we were reminded of how vulnerable we are.

Make no mistake: Ontario is a safe place in which to live, but in the presence of new global threats, we must make it safer, and that's what this bill is all about. It's a bill that will better equip us to respond to all types of emergencies in the future; and it's about working together.

The primary purpose of this bill is to provide emergency powers to the Lieutenant Governor in Council and to the Premier to deal with emergencies. The bill will amend the Emergency Management Act to further improve the province's ability to respond to all types of emergencies. The bill will help clarify under what conditions the province can declare an emergency.

It will provide authority to cabinet and government, including the ability to restrict travel or order evacuations; establish facilities for the care, welfare, safety and shelter of individuals, including emergency shelters and hospitals; fix prices for necessary goods, services and resources, and prohibit price-gouging; and widen job protection for people who are unable to work due to declared emergencies.

We need the legal authority to deploy relief and to help those who could become homeless to rebuild their lives following a catastrophe. Just like other jurisdictions around the world, we must add the further steps of creating the legal authority to support effective emergency management. Ontario must have effective emergency powers to respond to emergencies.

Ontario is the only jurisdiction in Canada without this type of emergency legislation. We need powers that allow us to get the job done, and done right, to keep our citizens, our communities and our economy safe.

Ontario is faced with tremendous challenges and limitless opportunities. We know Ontario can compete in the modern world, yet we would be short-sighted not to recognize that our fate is influenced by and tied to count-

less events beyond our borders. Our approach is not to reinvent the wheel. We can explore what's working and learn from the experience of others, and we have our own lessons and approaches to share with them.

Emergency management is an ongoing challenge and a critical one. But through the efforts of each one of us, we will rise to the challenge, because it's no exaggeration to say that what is at stake is the safety and well-being of our families, our friends, our communities, and even the world. Our future depends how well we as a society address those threats, seize the opportunities we have, and prepare for and respond to emergencies, regardless of their source, whenever and wherever they occur.

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): I'll respond briefly to the Minister of Community Safety. It's truly unfortunate that he comes into the House today and suggests that the opposition parties were the cause of Bill 138 not being called for second reading. That is ludicrous, and anybody who knows the workings of the House knows it is ludicrous. In fact, our party offered to work in a collaborative way to come up with a government bill that addressed these urgent issues in a timely manner, and that was rejected out of hand. There was never any response, and then we get comments like we heard today from the Minister of Community Safety, which do a disservice to the members of this House and put the lie to the positions they've taken in the past with respect to an open and collaborative Legislative Assembly. It's truly unfortunate.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): I'm going to respond to the statement of the Premier, and may I join him in saying to all members of the House that I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I look forward to being back here with other members of the House in the new year when we come back to our work in this place.

I agree with the Premier: This is a blessed place to live by any relative standard. The challenge, I think, is for governments to make sure that we can keep it that way, to make sure that people can maintain that hope that generation after generation has had and has seen fulfilled, namely, for them to be satisfied their children are going to have a higher standard of living and a better life in every single respect than they themselves had. I think that is the kind of government the people of this province deserve and the province itself deserves.

I have a statement here that goes through, talking about a series of issues, and I think, frankly, the results have been disappointing for the people of Ontario. They are things I have asked about in the House, and the Premier properly acknowledged that that is the job of the opposition party leaders: to ask those questions and to shine light on those things.

1410

We could talk about jobs and that fact that there are jobs being created in the province, but there are an awful

lot of jobs being lost at the same time, and families are affected by that. And when you come here and ask a simple question about when the plan is going to be brought forward to help those families and those communities, you don't get an answer. You don't get the sense there is an answer, which really would have just been a date.

When you come forward and ask about wait times, which, by the government's own supposedly reliable information, are supposed to be going down and in fact seem to be going up, there is no answer other than, "The information that we told you is reliable really isn't reliable."

When it comes to electricity, where promises were made that people would be protected, what we find is that there really is no plan and that people are faced with skyrocketing costs, which are having a negative impact on jobs and on the lives of individual Ontarians who are struggling to keep up.

When it comes to community safety, we had what I really thought was the most disappointing spectacle of all; namely, a summer unlike any we've seen and hopefully will never see again, but with silence from the government through most of the time in the course of the summer.

I had more comments to make on all those issues, but I want to put those aside and take the last couple of minutes to say this: While I accept at face value the words of the Premier with respect to the important role of the opposition party leaders and so on, I think we have a lot of work to do in terms of making this place work better for people, if we care about meeting the challenge of keeping this province the way it is and keeping that sense of hope alive for people that the next generation is going to have a life that is better than the one we've all experienced in this province.

That means we cannot afford, in my view, to cast aside the role, the ideas and the meaningful participation of any member of this Legislature—I'll pick the opposition leaders last and start with even the government members. I think it means we have to make this place work better, have more real, productive, open discussions about things where people aren't told that things are off the table and matters can't be discussed and so on. With the challenges we face, I don't think we can afford to minimize the contribution of any member of this place, or restrict what they can do or put down what they say or dismiss their ideas before they've even been given any consideration.

I think people are looking for us to make things work better collectively: to work together on developing a plan to respond to what has gone on with the layoffs; to work together to develop a plan to ensure community safety in neighbourhoods across Ontario. They want to see less of the partisanship, less of the jousting that goes on in this place and more results that people have developed collaboratively, between members of this House, between parties, between community leaders, union leaders, business leaders and average Ontarians. It starts

with leadership by example from this place. I don't think we are delivering that and, as a result, I don't think we're getting done as much as we could get done for the people of Ontario on these issues so that they can have that sense of hope, going forward, that the lives of their children and grandchildren will be better than their own.

I hope we can do better at this as we go into 2006. I'm prepared to do my part, and I hope we'll do it together.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I respond to the comments made by the Minister of Community Safety. On behalf of New Democrats I tell you, sir, what a load of unadulterated bull feathers you've left on the floor of this chamber today. You make Charlie Harnick look downright Diogenian with the statements you made during the course of your ministerial statement.

To suggest that somehow opposition parties haven't been eager to collaborate in developing emergency management at an effective level in this community, I tell you, sir, is beneath you.

You want to talk about emergency management? You make sure police forces are adequately resourced. Deliver on your promise to come up with a thousand cops—not 50-cent cops; fully paid-for cops. Quite frankly, the need across this province in terms of policing is now 1,700 cops for police services to deliver core services. You make sure that firefighters are adequately resourced in terms of staffing. You abandoned that issue—that file—a long time ago. You make sure that paramedics, the front-line emergency response personnel, have the tools and resources to do the job they are called upon to do.

I express embarrassment, on behalf of this House, for what you've done to your backbenchers David Zimmer and Laurel Broten, as she was then. They worked hard developing Bill 138. You promised them that their efforts would be given due effort in this House. Yet their bill, the bill that David Zimmer and Laurel Broten worked so hard on as backbenchers, has been abandoned. It's been left to linger on the order paper without your calling it for even the first day of second reading debate. Shame on you for attempting to imply that you were going to give effect to the role of backbenchers, when you have denied the effectiveness of your own backbenchers, never mind backbenchers in opposition parties.

We are going to be vigilant in terms of examining this bill. We are going to be adamant about the reality that real emergency management is getting firefighters, cops and paramedics out there in adequate levels of staffing with adequate tools, something that you and your government have failed to do over the course of two-plus years now.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): I want to take this opportunity to respond to the Premier

and to wish the Premier and all members of the Legislature happy holidays, and well-deserved holidays for many of us. But I also want to respond to some of the assertions that the Premier has made and say to the Premier, yes, we're all working toward a common purpose here. We recognize the style of parliamentary democracy. The government puts forward an agenda and opposition members critique that agenda, suggest improvements or, in some cases, suggest that the agenda is wrong-headed.

I want to say that I think some good things were accomplished over the last three months, but I also want to point out that a lot of people in Ontario were let down, and let me refer to some of those.

For example, I think a new medical school in northern Ontario is an excellent achievement. In that respect, I want to congratulate members of the former Conservative government for having the courage to make the decision and put in place the wheels so that would happen, because some of us have been campaigning, organizing and fighting elections on that issue for almost 20 years and it's nice to see it happen. I recognize the fact that it's happening now under a Liberal government, but the former Conservative government deserves recognition for having done much of the heavy lifting.

I want to say that, hopefully, like most Ontarians, I want to see wait times in our hospitals and medical clinics come down. So far, the evidence isn't there that they're coming down. So far, the evidence indicates that wait times are going up.

I want to say, yes, there may be new hospitals, but we need to recognize that fundamentally these will be private hospitals. They will be privately financed and privately controlled, and many of the services will be offered or provided by private, profit-driven corporations. If you put that concept to a test, most Ontarians do not approve of that.

I also think it's important that we acknowledge that, yes, 52,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs were lost in Ontario this year and many of those people are looking at some pretty difficult prospects. What I think was most painful was that when some communities came here to raise those issues, members of your government called those people “crybabies” and “whiners,” and we need to seriously reflect on that.

While I wish all members the very best of holidays, let's rededicate ourselves to doing a better job when we come back here in February.

DEFERRED VOTES

PRIVATE SECURITY AND INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES ACT, 2005 LOI DE 2005 SUR LES SERVICES PRIVÉS DE SÉCURITÉ ET D'ENQUÊTE

Deferred vote 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 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: All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Kular, Kuldip	Runciman, Robert W.
Arthurs, Wayne	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Balkissoon, Bas	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Bentley, Christopher	Levac, Dave	Scott, Laurie
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Marsales, Judy	Sergio, Mario
Bradley, James J.	Matthews, Deborah	Smith, Monique
Brotten, Laurel C.	McGuinty, Dalton	Smitherman, George
Bryant, Michael	McMeekin, Ted	Sterling, Norman W.
Caplan, David	McNeely, Phil	Takhar, Harinder S.
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Miller, Norm	Tascona, Joseph N.
Chudleigh, Ted	Milloy, John	Tory, John
Colle, Mike	Mitchell, Carol	Watson, Jim
Cordiano, Joseph	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wilkinson, John
Delaney, Bob	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wilson, Jim
Duguid, Brad	Peters, Steve	Witmer, Elizabeth
Duncan, Dwight	Peterson, Tim	Wong, Tony C.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Phillips, Gerry	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Gerretsen, John	Pupatello, Sandra	Yakabuski, John
Hoy, Pat	Qaadri, Shafiq	Zimmer, David
Jackson, Cameron	Racco, Mario G.	
Klees, Frank	Ramsay, David	

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

Nays

Hampton, Howard	Kormos, Peter	Martel, Shelley
Horwath, Andrea	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 61; the nays are 6.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

ECONOMIC POLICY

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier. Over the last couple of days, after many weeks of questioning, we've started to see some sympathy and just the lightest stirring from you and your government on the issue of the devastating job losses that have been taking place in family after family and community after community across the province. Yesterday, when I asked you a very simple but important question that concerns the livelihood of these thousands

of men and women, their families and their communities, you did not give me an answer.

Don't you think the 52,000 families dealing at this time of the year with layoffs in their lives, the loss of a paycheque and the devastation to their communities deserve an answer on this question, which is: On what specific date will you—your government—bring forward to this House the comprehensive action plan for these families and communities that this House endorsed last week? What date?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): Let me say that the leader of the official opposition does not have a monopoly on empathy for families which find themselves in difficult financial circumstances because they've lost their jobs. That is something that we feel very deeply on this side of the House. We remain very much engaged in this issue. I can tell you, one of the most important aspects of our plan to strengthen this economy has to do with strengthening the education and skills of the people of Ontario.

Now, the member might not like our plan. He continues to say that we don't have plans, but what he's really saying is that he doesn't like our plans. Our plan, in the face of globalization, is to put \$6.2 billion into our colleges, universities and apprenticeship programs, because we understand that what's going to attract investment, what's going to attract new jobs are highly skilled and educated workers. I have more to say in supplementary.

Mr. Tory: I say with the greatest of respect to the Premier that those investments, which may pay some dividends down the road, are doing nothing—they are doing nothing—for the people who are struggling to pay your health tax today. They're struggling to pay your hydro bills today; they're struggling to feed their families and clothe their children. That is why what I have been asking you about is something that is going to help these families and these communities now with the impact of the layoffs they are facing now in communities across this province. We've named them all over a period of weeks.

Recent additions to that list: Auto parts manufacturer Dana Corp. announced yesterday it's closing its Burlington plant—80 more people laid off; Dura Automotive in Bracebridge—48 employees laid off, 10% of their workforce; Abitibi confirmed yesterday it will close its mill in Kenora—390 people out of work.

These families and communities are looking for the plan your members voted with us last week to have. My question is simple: When is there going to be something that will provide some help and some hope for those families now?

1430

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: In addition to investing heavily in the skills and education of Ontarians, in Ontario youth in particular, we have also secured a brand new agreement with the federal government that will land \$1.4 billion more here in Ontario over the course of the next several years. We will use that money to invest in

the retraining of workers who may have lost their jobs or others who may be seeking to improve their skills.

I would ask Ontarians to carefully consider—I haven't seen any particular plan from the leader of the official opposition with respect to this issue—how cutting \$2.5 billion out of their health care will help Ontario families. He's also promised tax cuts on a number of fronts. I would ask them to consider the ensuing cuts that will necessarily mean to good-quality public services and how that will help Ontario families. We will continue to invest in their schools, in their health care—

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

Mr. Tory: It's the same old, same old: Pretend there isn't a problem, blame somebody else; blame me. You are the Premier; I'm the Leader of the Opposition. We will change that, because if you carry on on this course, where the best you can do—when you've been invested with the responsibility to lead the government of this province, when 52,000 families are affected by job losses, communities are devastated and people are deeply affected by this—is to have no answer as to what you can do except to say, "Over the next few years, we'll do this or that," that is not good enough.

ThyssenKrupp Budd in Kitchener—96 people next Friday, two days before Christmas, and 160 employees will follow in January; VSA automotive in Kitchener—150 people next Thursday, three days before Christmas; and for the new year, Guelph can look forward to 895 layoffs. All I have asked you is, when will you bring forward a plan that will deal right now with the dislocation and devastation being faced by these families and communities in Ontario? When are you going to do it, as Premier of Ontario?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I think it's important to understand that during the period from 1995 to 2003, the rate of unemployment in Ontario averaged 7.3%. Today, it is 6.1%, the lowest in some four or five years. October just passed: 21,200 net new jobs; November: 1,400 net new jobs. Since we took office, 215,700 net new jobs have been created in the province of Ontario. Procter and Gamble, in Belleville, just recently announced 100 full-time jobs; Kuntz Electroplating—60 new jobs in Kitchener; Research In Motion, KW—1,200 new employees; Christie Digital Systems in Kitchener—45 new employees; Koei, here in Toronto—200 new jobs; Ranbaxy Pharmaceuticals have just announced that they're creating a new headquarters in Mississauga.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): Again my question is to the Premier. While no one would disagree with responsible, effective measures to lower the dropout rate, when your education minister announced with much bravado that your government would force kids to stay in school, even against their will, he included penalties ranging from \$1,000 fines to suspension of drivers' licences in his scheme.

I want to quote from today's editorial in the Toronto Star, which said, "Without some indication that" coercive

steps work "in other jurisdictions, Kennedy needs to rethink this idea. How would he enforce it ... if a student got his licence, then stopped going to school?"

Premier, how will you enforce this?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): First of all, let me say that I wholeheartedly support this policy that has been initiated by our government. I'll tell you what motivates it, and I'm open to very constructive and positive advice that might be offered by my friend opposite. We believe that at the beginning of the 21st century, a 30% dropout rate in Ontario in a knowledge-based economy is, in a word, unacceptable. We are prepared to do whatever it takes to get that dropout rate down and get the graduation rate up. The Minister of Education has specifically pledged that we will put in place the necessary infrastructure, the necessary supports, the important new curriculum—a new high school major—to ensure that we can engage young people, that we can attract them, whether inside a traditional classroom setting or outside in an apprenticeship or workplace experience. But we will do what is essential to engage young people and make sure we are graduating more. It is essential, at the end of that, to say that we're serious about this, and making a driver's licence—

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

Mr. Tory: I agree with you that a 30% dropout rate is unacceptable. Let's look at the dropout rates in the states that suspend licences for poor school attendance: Alabama, 38% dropout rate; Georgia, 36% dropout rate currently; Texas estimates a dropout rate between 30% and 40%. Those are the states that suspend drivers' licences. According to the Education Commission of the States' March 2005 report, "Little research has been completed on the effect these types of laws have on truancy or dropout rates."

You've also announced that you propose to fine kids who have poor attendance. I don't know how you get kids who don't have any money to pay fines, but Ontario's Provincial Offences Act says that if a student can't pay your \$1,000 fine, then you could take them to court, charge them with truancy and they could face probation and possibly a 30-day jail sentence.

Premier, can you confirm that no one will go to jail, and given the lack of evidence supporting these measures, that you will rethink the provisions of this bill?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The leader of the official opposition is missing a very important dimension. He would compare us with dropout rates south of the border. We have learned from those experiences, and we understand that it's very important to put in place the necessary supports, the necessary curriculum and the necessary community-based and workplace opportunities before you put in that kind of a sanction.

What we are going to do is make sure that we have the programs in place that engage young people. I'd ask the leader of the official opposition to ask himself, why is it that no government has ever taken this on? Because they understand that it is difficult to do.

I think everybody agrees that ensuring that young people continue to learn to 18 is important and it's the right thing to do. The sanction is a very important component of that, but it has got to be seen in context. It's at the very—

The Speaker: Thank you. Final supplementary

Mr. Tory: I think it's becoming more obvious by the day that this bill is flawed. It is public policy by gimmick and something we've seen a lot of from your government. Whether it's a wait times Web site that you now say isn't reliable, whether it's a pit bull ban that isn't enforceable or a promise to shut down coal plants that you can't keep, you haven't done your homework yet again.

We've had pleas from constituents around the province over the last two days who are going to be affected, saying this bill ignores their personal circumstances. There is a report in the media of one student who says he's going to have to drop out to care for his parent, who suffers from cancer. How will this bill deal with that student? From today's National Post editorial, "In rural areas particularly, it is much more difficult" to find work "without a driver's licence. In effect," this "plan would ensure that those already facing reduced options ... are virtually consigned to failure."

Why have you not considered the impact of this bill on kids in rural Ontario, just to pick one example? Why have you not done that?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: When the Conservatives formed the government, 14,000 more young people dropped out every year as a result of their educational policies. They did nothing to curb that disaster. We decided to take it on. We decided to put in place the necessary programs to retain young people in schools. If the leader of the official opposition believes we should keep the dropout age at 16 in Ontario in a knowledge-based economy, then he should stand up and say so.

We think it's time for us to mature as a learning society. That's why we're sending a modest signal to young people that we will do everything that we possibly can from our end to make sure that we've got the necessary programming in place so that they can stay in school and learn in a way that is relevant and meaningful to them. That's why, beyond that, we said we're going to put \$6.2 billion into our colleges, universities and apprenticeship programs.

We are committed to doing whatever is necessary—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Premier, people are demanding that you keep your promise to have a thorough consultation with the people of Ontario regarding your \$40-billion scheme to build new nuclear plants and refurbish old ones. This can only be done by submitting the recently released Ontario Power Authority report to a full environmental assessment under the province's

Environmental Assessment Act. The question is, Premier, will you submit the Ontario Power Authority's plan to a full environmental assessment under the province's Environmental Assessment Act?

1440

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): We look forward to engaging all Ontarians in a very important conversation about the kind of supply mix we need to ensure that we have a reliable supply of energy long into the future. To that end, we will have a full, open and public consultation, but I'll leave it to the Minister of Energy to describe that in more detail in the new year. I will certainly take advice from the leader of the NDP in that regard, but I'm open to advice from others as well.

Mr. Hampton: Premier, one minute you talk about a 60-day consultation on the Web site. The next day you talk about a conversation. I want to be clear. This is a huge undertaking for Ontario. It has huge environmental implications and huge health and safety implications, not to mention the financial implications. A real environmental assessment would subject the Ontario Power Authority's plan to a public hearing before a joint board of the Ontario Energy Board and the Environmental Review Tribunal. That was the approach of your predecessor, David Peterson, when he was presented with a similar plan by Ontario Hydro in 1989.

Premier, given the huge economic, environmental, and health and safety issues associated with your \$40-billion scheme, will you do the same thing David Peterson did? It was the right thing to do then; it's the right thing to do now. Will you do it?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I know the leader of the NDP has a real interest in these issues. I can provide him with the assurance that, first of all, we intend to learn—I don't know where he came up with this \$40-billion figure. If there's some specific proposal he's had, for which he's prepared an accounting, then I'd ask him to table that, but if he doesn't have facts in that regard, I ask him to keep somewhat of an open mind as we engage Ontarians in a very important discussion.

The issue at hand is whether or not we should make decisions now, and what kind of decisions those should be to ensure that we have a reliable supply of electricity into the future: what kind of a supply mix we should have, and how much effort we put into conservation, how much into renewables, for example, and how much into gas-fired and how much into nuclear. Those are important kinds of questions. We think we should take the time to talk to Ontarians and in due course, the Minister of Energy will—

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

Mr. Hampton: Premier, that's why we need a full environmental assessment, as I've called for, not a conversation, not a discussion somewhere, a full environmental assessment.

Where did the \$40-billion figure come from? People looked at the OPA report and went out and talked with some people who were experienced. They said this will

be at least \$40 billion. If you look at the Darlington experience, it may in fact be an \$80-billion financial cost, which boils down to about \$26,000 for every family of four in the province.

A full environmental assessment is the only way we can ensure that a full economic and environmental review of this plan happens before it proceeds any further. Will you submit the Ontario Power Authority electricity plan to a full environmental assessment? What are you afraid of, Premier? Your predecessor did it. It was the right thing to do then. Will you do the right thing now and submit it to a full environmental assessment?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: If the leader of the NDP thought the full environmental assessment process that then Premier Peterson did was the right way to go, why did they cancel it? It's kind of a basic question I would ask him to answer.

Just so we're clear, to the leader of the NDP: I don't consider the Ontario Power Authority's advice to us to be a hard and fast plan that we're somehow going to turn over to an environmental assessment process. I think what we need to do now, building on that advice, is work with Ontarians to come up with a specific proposal that would be worthy of sending off to an environmental assessment process. So I'm not going to take the advice we've just received, which is nothing more than advice—very important advice worthy of attaching considerable weight to—and send it off to an assessment. Let's talk to Ontarians, then develop a specific proposal and make that the subject of an environmental assessment process.

ECONOMIC POLICY

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): To the Premier again: Today, for the first time, you finally acknowledged that people in Ontario are hurting after the loss of 52,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs. When I heard that you finally acknowledged this, my response was, where has the Premier been for the last year? Where was his government when community after community from northern Ontario said that skyrocketing electricity rates would kill thousands of jobs? Where was your government when communities asked you for strategies to deal with these issues? Finally, when people came here to Queen's Park to plead their case, why did members of your government call them whiners and bellyachers? Can you tell people that, Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): The leader of the NDP has a wonderful gift for creativity when it comes to these kinds of things. I think he owes it to all of us to be straight. There was one particular member of the government who said something that was decidedly unhelpful, for which he later apologized, and which I indicated was in no way representative of our policy or our sentiment, just so we're very clear on that and so that Ontarians are aware of that.

I think another important fact here is that, while I said today that the unemployment rate is 6.1%, our lowest

level in some four or five years, and while I said the average was 7.3% under the Conservative government, I think it's important to know that under the NDP we averaged an unemployment rate of 9.4%, just so we are clear and factual about who paid how much by way of devastating losses for our families under various governments.

Mr. Hampton: I think, if you're fair at all, you'd acknowledge that Bob Rae had to govern the province when the American economy was in the tank and the Japanese economy was in the tank and the Canadian economy was in the tank. Today, you have a robust economy in China, India, Japan, the United States and Canada, and you are losing manufacturing jobs in the province.

Premier, you may call people who lose their jobs crybabies. I call them family, I call them friends, I call them neighbours, and today—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Order, Minister of Health and Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

The leader of the third party.

Mr. Hampton: When 320 people find out today that they lost their jobs, they are not to be called crybabies. Those are families who are in very difficult straits. But what's more, this is an industry that has come to your government many times over the last year and a half and said to you, "Your electricity policy, your forest policy is going to kill thousands of jobs." What they're asking today is, when is your government finally going to respond in a meaningful way? When are you going to deal with the electricity crisis you've created? When are you going to deal with the forest crisis you've created in this province?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The leader of the NDP, I assume, is talking about the devastating job losses affecting the community of Kenora today. It is of little consolation to that community that a sister plant was closed in Stephenville, Newfoundland. But just so we are clear, the electricity prices there are about half of what they are here, and notwithstanding that, they still shut down that particular plant.

I can say that I had the opportunity to chat with Dave Canfield, the mayor of Kenora. We talked about how, for months now, our government has been working as hard as we could with the employer. We put forward what we thought was a really aggressive proposal addressing fibre issues and energy costs, but unfortunately that could not be the subject of agreement between the employer and the employees. I don't pretend for an instant to know what happened in that regard, but I can say that in speaking with Mayor Canfield I have pledged that we will work with him to do everything we possibly can to put that community on a stronger footing. I know they're going to experience—

The Speaker: Thank you.

1450

Mr. Hampton: This sounds like repentance after the fact. A year and a half ago, representatives of the pulp

and paper industry came to Queen's Park. They brought the graphs, they brought the charts and they said to your government, "The electricity policy you're on is going to kill thousands of jobs." And what do we see happening? We see Cascades in Thunder Bay, over 500 jobs; we see Domtar in Cornwall, all told, 900 jobs; even in your hometown of Ottawa, Domtar is closing the mill, over 200 jobs; we see Kenora, over 320 jobs; we see Terrace Bay, 150 jobs; and we see Dryden, another 40 jobs. All of this is happening after these communities came to your government and said, "Your policy of driving up electricity rates, your policy of driving up the delivered cost of wood, is going to kill jobs."

Premier, who controls the cost of electricity in Ontario—

The Speaker: The question has been asked. Premier?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: To the Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): I'd like to remind the member that, as he knows, Abitibi Consolidated came to our ministry with a proposal this summer as to how they could keep a machine viable and sustainable in Kenora, at their plant there. We invested a lot of time, and worked with our colleagues in finance, northern development, economic development and trade, and energy to put together a proposal that the company was very confident would give them a sustainable footing to move forward for a sustainable mill for the next 20 to 30 years.

As the member knows, when it came to discussions with the employees, those discussions broke down, and that is sad. I was devastated by this, too, because we had put a lot into this. I was very hopeful, and I'm sorry this went down.

HEALTH SERVICES

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo): My question is for the Premier. You claim you are reducing wait times, but this e-mail to you from Helen Saari of York region demonstrates the opposite. Her husband was forced to wait three days for emergency knee surgery, despite the fact that the orthopaedic surgeon in the emergency room said he needed to be operated on right away. Mrs. Saari now asks you, "Is this why I am paying the extra tax that you promised we would not get last election? To watch my husband in excruciating pain for three days, which will add three days to his recovery, and therefore three days of diminished income to our family?"

Premier, you said you had empathy for people in this province. What do you say to Mrs. Saari and her family?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): To the Minister of Health.

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I think what we say to Mrs. Saari is that we're working in a decidedly aggressive way to address some long-standing challenges in the Ontario

health care system and that she should be very wary of an opposition party in this province that intends to cut \$2.4 billion from health care.

There is a letter that came in on the Premier's Web site just the other day. Linda from Ottawa wrote in: "I had contacted you in December of 2004 re the waiting time for hip replacement surgery, specifically the 12-15 month time frame designated for my" mom, who's 84 years old. "At that time your response was that efforts were being made to improve this time frame and hopefully things would improve shortly.

"I am writing to thank you for your efforts in improving the wait times and to tell you that my mother [had] surgery on May 11, 2005," not 2006 as was originally predicted.

Mrs. Witmer: That response is an insult to Mrs. Saari and to her husband. We know that the wait time data from your own ministry show that your wait times are increasing. Mrs. Saari writes, "The money is not going where you promised us it would go," to lessen wait times and provide more beds. "You have had two years to prove yourself and you have proven yourself as a politician who increases taxes under the guise of improving health care and taking that money and putting it somewhere else....

"We have a crisis here and you and your health minister have ignored it."

Premier, can you explain to Ontarians, people like Mrs. Saari and her family, why they are paying more in taxes but waiting longer for health care services?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: First and foremost is the necessity of addressing some of the inherent contradiction in any question that comes forward from a party that on the one hand pretends to be on the side of patients and on the other hand closed thousands of hospital beds and had on the record a policy to reduce health care spending by \$2.4 billion.

What I can tell Mrs. Saari is that we're working tremendously hard. This past week I had the privilege, alongside my colleagues from across the country, to establish benchmarks, and tomorrow our province will go further in terms of the access targets which we seek to improve upon. In the area of hips and knees, the area that the honourable member was raising the question about, we've increased capacity by 28%.

Here is what Dennis Egan, the CEO of a hospital in the member's riding, said: "The challenge with these areas is that in the past, the hospital hasn't collected or maintained information on waiting times in these areas. We are working with surgeons in the region to build a system that will work to increase capacity for these surgeries at Grand River Hospital, therefore reducing wait times."

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I have a question to the Premier. I want to quote from an e-mail that I received yesterday: "I am writing to you as a father

of a son who dropped out at 16. Now at the age of 22 he is working toward his GED"—general education development certificate—"and is supporting himself. When he quit school, my son's only motivation was to work so he could have his own car and go out to his landscaper's job." He continues, "Keeping students in school is a great idea. Preventing young adults from driving is a bad idea. Work with them, not against them." That is the quote from him.

I had another conversation with a mother today as well who said that her daughter won't be able to drive and get a job if your bill goes through. She will be without an education and without a job.

Under your government, 30% of students are dropping out. Under your new initiative, 30% of students will still drop out, but they'll have to wait two years to get a driver's licence. How does a \$1,000 fine or preventing young people from getting a driver's licence help students to stay in school?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): I appreciate very much the question from the member opposite. I'm sure he will want, though, to be responding to that e-mail in an accurate fashion, and it is this: There was a \$1,000 fine for students, which we think is not necessarily the right way to pursue and encourage students. What we've done instead is come up with a creative way to avoid the courts and instead provide an extra obligation for earning your driver's licence as a means to stay in. But the learning we're talking about could be a landscaping position. It could be earning while learning; it could be earning credits for college while taking a course and while working with an employer. It is, in short, a new kind of high school that we're offering. To the people writing e-mails and to the people who are coming forward now, people are looking for this, and I would invite the member opposite to take a close look. The legislation requires these kinds of programs to be offered by school boards. The legislation allows us to work with colleges, apprenticeships and universities. I believe the legislation deserves the support of the member and the party opposite.

Mr. Marchese: The minister will know, or ought to know, that technical programs at the elementary and secondary levels have been lost. What programs exist in schools are inadequately resourced. Small schools throughout the province can barely be kept running, let alone offer the extra programs you talk about. Struggling students trying to graduate do not have sufficient course choices because their schools cannot afford to provide them.

Minister, without the resources to implement these great ideas, they are just virtual ideas. You're asking boards to implement programs that they don't have the funds to implement. When are you going to commit to the funding that would make these virtual programs actually available in schools throughout this province?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: I'm sorry the member opposite has a bleak outlook on our teachers and our schools and what they are doing. Ultimately, like the government that preceded this one, they can't see themselves actually extending respect to people. Not only are the programs possible; they are happening in schools. We've put \$45 million to revitalize the shop programs, the technical programs in our schools. Several hundred new courses are available next semester, because the dollars are already in the schools. He speaks with hopeless pessimism about what can be done for our rural students. We say that the \$10 million we're providing, \$100,000 to \$200,000 more to a school, will be there, and then Mr. Rosario Marchese and others hopefully will let loose of this blackness, of this idea that we can't advance. We say that neither the naysayers nor the people who can't see a better future will hold us back from—

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

1500

MUNICIPAL LEGISLATION

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West): My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Yesterday you introduced the stronger city of Toronto for a stronger Ontario legislation, and our government understands what a strong Toronto means to a stronger Ontario. I'd like to share with you an excerpt from the Toronto Star's editorial today: "Much credit for Toronto's new power goes to McGuinty, who clearly understands the city's needs and is willing to work to satisfy them. He has been a true friend of Toronto. That's a huge change from the Conservative government of former Premier Mike Harris, which all too often assumed the role of an enemy."

Yesterday the opposition leader refused to say whether or not he would support the legislation. He was really busy talking about elephants. Mr. Tory should know that elephants never forget, just like my residents in Don Valley West and the people of Toronto never forget that their city was trampled on and treated like an enemy when his party was in government.

So after years of neglect, there—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I think there was a question. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): First of all, I would like to congratulate and thank the member for Don Valley West for all the valuable input she had in this legislation over the last year.

I totally agree with her that our Premier, Dalton McGuinty, completely understands what needs to be done in order to put the city of Toronto on a solid and sound footing, as we want to make this city an even better city and more globally competitive in the 21st century. That's exactly what we've done with this bill. We have given our capital city, Toronto, the ability to determine for itself what is in the best interests of the

people. We have given it greater flexibility to address the day-to-day issues that need to be addressed. We have empowered the city of Toronto to make the best decisions possible—

The Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary, the member for York West.

Mr. Mario Sergio (York West): Minister, I know my constituents are pleased with yesterday's announcement, as well as with all that the McGuinty government has done since 2003 to support the city of Toronto. The legislation he introduced in the House yesterday would provide the foundation for the city of Toronto to take its place as a world leader among municipal governments globally. We have always known that Toronto is a great city to live in, work in and visit; now our government is working to strengthen its responsibility and accountability as well.

My constituents understand our government's commitment to helping Toronto, and they know that by working to make Toronto strong, healthy and prosperous, we are strengthening our entire province. Some of my constituents have been asking me what the proposed legislation really means. They would like to learn the impact, how on a day-to-day basis it affects their lives. Minister, please illustrate for my constituents, and all Torontonians, as a matter of fact, how this legislation, if passed, would improve their—

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: Having worked with the member for York West over the last 10 years, there's no more effective a spokesperson for the people of Toronto, and particularly for the small business owners here in Toronto, than the member from York West.

Let me give you a couple of examples of what the city of Toronto will be able to do under the new act. Under the current act, the city has limited ability to shape the appearance and design of buildings. What we're doing in the proposed act is giving the city more control over the look and feel of the city through controls over architectural detail and building design.

Under the current act, the hours that Toronto businesses can remain open on certain holidays is extremely limited. Under the new act, we're giving the city complete power to determine issues like that.

The city currently has a limited ability to determine the environmental quality of buildings. Under the new act, we will give the city the increased ability to encourage certain exterior environmental features and to require green roofs. These are—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): My question is for the Premier. Approximately seven months ago, the official opposition filed a freedom of information request surrounding the schedule of the Minister of Transportation, and his cell phone listings as well. The minister asked for an extension in August. It's now seven

months. This deals with questions surrounding his activities at Chalmers Group, a matter under investigation by the integrity commissioner. After seven months, he has failed. Do you support that failure, Mr. Premier, and if not, what will you do about it?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): The member knows that this matter has been referred to the Integrity Commissioner. Members of the opposition have had an opportunity to make presentations to the Integrity Commissioner, and I think we should place our faith in the Integrity Commissioner to do the job and give him the time he thinks is appropriate to address the matter.

Mr. Runciman: The usual mumbo-jumbo from the Premier; no answer to the question, which was quite direct, with respect to the minister's failure to comply with the requirements of the freedom of information act. For seven months—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Minister of Community and Social Services, come to order.

Mr. Runciman: For seven months he has failed to comply with, I think, very reasonable requests. We're talking about the minister's schedule for a very compressed period of time and his cell phone records for a compressed period of time. He has failed to comply with the requirements of the freedom of information act. This is in terms of questions about his activities, which may be in violation of the Members' Integrity Act. This smells of a cover-up, endorsed and sanctioned by the Premier's office. If that's not the case, table that information today. Comply with the requirements of the act. Do that today.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: While the member opposite remains obsessed about skulduggery, let me tell what you the minister has been up to. He launched the first HOV carpool lanes on GTA highways; he launched new safety initiatives for school buses; he launched a new program for booster seats in cars; he launched the new Viva transit system in York region and he launched the new GTA fare card. We have a new northern Ontario highway strategy in place, we have in place a new rental truck safety inspection blitz, and he has delivered on the next phase of the gas tax to Ontario municipalities.

I'll leave it to the members opposite to engage in innuendo and skulduggery. I'll leave it to my minister to do the work he's supposed to do on behalf of the people of Ontario.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): My question is for the Minister of Labour. It's about how your ministry deals with dangerous workplaces in cases where an employee is fatally or critically injured on the job. My constituent, Tom Gall, was the victim of a very serious explosion at Heddle Marine in September 2004. He sustained burns to 60% of his body and has been off work for over a year. After the accident, ministry staff

identified serious health and safety infractions at that workplace but never attempted to prosecute the company.

Minister, someone nearly died on the job. Why were no charges laid?

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): The health and safety of Ontario citizens is our number one priority. That's why we've made an unprecedented move to move forward with hiring an additional 200 inspectors. By the end of March next year, we'll have an additional 69 inspectors in place. As our inspectors take issues of health and safety in workplaces very seriously—and I ask the member. I'm certainly not going to comment about specific cases in this Legislature, but if you'd like, if you'd provide me with some information about this, you could just pick up the phone and call my office. You don't need to ask this question in the Legislature. That's what we're here to do. We're here to serve you and work with you, and my office is prepared to do that. Perhaps after question period, we can get together and get you some specifics about the concerns that you've raised.

1510

Ms. Horwath: The sad thing about it is that my office was working with the ministry office in Hamilton all through this process and didn't get any justice for this worker. Your ministry's own policy manual obligates your operations branch employees to carry out prosecutions for all incidents involving critical and high-risk injury, and that certainly happened here. You had a whole year. Mr. Gall suffered enormously. The accident wasn't his fault, and now the time to prosecute the company has expired.

Minister, by flouting your own policy and refusing to take action, you send a very clear message to workers that says that workplace safety doesn't matter. Will you assure the House today that all cases of wrongdoing involving critical and high-risk injury will be prosecuted in accordance with your policy?

Hon. Mr. Peters: Again, I'm not going to comment on a specific case. I would encourage the member, as I said earlier, to come over and talk to us. That's what we're here to do. We are committed to the interests of health and safety of citizens in this province. I think every one of us is conscious of that, and every member of this House is concerned about that. As well, I don't think it would be appropriate to comment in this Legislature about any specific investigations that are taking place.

We're moving forward on the hiring of an additional 200 inspectors. We're working toward reducing lost-time injuries in this province by over 20% by 2008. We're committed to health and safety, and I would hope that every member in this House is committed to health and safety. Certainly, we are concerned about any individual. Again, I urge the member to come across the floor, and let's have the opportunity to discuss the details.

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill): The question is to the same minister: the Minister of Labour. It is my belief

that our government has been working hard to improve workers' health and safety in our province of Ontario. Unfortunately, some people still suffer workplace-related injuries or illness and are forced to take time off. Just last Friday, I met with a group of injured workers, and they spoke to me about their personal financial problems. One gentleman from Hamilton was complaining that his case started in 1992, when the NDP was in power, and nothing was done. Then came the PCs, and his situation became even worse.

The people at the rally announced two improvements that your ministry just implemented, and they were pleased with what you have done. However, I understand that there is some more good news for our injured workers. Can you tell us what measures the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board will be implementing to help injured workers?

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): I want to thank the member for his advocacy as well as for meeting with the injured workers last week. I think every one of us in the House needs to understand and hear the challenging situation that injured workers in this province have faced because of changes that previous governments have made to the WSIB. We need to recognize that one injury in a workplace is one too many. The government is committed to not only preventing workplace injuries, but as well providing support for those who are already hurt.

I'm really pleased to announce that the WSIB is moving forward on a number of initiatives. Starting January 1, as an example, the travel allowance for injured workers who need to travel and access labour re-entry programs has been increased by a full 10%, which puts the rate above most other provinces. The WSIB has also eliminated the set rate for room and board, which was an outdated and confusing allowance. As well, we're improving benefits for the independent living allowance, personal care allowance and guide dog support allowance, which will receive more money. As well, tackling the—

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

Mr. Racco: Certainly, those changes will go a long way toward helping the ill and injured workers of Ontario. I know that you have taken a personal interest in the well-being of injured workers right from your first day in office and that you have been meeting regularly with people. It is good to hear that the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board is improving conditions and making positive changes.

Minister, could you further update us on other developments concerning the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, including the selection of a new chair?

Hon. Mr. Peters: Our government is very much committed to bringing forth an approach to injured workers that treats these individuals with respect and dignity. I've taken the opportunity to meet with thousands of injured workers across the province, whether it's been in Thunder Bay, in my own backyard in St. Thomas or representatives right here in Toronto. In terms of the

WSIB, we've made sure we're putting in place an accountable institution that provides long-term stability for the workplace injury system and provides benefits for injured workers.

As well, we've moved forward on a very open and transparent process of all our public appointments. No longer are the days of just strictly political appointments being made. We've completed the process right now. We've publicly advertised for the position of WSIB chair, interviews have been conducted, and from those interviews I'm quite confident that we'll be announcing, by the end of January 2006, a new chair, in an open and transparent process.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington): My question is to the Premier. Five times in the last two months, I have raised the concerns of colorectal cancer patients in our province, who have been simply seeking treatment that has been recommended by their Ontario oncologists from Ontario cancer clinics. We've established that your government is currently paying at least three patients we know of in Ontario to go to Buffalo, at US\$24,000 each per month. On Monday of this week, the federal government approved a special access program to ensure that hospitals in Ontario can receive the drug Erbatux and provide it at \$3,500 per month to Ontario patients. Premier, do you not think it is a better use of Ontario's limited health dollars to spend the \$3,400 in Ontario, instead of sending these cancer patients to—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): To the Minister of Health.

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I believe it has been determined by now that for those individuals who did receive out-of-country approval for the provision of this drug, it was for the period before it had received its notice of compliance from Health Canada. I think that, accordingly, we continue to work on the basis that products which have received notice of compliance require approval from the drug quality therapeutics committee to be accessed. Accordingly, we have a system which does give the opportunity to apprise the needs of patients.

We have, by some extraordinary measure, increased our new drug funding for cancer drugs in the province of Ontario. I think this stands as a strong degree of support for the provision of appropriate product. Our system will continue to evaluate those products and offer them on the basis that they have established that they are appropriate and efficacious.

Mr. Jackson: It's clear that your cancer waiting times are growing, that your cancer delivery program is becoming more confusing and inconsistent, it's being protracted, and now we find it's unnecessarily wasting taxpayers' dollars in the United States.

With all due respect, Premier, if I could have your attention. Premier? Could I please ask the Premier to pay attention?

Premier, at 12 o'clock yesterday, Suzanne Aucoin from St. Catharines, who has colorectal cancer, used her Visa card and spent \$2,500 to acquire her life-saving drug. She then put it in her car and drove out of this province. Premier, I will ask you again: Will you not listen to the legitimate concerns of these colorectal cancer patients, who have asked for the same treatment that others from Ontario are getting in the US, at much less cost, to receive that treatment closer to home here in Ontario? And as well, address the issue of why they have to use their Visa cards to acquire life-saving cancer drugs in this province—

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: The honourable member likes to pretend that he doesn't know the circumstances. I've been clear in indicating to him previously that any of those patients who had made application for the provision of this drug were assessed not once but twice from the standpoint of clinical efficacy. This is the challenge that we have. It's been long-standing in our province. It's exactly the same as it was under the previous government.

Accordingly, our government has contributed a sum of money that's quite extraordinary in terms of our willingness and our desire to extend good-quality product to citizens. Our announcement on Herceptin added \$148 million in additional expenditure over a period of three years and stands as our commitment, our willingness and our ability, when drugs are indicated for a level of efficacy that is appropriate, that we're going to find the resources to support them.

1520

EATING DISORDERS

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Minister of Health. One month ago, my colleague from Nickel Belt asked you when your government would provide funding to deal with serious gaps in services for those suffering from eating disorders in Ontario. Your reply was succinct. You said, "Very shortly." However, to date, there's been no announcement regarding funding to deal with the deficits in the provincial network of eating disorder services, nor has there been any allocation of monies to create badly needed services here to stop the flow of adolescents and young adults to eating disorder programs in the United States. Minister, when will you be making this critical announcement?

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I appreciate the honourable member's acknowledgement that, in those circumstances where we're unable to provide the service here in Ontario, we are working very hard, through appropriate mechanisms, to offer that support for people elsewhere. We would all agree that that's not the preferable circumstance.

I've indicated to the honourable member that we're currently re-profiling about \$5 million to \$6 million of

out-of-province support in order to be able to build a more robust access for people who need these services in Ontario. That we're not there yet means that we have not yet made an announcement. But I can confirm for the honourable member that people are working on this, even as we speak, with a view toward making it available on a priority basis. I will ascertain a more specific date and commit to the honourable member to get back to his office to indicate a more likely date of announcement.

Mr. Prue: Minister, you have acknowledged some of how serious this is, but just for the record, you know that one in four adolescent girls report at least one symptom of an eating disorder in this province. You know that 30% of healthy-weight girls and 25% of healthy-weight boys between the ages of 10 and 14 are involved in dangerous weight loss. And you should know that over 70,000 people are affected in this province, but there are only 30 treatment beds available all through Ontario.

The current eating disorder programs need funding just to get back to where they were in 2000. I know you have difficulty, but the people out there are desperately wanting to bring their kids home. They're desperately wanting to have the services here so that we don't have to spend \$5.6 million and have the kids being treated in another country.

Minister, please, please, endeavour everything you can to make this announcement before year's end.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: I think many of us know people—young women, perhaps, in particular—who are in need of these services. This is not an issue that has left my family untouched. I can confirm to the honourable member my very strong desire, not just as a health minister but as an individual who has witnessed the challenges that young women in particular experience, to be able to make sure they have those supports.

Accordingly, I can repeat what I said a second ago, which is that, as we speak, people in the ministry are working very hard on an announcement and, more appropriately, on an allocation of resource which will enhance capacity in a variety of places around the province. I can't confirm whether it's possible to get that out in the next week or two, but I will commit, as I said in my earlier answer, to get back to the honourable member and let him know of a more specific time frame for announcement and for expansion of Ontario-based service.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): I have a question today for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Recently, there's been a lot of talk about the manufacturing sector in Ontario, and not all of it has been accurate. Our government understands how critical the auto sector is to Ontario's economy, and that's why your ministry has implemented the auto investment strategy. Clearly, this is a strategy that's working. You and I have seen the results first hand in my riding of Oakville: massive long-term investments from companies

such as Ford and Automodular. Because of investments like this, Ontario is now the leading jurisdiction for automotive production in North America.

Minister, can you provide us with an update on the auto manufacturing sector in Ontario, and specifically in Oakville?

Hon. Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade): I want to thank the member for the question. It's a very good and important question.

I want to refer to a report that was issued by StatsCan today which indicates that most industries have posted higher exports, and this is important with respect to the manufacturing sector: a 1.9% increase in machinery and equipment and 1.6% in manufactured goods. Even in forestry, there's a 5.8% increase. Of particular importance to Ontario's automotive sector, Ontario vehicle shipments hit \$6.2 billion in October: a 7.6% increase from September.

Let me just quote from Doug Porter, chief economist at BMO Nesbitt Burns, who says, "Such performance does show that goods producers continue to cope with the strong Canadian dollar. Exports in manufacturing have fared a lot better than the doom and gloomers thought in 2005."

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Supplementary. The member for Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge): That's particularly good news. It shows that Ontario's economy is doing extremely well, and that's even contrary to what some might say. Not only is the economy doing well in the present, but a key part of the government strategy and agenda is to ensure that the workforce of Ontario's future stays highly skilled and very competitive.

I'd like to give you an example of just such an initiative. The Beacon project, a collaborative effort including General Motors, the federal and Ontario governments and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, will have a major positive impact on the automotive industry and illustrates that our government is dedicated to creating the highly skilled workforce that the industry needs.

Although Ontario's economy is doing well, some communities such as Cornwall and Oshawa have been affected by some recent company announcements. I know our government takes every job very seriously and is concerned when a community faces such challenges. What can you tell these communities and others as they face these challenges?

Hon. Mr. Cordiano: I want to assure the families and the communities, the people involved, that this government is doing everything possible to work with those communities and with those people to ensure that there will be better times ahead.

I've endeavoured to meet with many communities over the past number of years since I've been a minister, recently meeting with the mayor of Cornwall and his economic development officer to sit down and talk about the impacts and to talk about what we can do together,

the province working with the municipality and with the federal government.

Let me tell you about the meetings we had with Niagara region, Hamilton, Sault Ste. Marie and North Bay to talk about an economic development plan. I visited all these communities over the past number of months to talk about the economic plans they're putting forward and to suggest to them that this government stands fully in support of the efforts they're making and will work with them on a continuous basis to ensure that economic development comes to every region of this great province.

PETITIONS

CANCER TREATMENT

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas we are asking for funding for Velcade to be available in Ontario. Ontario is the only province in Canada not currently making funding available for this drug, even though approximately 40% of people diagnosed with multiple myeloma in Canada are from Ontario;

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

"To push the approval of Velcade through the review process and make funding available for patients in Ontario immediately, as it is in every other province of Canada."

I agree with this petition, have signed it and send it down by way of Kumail to the Clerk's table.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I'd like to present this petition that's been collected from the city of Niagara Falls, and acknowledge the efforts of the members from St. Catharines and Niagara Falls.

"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."

This is a good petition. I'm pleased to affix my signature, and I'm going to give it to page Adam to carry for me.

1530

CURRICULUM

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): It's my pleasure to present a petition from students and teachers from a Muskoka school. It says:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current Ministry of Education of Ontario has prepared a secondary school curriculum completely devoid of the topic of calculus to be implemented in September of 2006;

"Whereas the changes to the curriculum have been presented to educators only after October 2005, and not yet to the general public;

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

"To ensure that the total removal of calculus from the Ontario secondary school curriculum be delayed until at least September of 2008, so that the change may be openly and thoughtfully considered."

I support this petition and affix my signature to it.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): Dawne Warner organized this petition, and it reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition and sign it.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale): I have a petition in support of my colleagues from St. Catharines and Niagara Falls. The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

I support this petition and put my signature on this petition as well.

CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

“Re: Support for chiropractic services in Ontario health insurance plan

“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, government and the province.”

I have affixed my signature as well.

PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): This is a petition sent in by nurses in Ottawa.

“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 this, Mr. Speaker. I sign it and send it to the Clerk’s table by way of Cameron.

AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): I have a petition signed by members of the region of Halton and the town of Oakville.

“Petition to Rescind Joint Board Decision (June 8, 2005) Approving the Applications of Dufferin Aggregates to Expand its Mining Licence in the Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve.

“To the Legislature of Ontario:

“There are numerous reasons for rescinding the joint board decision, including the following:

“Whereas the decision contravenes the purpose of the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act;

“Whereas the decision sets a precedent for quarry expansion licences on the Niagara Escarpment;

“Whereas this decision could lead to habitat destruction for species of concern;

“Whereas escarpment rural lands are equivalent to buffer designation under the United Nations’ framework for biosphere reserve (buffer designation is expected to protect the sensitive nature of the core protected areas);

“Whereas, to attempt to maintain the significant wetlands and the streams course, water will have to be pumped in perpetuity;

“Whereas this decision allows for pumping 50 feet ... below the water table;

“Whereas the 50-foot dams to be constructed have a potential for failure;

“Whereas aggregate can be readily accessed close to market off the Niagara Escarpment in land that is not protected or at risk;

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

“We call on the government of Ontario to:

“Issue an order by the Lieutenant Governor in Council ... rescinding the decision made by the joint board dated June 8, 2005, approving the applications of Dufferin Aggregates in regards to this matter;

“Issue an order by the cabinet substituting for the decision of the board on this matter, a decision rejecting the applications of Dufferin Aggregates.”

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): I have a petition signed by 500 people from Smith Falls and other places in eastern Ontario to save Rideau Regional Centre in Smith Falls.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I have signed it with a great deal of pride.

1540

OPTOMETRISTS

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): This petition is about the Optometry Act.

“Whereas the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario will be considering a private member’s bill that

aims to amend the Optometry Act to give optometrists the authority to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of certain eye diseases; and

“Whereas optometrists are highly trained and equipped with the knowledge and specialized instrumentation needed to effectively diagnose and treat certain eye problems; and

“Whereas extending the authority to prescribe TPAs to optometrists will help relieve the demands on ophthalmologists and physicians who currently have the exclusive domain for prescribing TPAs to optometry patients; and

“Whereas the bill introduced by New Democrat Peter Kormos (MPP—Niagara Centre) will ensure that patients receive prompt, timely, one-stop care where appropriate;

“Therefore, I do support the bill proposing the amendment to the Optometry Act to give optometrists the authority to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of certain eye diseases and I urge the government of Ontario to ensure speedy passage of the bill.”

I’ve signed it and I’m sending it down by way of Cameron.

CRIME PREVENTION

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas gun violence has been on the rise in the province of Ontario over the past year;

“Whereas such violence has had a devastating effect on communities across this province;

“Whereas this propensity toward gun violence is born largely out of neglect and abandonment on the part of the previous governments toward youth and the issues and concerns they face;

“Whereas programs supporting youth such as employment and recreation are essential in diverting youth from pursuing and embracing a culture of crime;

“Whereas we applaud Premier Dalton McGuinty for his quick response to this issue by immediately meeting with members of affected community groups and committing the government of Ontario to action;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request that the government of Ontario, as part of its strategy to deal with gun violence, restore and fund more programs that fund initiatives that empower youth like employment and recreation.”

I agree with this petition, and I affix my signature to it and give it to page Nadia, who’s here with me today.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): This petition is brought to me by Community Living Kawartha Lakes.

“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 want to thank Community Living Kawartha Lakes for all the good work they do.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

DUFFINS ROUGE AGRICULTURAL PRESERVE ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 SUR LA RÉSERVE AGRICOLE DE DUFFINS-ROUGE

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): G16, Mr Speaker.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Todd Decker): Order G16, third reading of Bill 16, An Act respecting the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve.

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

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): I'd like to announce that I will be sharing my time with the member from Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge, and it's a pleasure to do that. It's also a pleasure for me to stand in my place in the Ontario Legislature today to move third reading of Bill 16, the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act, 2005. Bill 16 is part of the government's plan—

The Speaker: Mr. Ramsay has moved third reading of Bill 16, An Act respecting the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: Sorry. As someone who is as long in the tooth in this Legislature, I should have known better.

As I said, I will be sharing my time with the member. It is a pleasure to stand in my place and talk about this bill. This is a bill that is very important to the McGuinty government, and I would hope it's important to the opposition parties, as it actually defends an arrangement the previous government had made with regard to the

protection of the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve, setting it aside permanently for agricultural use.

I believe there is support here, so I won't speak too much to this bill. At the moment there is a snowstorm raging across southern Ontario, and many members want to start to head out to get home for their holidays. So I will keep my—

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Nobody is going anywhere.

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: OK, but I will keep my remarks brief. As some of the members have said, maybe we're all stuck here. If I am stuck here, then I can go on for the next two hours and talk about this. I suppose that would be fine.

Interjection: I've got a blanket.

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: We did that once before here.

As you know, this legislation preserves 4,700 acres of land in north Pickering. These lands are part of a larger area, close to 40,000 acres, that was expropriated in the 1970s for a proposed airport. The preserved lands have been recognized as prime agricultural areas that qualify for restriction to agricultural, farm-related uses under the region of Durham official plan, the provincial policy statement, the Greenbelt Act and the greenbelt plan.

I did talk about the history of this, how we started in 1999 and where we are today. I think all the members are informed about that, so I will dispense with that part of it. I just want to say that the McGuinty government very firmly believes in the ideal of preserving our natural spaces, be they wooded areas, be they agricultural areas, because once we lose these lands, we lose them forever. It's very important that we act boldly today and ensure that these lands are preserved. Any jurisdiction that cannot feed itself, that cannot produce food, is not going to survive. It's very important that we make a stand in southern Ontario, especially where we have prime agricultural land, and preserve that land. So that's what this legislation does.

It also makes the point that environmental conservation easements need to be protected. When parties, in good faith, talk about protecting land in perpetuity, that perpetuity means forever; it doesn't mean that in five years somebody can come along and get rid of it.

I would like to conclude my remarks there and allow my colleague to further the debate.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge): I want to thank the minister for sharing his time with me today, particularly in light of the fact that my view on this particular bill differs with that of the minister and the government. I don't support Bill 16. I voted against Bill 16 when we rose on second reading and I'll be voting against Bill 16 this afternoon.

The available time today is somewhat limited, given the time of year, the nature of the weather and other things, so my comments today are going to be somewhat cursory rather than in depth.

The minister references that he's had some discussion over a period of time in respect to this particular piece of legislation and the land in question. I've had the privilege

to represent the lands in question, both the owners and tenants, for some 24 straight years, and still do, and I feel, in that context, that I come to this particular issue with some authority.

Frankly, neither the current government nor the former government has the right to claim any moral high ground in claiming that this bill or predecessor actions of both governments are fundamentally about saving farmland. They are not. These acts are principally, and have been, about the supply and demand of developable land. The marketplace will dictate that an oversupply of developable land in any given geography will dampen both the demand and the price for any given parcel.

The province owns public land, and those lands are called Seaton. Those lands are adjacent to the privately owned lands which are the subject of this legislation. The Seaton lands are being sold to developers for development purposes, and this sale for development is to facilitate the Oak Ridges moraine acquisition. To secure the highest sale price for public land for development purposes, successive governments, not just ours, have acted to limit the availability of supply by frustrating the ability to consider the adjacent private lands for development purposes.

1550

In my view, the city of Pickering has acted fully within its legal rights in the management of the easements that exist on those lands. The city holds those easements exclusively. As a matter of fact—and I'm not sure what has transpired since October 2003—the only political signature on those easements is mine as the then mayor of the city. No other political body has any legal entitlement to act in respect of those easements.

This file is, and in my view has been for successive governments, about the economics of development, not the ethics of agriculture.

I appreciate the opportunity to make these few remarks today. I remain in opposition to Bill 16 and the actions of our government.

The Speaker: Questions or comments? Questions or comments? All right. The next speaker would be the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): It's my pleasure to join the debate this afternoon on Bill 16, to do with the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve. I did have an opportunity on second reading to speak for a full hour on this and gave a significant amount of history in terms of all the good things Mike Harris did to preserve parklands in this province, including the greatest creation of new parks and protected areas in the history of this province, actually.

Mr. Kormos: Don't put "Mike Harris" and "parkland" in the same sentence.

Mr. Miller: I hear the member from Niagara Centre, who is making some comments.

One of thing that isn't well known is that the government under Mike Harris did create more parklands, with an area the size of Lake Ontario—new and protected areas—and I think he should be commended for it.

But today we're speaking about Bill 16. As I say, I did have an hour to speak about it previously. This bill has support from all three parties and most of the members in this Legislature. It was a big issue in the last election. Certainly, the member from Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge, who just spoke, has maintained a consistent position. He ran against Janet Ecker in the 2003 election; he won the election. He was not for preserving the agricultural land, and has made that clear again today. In my previous hour, I quoted some news items that noted that the member from Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge was also significantly supported in terms of donations to his campaign. There were 25 \$1,000 cheques from one specific developer from one specific address, and that's already in Hansard. Janet Ecker was also very clear in supporting preserving this land, and it was an important issue in the last election.

We've had committee hearings on this bill and heard from many interested groups. Most were in favour of preserving the land. The Ministry of Natural Resources did their own presentation on this bill and pointed out that the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve includes about 4,700 acres of prime agricultural land in north Pickering, and also that in 1999 the regional municipality of Durham, the town of Pickering and the province agreed to a number of measures to enable the sale of previously expropriated Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve lands to the original landowners and tenants. The key point here that I think is very important is that, as a condition of the sale, the purchaser of the land was required to agree to an easement held by the town of Pickering under the Conservation Land Act that would protect the land for agricultural uses in perpetuity. The price of the land—and this is also a key thing, as far as I'm concerned—was based on the value of the land for agricultural purposes. From what we heard in committee, that's probably \$4,000 or \$5,000, instead of \$150,000. That is quite significant, and obviously critical to this point.

We heard lawyers arguing in committee that perpetuity is some finite period of time. I think they were talking of 91 years as being perpetuity. I must admit, that caught me by surprise in committee. I guess lawyers are paid to argue any point, and they're good at it, but I went to the dictionary to see what "perpetuity" means, and it seems to be quite clear, as I thought it was. Here are a few definitions of perpetuity: "The state or quality of being perpetual; the state of having no end; in perpetuity, forever." "Eternal, lasting indefinitely, uninterrupted, frequent, much-repeated; existing or occurring without interruption or end; enduring for all time."

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): It sounds to me like it means "permanent."

Mr. Miller: It sounds fairly permanent to me.

Another dictionary, just in case that one was wrong: "The quality or condition of being perpetual." "The perpetuity of the church was an article of faith." That was Morris L. West. "Time without end, eternity."

"In perpetuity: for an indefinite period of time, forever; the condition of an estate that is limited so as to

be inalienable either perpetually or longer than the period determined by law.”

I think it's fairly clear that it's more than five years. So I think the understanding was that these easements would be forever and that the land would be preserved forever.

I note, when I look back at the Hansard record, that John O'Toole asked a question in the Legislature to then-Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing David Young. He said:

“Minister, on April 21, 2003, you announced that you had signed a minister's zoning order under the Planning Act to protect the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve.” I'm not going to read it all.

“Recently it seems that this promise is in doubt. The city of Pickering was starting a growth management study, a study funded by developers, that some worried could lead to the development of this land,” and he goes on in his question.

The minister, in his response, says:

“I didn't think there was any doubt about what was intended in relation to this land. I say to you that this government, the Ernie Eves government, took action to make sure that the promise made by three levels of government was a promise that would be kept.

“The honourable member a moment ago, when asking the question, referred to an agreement that was signed in May 1999 by the town of Pickering, the region of Durham and the province of Ontario. It was an agreement that made clear that this land would remain agricultural forevermore.

“I think the best way to clear up any doubt is to actually quote from the agreement that Mayor Arthurs signed on behalf of Pickering. He said at that time, ‘It is the intention of the parties that the covenants and easements herein shall run with the property in perpetuity.’ It could not be any clearer.”

Mr. O'Toole goes on to say, “Minister, there is no ambiguity in your answer.”

Mr. Young responds again in the supplementary, “The people of Pickering were very clearly promised that the land in question would be protected—not protected for a month or two when it was politically convenient, but protected forevermore.”

I say that the question of how long these easements were to be in place on this land to protect the land for agricultural purposes is very clear. Unfortunately, on March 1, 2005, the city of Pickering unilaterally released the agricultural easements on a sizable portion of the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve. Of the 3,017 acres sold by the Ontario Realty Corp. with easements, only 1,000 acres still have easements. The land was sold back from the Ontario government, the Ontario Realty Corp., to some of the original landowners, but at \$4,000 to \$5,000 an acre, not at \$150,000 an acre, and it was meant that the land would be saved for agricultural purposes in perpetuity. I think that's very clear.

All three parties, with the exception of a few members, do support this bill, and I will be voting in favour of this bill this afternoon.

The Speaker: Questions and comments? Further debate? The member for Trinity–Spadina.

Applause.

1600

Mr. Marchese: We only have 10 minutes. Thank you very much. Such a good group of Liberals we have here.

A little bit of history: On November 24, 1993, the New Democratic government approved a new Durham regional official plan that included the redesignation of the agricultural preserve lands from “special study area” to “permanent agricultural preserve.” As such, the regional official plan's “permanent agricultural preserve” land use designation applies to the agricultural preserve lands today. The use of lands so designated is restricted to agricultural- and farm-related uses.

In December 1995, the province—that would be the conservator—announced its intention to dispose of the publicly-owned agricultural preserve into private ownership. To accomplish this, in 1996 the Conservative government approached the region with a proposal to use the crown right to facilitate conveyance of the agricultural preserve lands.

The Conservatives had a change of mind in 1999, and therefore local conservationists signed an agreement in 1999 with the provincial government's Ontario Realty Corp., Durham region and the city of Pickering, with the clear expectation that the easements placed on lands in the preserve would be held by the city in perpetuity—and we've already heard a definition by a Conservative member about what “in perpetuity” means. It means for a long, long time, and certainly more than five years.

The leader of the New Democratic Party, Howard Hampton, the member from Kenora–Rainy River, first raised this issue in the House back in March, with our environment critic asking follow-up questions on several occasions in April and May about the Liberal government's failure to uphold the easements in light of the Pickering council and Durham region's decision to remove them.

You heard the former mayor from Pickering saying that he disagrees with the Liberal government. He obviously hopes that this issue will go away and that everything will be forgotten and forgiven, but I've got to tell you that the former mayor of Pickering is unabashed about his support for the town of Pickering doing what it wants. In spite of any signed agreement, the former mayor said, “No. You, Liberal government, have it all wrong.”

What the former mayor is saying, what the city, now present, is saying to Ramsay is: “We can do what we want.” Ramsay said not a word to the member from Pickering, who said to Ramsay, “I disagree with you.” It's amusing to me that Ramsay didn't speak after the member so that he could refute them strongly. He chose to speak in advance so that the former mayor of Pickering could just say what he wants, with the forgiveness of Ramsay to allow him to say whatever it is that he wishes to say.

Interjections.

Mr. Marchese: Mr. Kormos, a legal opinion. Ramsay would know, I think, and the former mayor of Pickering would know that there is a legal opinion by David Estrin, a certified environmental law specialist, who said very much in this regard. He said, "Pickering contravened the Conservation Land Act," and Ramsay knows it.

Mr. Kormos: Does Arthurs know what he's talking about?

Mr. Marchese: I don't know, because he didn't speak to it. He said, "The city breached its fiduciary duties to keep the easements registered and to enforce them..."

"The city committed a breach of trust," and it goes on to define each of these points. "The city breached its duty of fairness"—

Interjection.

Mr. Marchese: Sorry, Ramsay, what is it you are saying?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: We're fixing it. Let's get on with it.

Mr. Marchese: I see. The Liberals love it. After pressure to fix something, they say, "OK. Now we've fixed it. Let's move on and let's forget about the past." Ramsay breaks a whole lot of promises, and then he says "OK, but we fixed it. Now let's move on."

Mr. Kormos: Fine. Let's sit tonight.

Mr. Marchese: No, Ramsay doesn't want to sit tonight, obviously.

Ramsay, listen to this: "The city breached its duty of fairness and offended the principles of natural justice in unilaterally terminating the easements." Further, "The city's actions contravened the Planning Act and the Greenbelt Act," yet you still have the former mayor of Pickering—I don't know if you can see him. Cameras, can you see him? He's over there. He's saying, "No. Ramsay is wrong, the Liberal government is wrong," and he is right. His city councillors are still right.

I've got to tell you that we were afraid the Liberals wouldn't deal with this issue. We feared that the McGuinty Liberals, whose close ties with Toronto land developers are very tight—witness the \$10,000 kind of dinner that was held with a lot of those developers. I would say that's a close relationship. We're not talking about \$25 a plate, you know, for some cheese and some chicken. But \$10,000—man, it can buy you a whole lot of influence, right? So we were very nervous. I would say that back in March, when Durham council voted to remove the easements—Ramsay, listen to this—denial was the McGuinty government's position with respect to the Duffins-Rouge lands.

In response to our leader calling for government action to maintain the easements on the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing stated the following: "Let me repeat once again: The lands that are in the agricultural preserve in Pickering are part of the greenbelt." He declared, "Whatever the city or town of Pickering does by way of resolution removing some designation on those lands is up to the town of Pickering. But quite frankly, the lands are still part of the greenbelt."

The minister then went on to say, "I'm very pleased to tell this member and his caucus and everyone in this room and outside that we do have a permanent greenbelt; that the legislation that was passed is stronger than any other legislation we've ever had in this province." And he goes on and on, poor man, to say, what else, God knows. But he leads people to believe that the law that had been passed by this government, connected to the greenbelt, was strong enough to be able to preserve the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve. Clearly, he was wrong.

Over and over again, our colleague Marilyn Churley and our leader, Howard Hampton, kept on asking questions to various ministers to get some appropriate answers: Are we going to protect easements? Each time the minister would say, "No, we've got a strong law now. We're doing it."

I'm glad, very pleased that something has changed, because we now have Bill 16, which finally protects the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve in perpetuity, which is what we wanted, which is what the Tories, God bless them, in 1999, after changing their mind, did, and which now has the support of the Liberals after a whole lot of pressing. The Liberals do nothing except when they are pressed to the wall. Only then, after so much squeezing, did they say, "OK, now we understand it a little more clearly."

That's the only thing, I believe, that David Ramsay understands. So you need strong New Democrats who keep on asking questions. You need environmentalists, who in that area of Durham pressed not only city councillors but pressed the Liberal government to introduce a bill that would protect those lands for agricultural purposes. In combination with environmentalists and people who were nervous about what was happening there, and with New Democrats pressing Liberals, only with that pressure do we finally have a bill that even Jim Bradley can say, "OK, now we support it. OK, you pressed us a little bit."

So we're there. I congratulate all those who petitioned us, who squeezed the Liberals as best as they possibly can be squeezed, who pressed them to do the right thing, and yes, it's better late than never, but we are pleased we now have a law that protects the Duffins-Rouge lands for agricultural purposes. I believe that this is a good day for all.

1610

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): I now call for questions and comments. Seeing none, further debate?

Mr. Ramsay has moved third reading of Bill 16. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour?

All those opposed?

In my opinion, the motion carries.

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

SAFE STREETS STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2005
LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LA SÉCURITÉ DANS LES RUES

Mr. Lalonde moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 58, An Act to amend the Safe Streets Act, 1999 and the Highway Traffic Act to recognize the fundraising activities of legitimate charities and non-profit organizations / Projet de loi 58, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1999 sur la sécurité dans les rues et le Code de la route pour reconnaître les activités de financement des organismes de bienfaisance légitimes et organismes sans but lucratif.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): The member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell has the floor.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell): This bill will allow fundraising activities that meet the following conditions:

“1. They are conducted by a charitable organization registered under the Income Tax Act (Canada) on a roadway where the maximum speed limit is 50 kilometres per hour.

“2. They are permitted by a bylaw of the municipality in which the activities are conducted.”

I want to thank members of the three parties for their support and their comprehension of this very important bill. Special thanks to the member for Essex, Bruce Crozier, for the work he did on this bill, and to the member for Cambridge, Gerry Martiniuk, for the amendments.

The Ontario firefighters’ association will be able to continue their annual fund drive for Muscular Dystrophy Canada.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the people we have in the east gallery who are very supportive of this bill: Kelly Gray, from Muscular Dystrophy Canada; the firefighters, Greg Knight, Kevin Ashfield, Chris Bardecki, Cindy George, Brian George, Richard Nault, Richard Metzloff and Cindy Haliday. Welcome to the Legislature. Also, the Boy Scouts association will continue improving their summer program, just to name a few.

If passed, it will be one of the greatest Christmas gifts that all non-profit organizations will be receiving at this time of year.

Cette loi permettrait de reconnaître des activités de financement des organismes de bienfaisance sur les routes municipales. Cela fait longtemps qu’ils rencontrent les conditions suivantes :

« 1. Elles sont menées par une oeuvre de bienfaisance enregistrée en vertu de la Loi de l’impôt sur le revenu (Canada) sur une chaussée où la vitesse maximale est de 50 kilomètres à l’heure;

« 2. Elles sont permises par un règlement municipal de la municipalité dans laquelle elles sont menées. »

Je profite de l’occasion pour remercier encore une fois les membres des trois partis pour leur appui de ce projet de très grande importance.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Further debate?

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): It’s my pleasure to join the debate this afternoon and to congratulate the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for bringing forward this private member’s bill, Bill 58.

I also would like to recognize the firefighters and those representing Muscular Dystrophy Canada who are here in the Legislature today. I won’t go through the list of names, but welcome to the Legislature this afternoon.

I would like to congratulate the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, Jean-Marc Lalonde, for bringing this bill forward. All three parties have worked together for this bill. This bill, for those who aren’t aware, “amends the Safe Streets Act, 1999 to provide that the prohibition in section 3(2) of the act does not apply to fundraising activities that are conducted by registered charitable organizations on roadways where the speed limit is not more than 50 kilometres per hour, as long as these activities are permitted by municipal bylaws.”

Firefighters are one of the groups that will use this to their benefit for fundraising activities, and I think we all agree that that should be happening for the benefit of our many communities.

We look forward to this bill passing this afternoon. It will be a nice Christmas gift for the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. He is also known as the coach of the Legiskaters hockey team. I have to say that his record is pretty bad, though. We play about one game every two years. We had our first game this past Sunday against the security guards and kept our record of always losing. I think they stopped scoring at about 4-1. I think he’d better start a conditioning program for the MPPs around this place, because we’re all in pretty bad shape sitting around in these cushy chairs so much of the day.

I look forward to supporting this bill. I’m pleased to see it coming forward, and I think it is a positive bill.

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I regret that I have but 20 minutes to deal with this bill, and I will do my best to be as concise as possible.

I do want, though, to join the Speaker in his praise of the pages, the young women and men who have been serving us over the course of last several weeks. This group of pages has been a delightful group of incredibly bright, talented young people, and I know that everybody wishes them well. There are members of this Legislative Assembly who served as pages, and I want these pages to be cognizant of that. I’m sure I speak for everybody in the chamber when I encourage pages who are here, and who will be joining us in the future, to reflect on elected positions as options in their own careers. I think the public service would be in good hands were these pages, in the next 10 and 15 years, to be sitting in some of these very seats.

The government House leader might be interested in the fact that I took a look at the history of the so-called Safe Streets Act, 1999, it’s course through this legislative chamber. New Democrats fought it tooth and nail, the whole kit and caboodle. Even today, the bill hasn’t elim-

inated panhandlers down at the end of University Avenue. Mr. Flynn, who has to drive home to Oakville in rush hour in a few minutes, as he is driving down University Avenue and trying to turn right on to Lakeshore to get on to the Gardener, is still going to be accosted, if that's not too harsh a word, by panhandlers.

I quit smoking, so I keep loonies and toonies in the ashtray. The problem is, before this stupid Safe Streets Act, at least I'd get my windows squeegeed. Now I accommodate the panhandler but he or she doesn't carry a squeegee because it is a bustable offence. To the people who advocated and supported this bill back in 1999, what were you thinking? I now have to get on to the Gardener, like Mr. Flynn, with a mucky windshield, with nobody at the foot of University Avenue to do a quick squeegee.

I would have hoped that the Liberals would advocate the repeal of the whole Safe Streets Act. It was a phony bill to begin with. It was a stupid bit of legislation, and it has punished poor people as well as good folks in all our communities, firefighters among them, who have traditional fundraising activities along the roadside.

1620

In reference to the course of this bill through the Legislature, we fought it tooth and nail—the opposition, all the opposition. It was only by a time allocation motion—a closure motion, Mr. Bradley—that the government was able to force this to second reading. It was a recorded vote on the time allocation motion, on the closure motion. This was at a point in time when Mr. Bradley was prepared to stand with me in opposing closure motions and Dwight Duncan was prepared to stand with me in opposition to closure motions—Mr. Bradley and Mr. Duncan both knowing full well that closure motions are not good for democracy, not good for Parliament, and they're not the way you develop legislation and policy. That was the Mr. Bradley I knew then, and I wanted to remind him of that time in his life and career when he opposed time allocation motions. I'm looking forward to the next opportunity that Mr. Bradley will have to stand up with me in this Legislature, voting against a time allocation motion, just like we did back then in 1999.

It is incredible how much money has been lost to any number of organizations as a result of the Safe Streets Act. We encourage this amendment, as we have from the get-go. Obviously, Liberals and New Democrats were pointing out to the government as emphatically as possible during the course of committee hearings what this bill would do to fundraising activities.

So the amendment is one we're going to support. I want to tell you, though—both the people who are watching and listening and the folks here—that I personally am concerned about the wording of the bill. And I don't fault the sponsor of the bill for that; it's the bureaucratic level, the lawyers, who got—

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): Let's go home.

Mr. Kormos: There's a Liberal behind me heckling, saying he wants to go home. The Liberals simply don't

want to work. I can't believe it. Here we are, it's only 4:25 in the afternoon, and Bob Delaney from Mississauga West is whining about how he wants to go home already. For Pete's sakes, Mr. Delaney, an eight-hour workday for once in your life wouldn't hurt you.

So here we are, supporting this amendment. But I indicate, I'm concerned because it talks about activities “conducted by a charitable organization registered....” In referring to that, I'm confident that I speak for everyone here when we expect that phrase to be interpreted very broadly.

Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale): Oh, broadly.

Mr. Kormos: And if Mr. Zimmer wants to dispute that, let him stand alone and say so.

We interpret that language very broadly. That is to say that when firefighters or other groups of people are out with the boot campaign—you know, the boot on the roadside—they are acting as agents of the charitable organization for whom they are raising money. So I have concern about the language, and I want to indicate that we are prepared to readdress this promptly should there be people out there—authorities, including judicial authorities—who don't interpret this as broadly as we want it to be interpreted.

Should this bill find itself to be problematic in terms of judicial interpretation—in other words, it's only the charitable organization itself that can do the soliciting—then I want a commitment from the government, and I'm sure I have it. Just nod if you agree, Mr. Lalonde, that we can readdress this quickly by amending the bill yet one more time through this amendment.

I want to tell you that we have firefighters here today, firefighters I know, not just from down in Niagara—from St. Catharines, Welland, Pelham, Thorold and Port Colborne—but firefighters from across the province. They're but one of the groups of people who do fundraising on an annual basis. Labour day weekend, they're always out there. They're going to be out there again just before Christmastime, in this season as well, as I understand it. These firefighters are just tremendous assets to all of our communities. They're not only incredibly brave women and men, but you also see them coaching the hockey teams and the baseball teams, doing the fundraising, being out there supporting their neighbours and making our communities safer places by virtue of their professional lives, and far better places to live in because of their incredible benevolence.

I also want to underscore how important it is for people, even in hard times—and it's hard times; we've talked often about the 52,000 jobs lost in the last short while here in the province of Ontario—to throw that loonie or that toonie, or more if they can, into that boot when the firefighter stops you on the highway. It's also incredibly important that city councils respond with the appropriate bylaw and that city councillors don't get deluded by bogus arguments. The one argument that's used perpetually is, “Oh, our insurance won't cover it.” Oh, give me a break. That's a load of hooley.

Mr. Zimmer: Unparliamentary language.

Mr. Kormos: It's a load of hooley, Mr. Zimmer, and you know exactly what hooley is. It's what you've got all over your shoes when you leave this chamber—that's hooley. You step in it—that's hooley. It's a load of hooley for city councillors to be given the bogus argument that "the insurance won't permit us to do this." There is a need, I believe, for a sample bylaw to be developed so that communities can adopt a uniform bylaw that makes it easy, clean and effective.

I am so sad that my time is coming to an end and I won't be able to speak to this bill much longer. I'm looking forward to the balance of the work we're going to be doing this afternoon, because I'm trusting, of course, that the Liberal government will want to work a full workday through to 6 o'clock. So I'm looking forward to the next matters that are going to be called. I look forward to supporting this legislation and enthusiastically look forward to the balance of the debate over the course of the balance of the day. I don't know whether the government House leader is going to have an evening sitting this evening, because, of course, we're prepared to sit this evening. Again, I would find it strange that when most working people—look, most working people work up until Christmas Eve; they work December 24. So I'd find it most disturbing that, in view of the fact that this House is going to rise today, we not put in a full day through to 9:30 this evening. I'm looking forward to the other matters that will be called, I'm sure, by the House leader.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Lalonde has moved third reading of Bill 58. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, His Honour doth await.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario entered the chamber of the Legislative Assembly and took his seat upon the throne.

1630

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

Hon. James K. Bartleman (Lieutenant Governor): Pray be seated.

The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Deborah Deller): The following are the titles of the bills to which Your Honour's assent is prayed:

Bill 16, An Act respecting the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve / Projet de loi 16, Loi concernant la Réserve agricole de Duffins-Rouge.

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.

Bill 58, An Act to amend the Safe Streets Act, 1999 and the Highway Traffic Act to recognize the fundraising activities of registered charities / Projet de loi 58, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1999 sur la sécurité dans les rues et le Code de la route pour reconnaître les activités de financement des organismes de bienfaisance enregistrés.

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.

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.

Bill 214, An Act to amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act, to repeal the Representation Act, 1996 and to enact the Representation Act, 2005 / Projet de loi 214, Loi modifiant la Loi électorale, la Loi sur le financement des élections et la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative, abrogeant la Loi de 1996 sur la représentation électorale et édictant la Loi de 2005 sur la représentation électorale.

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

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

Bill Pr20, An Act to revive 1376037 Ontario Inc.

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

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): In Her Majesty's name, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor doth assent to these bills.

Au nom de Sa Majesté, Son Honneur le lieutenant-gouverneur sanctionne ces projets de loi.

His Honour was then pleased to retire.

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

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

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock, February 13, 2006.

The House adjourned at 1637.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller
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Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L)	London West / London-Ouest	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement
Bisson, Gilles (ND)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)	St. Catharines	Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader / ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
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Brownell, Jim (L)	Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)	St. Paul's	Attorney General / procureur général
Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie
Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy government House leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L)	Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	Deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
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Duguid, Brad (L)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)	Windsor–St. Clair	Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Oakville	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Travail
Fonseca, Peter (L)	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health Promotion / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Gravelle, Michael (L)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	
Hampton, Howard (ND)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Horwath, Andrea (ND)	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	
Hoy, Pat (L)	Chatham–Kent Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Erie–Lincoln	
Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Burlington	
Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Children and Youth Services / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Kennedy, Hon. / L'hon. Gerard (L)	Parkdale–High Park	Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation
Klees, Frank (PC)	Oak Ridges	
Kormos, Peter (ND)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	New Democratic Party House leader / leader parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kular, Kuldip (L)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale	Parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for democratic renewal / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Leal, Jeff (L)	Peterborough	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Énergie
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	Chief government whip / whip en chef du gouvernement
Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Trinity–Spadina	
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Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Deborah (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Mauro, Bill (L)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	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

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McNeely, Phil (L)	Ottawa–Orléans	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Transports
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	Chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Milloy, John (L)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Mitchell, Carol (L)	Huron–Bruce	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)	Stoney Creek	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Culture and the minister responsible for francophone affairs / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de la Culture et ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Munro, Julia (PC)	York North / York-Nord	
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	Deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Oraziotti, David (L)	Sault Ste. Marie	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources and minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Richesses naturelles et au ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Parsons, Ernie (L)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services (Disabilities) / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires (Personnes handicapées)
Patten, Richard (L)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Peterson, Tim (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Tourism / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Tourisme
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Minister of Government Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Prue, Michael (ND)	Beaches–East York / Beaches–York-Est	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Racco, Mario G. (L)	Thornhill	
Ramal, Khalil (L)	London–Fanshawe	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Northumberland	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House leader / leader parlementaire de l'opposition
Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (L)	Guelph–Wellington	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Victoria–Brock	

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Smith, Monique M. (L)	Nipissing	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Sorbara, Greg (L)	Vaughan–King–Aurora	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Lanark–Carleton	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford	Second Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Tory, John (PC)	Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
Van Bommel, Maria (L)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (Rural Affairs) / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation (Affaires rurales)
Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Wilkinson, John (L)	Perth–Middlesex	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Environnement
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Deputy opposition House leader / leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
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Wong, Tony C. (L)	Markham	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Research and Innovation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
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Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (L)	Willowdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire au procureur général
Vacant	Nepean–Carleton	
Vacant	Toronto–Danforth	
Vacant	Whitby–Ajax	

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Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Michael Prue, Monique M. Smith,
Norman W. Sterling, Kathleen O.Wynne
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Ces listes figurent dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et du premier lundi de chaque mois. Par contre, une liste des circonscriptions paraît si l'espace est disponible.

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