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(Hansard)**

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des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 20 February 2006

Lundi 20 février 2006

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 20 February 2006

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 20 février 2006

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CONSERVATION OFFICERS

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): I have a question: Is this government providing the resources to protect our resources in Ontario? This government inherited Ontario's Living Legacy, the designation of signature sites, the right to hunt and fish, a rejuvenated Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission, and yet now we hear so little. We don't hear about the Great Lakes Heritage Coast, the Nipigon Basin, the Kawartha Highlands or the St. Williams crown preserve. Funding for programs like Ontario's Living Legacy has dried up under this government, funding that sat at \$4.8 million just two years ago. What about funding for enforcement and support of the good work of our conservation officers? Are those expensive trucks sitting in the lots with empty gas tanks?

Greg Farrant, of the Federation of Anglers and Hunters, made these concerns clear to the finance committee in Cornwall, stating, "Because of the lack of operating dollars, conservation officers are no longer able to go on routine patrols and carry out routine assessments. They are to respond only on complaint. So quite often you'll find them sitting in the office instead of being in their vehicles. This is because of fuel costs...."

So I'm concerned: Is this government backing up our fish and wildlife officers? Enforcement can be very lonely, dangerous work. At minimum, they need gas for their trucks.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey (Brampton Centre): I rise today to speak about the progress on the Ministry of Transportation's project to extend Highway 410. In 2004 the ministry, the region of Peel and the city of Brampton partnered to secure land parcels which would allow completion of phase 1 of the highway extension.

Highway 410 is the corridor of economic growth in Brampton. It is essential that we make transportation improvements in Brampton to accommodate the growing population. Our government has invested the money and is keeping its promise of forging ahead with this project. We are now in phase 2, having acquired the land and

completed the design, and will soon be issuing a tender for the plan.

I'm pleased to be part of a government that recognizes the need to invest in transportation infrastructure. The ministry is continuing to work with its municipal partners, stakeholders and the public on the remaining phases of the extension. I'm proud of the progress our government has made and look forward to seeing the highway and driving on it. I believe we are on our way to completing Highway 410 in Brampton.

CHILDREN'S TREATMENT CENTRES

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): There are 9,000 children waiting for necessary therapy and health services from children's treatment centres in this province. This is totally unacceptable.

About 1,053 of these children are served by Kids-Ability in Waterloo and Wellington. These include children who cannot walk or talk properly, premature babies who need therapy to survive and thrive, disabled preschoolers and children with complex medical syndromes.

These children are not being treated equitably or fairly as they wait two to three times longer in the province than many children elsewhere; in fact, it is a wait of nine months for necessary services.

These unfair wait times are penalizing our young children with disabilities, jeopardizing their future in school and life. It is placing an unfair and expensive burden on our schools and undue stress on already worn-down families.

Research from McCain and Mustard tells us that intervention before a child enters school minimizes the health, learning and social problems they would have later in their childhood, and reduces education and health costs. It also shows that we must give them this early intervention in order that they can achieve their full potential.

Despite this research, the government is not living up to the government policy on fairness and equitable access to services. So today, I urge the government to provide \$2.2 million in its budget to eliminate the wait times.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): Last Monday the emergency department at the Sudbury Regional Hospital faced another crisis as patients waited 24 hours to be admitted to a hospital bed. The problem: 55 alternative level of care patients were still in hospital beds, unable to

be transferred to the community because there are no beds and services available for them.

This sorry saga has plagued the community for 18 months now. In October 2004, the Ministry of Health applied a category 1A crisis designation, forcing alternative-level-of-care patients to long-term-care homes on Manitoulin Island and Espanola. City council asked the Minister of Health to open 30 interim long-term-care beds at Pioneer Manor. The minister approved only 10.

Late last summer, the emergency department was in chaos again. Surgeries were cancelled due to a lack of available hospital beds. So in October 2005, the ministry added 15 beds at Pioneer Manor—still short of the original request made by city council. This didn't solve the problem, so the ministry extended its crisis designation to now send frail, elderly seniors to Parry Sound.

Seniors groups went public again, the city again requested more interim beds at Pioneer Manor and finally, in January 2006, 20 more beds were announced. They are still not open. A pre-occupancy review of the beds is required. Hopefully, this will occur by March.

So the crisis continues, with seniors staying in the hospital because there is nowhere for them to go in the community, the ER getting backed up since there are no hospital beds available and surgeries being put at risk with no beds for patients to recover in. What a mess.

To the minister: Get the occupancy review done, get alternative level of care patients into appropriate settings and get the pressure off.

1340

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh): February marks Black History Month, a time when we reflect upon and celebrate the great achievements and contributions African Canadians have made to our province and to our country.

Since Mathieu Da Costa, an African interpreter, took his first steps onto the shores of a yet-to-be-born nation, African Canadians have contributed to our rich history and heritage. Black Canadians hail from all corners of the globe. Indeed, we are a nation consisting of all the ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups of the world. We take great pride in that unique diversity.

This was not always so. There was a time in our history when those of African descent were discriminated against; when most were forced to work in poorly paid jobs. It has been a long struggle towards equality, and there is still work to be done.

Still, we can take great pride in people like the late Garth Taylor, an ophthalmologist and humanitarian from my riding of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh, and the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, who graces us with her presence here today.

Black Canadians, throughout the history of our nation, have played an important role not just in creating a distinct Canadian culture but in forming our essential Canadian values: the values of equality, understanding and appreciation of differences. We must continue to build on this foundation, to promote our ideals of diver-

sity and community both here and abroad. We must never forget that a functional multicultural society depends on understanding, respect and co-operation.

PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): I rise today to congratulate and thank over 1,000 people from around the province who, this weekend, attended the Ontario Progressive Conservative policy conference in Niagara Falls and helped begin the process of building Ontario's new foundations. The conference marked the mid-point in our party's policy process and focused on listening and reaching out to all Ontarians, unlike the upcoming Liberal conference—a closed-door affair, we hear.

On the weekend, we heard ideas about how to restore our economy after two and a half years of Liberal mismanagement and return some of the 80,000 manufacturing jobs lost so far under the Liberal watch, and strategies to keep the lights on in Ontario, something the Liberals clearly have no plan for.

This weekend was a demonstration that Ontario Progressive Conservatives under John Tory's leadership are committed to listening to the grassroots of our party and everyday Ontarians. Unlike the current government, we reaffirmed that we will do what we say we will do when we form the government.

Once again, I would like to thank the over 1,000 people who travelled to Niagara Falls from across this great province and engaged in a process that will help the Progressive Conservative Party build a new foundation for the province of Ontario.

MYLES McLELLAN

Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham–Kent Essex): It is my great privilege to speak about the life of a brave, exceptional little boy: Myles McLellan. Myles attended Our Lady of Fatima school in Chatham. He celebrated his 13th birthday on February 9 and passed away just a few days later.

He had been battling brain cancer since he was nine years old, but instead of giving up, he used his illness as an opportunity to give to others. He raised awareness about childhood cancer and raised funds to help find a cure. The foundation named after him, Myles' Miracle Mission, continues to accept donations to help cancer patients and their families in the Chatham area. I invite my fellow members to consider making a donation in his memory.

On behalf of Premier Dalton McGuinty and all members of the Legislature, we send our thoughts and prayers to Myles' parents, Susan and Wayne, their family, friends and Myles' classmates.

The poet Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote that it is not in the length of life but the depth of life that we find our meaning and purpose. Myles McLellan did not live a long life but he lived a deep life, and it is my sincerest hope that together we will take up his fight against childhood cancer and that his dream of a cure one day soon will be realized.

OMERS PENSION FUND

Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale): I'd like to speak about an issue that is of great concern to the people of Ontario. Bill 206, if passed, would give control of the OMERS pension plan to the people who pay into it and benefit from it.

This is something that CUPE Ontario, along with many other OMERS stakeholders, has been asking for for some time. But now, some members of CUPE Ontario are threatening an illegal strike if Bill 206 is passed. These people have said they will ignore their responsibility to the public and walk off the job.

After extensive consultation, two rounds of committee hearings and a number of amendments, they have decided that they are willing to break the law in an attempt to force the government to give them what they want. They have threatened, among other things, to keep kids out of school, leave roads covered with snow and ignore hydro systems.

As the Premier said in the Legislature last Thursday, threats of an illegal strike have overshadowed the substantive discussions on the legislation. Fortunately, cooler heads have prevailed for thousands of workers across Ontario.

I would like to applaud those CUPE locals that refuse to participate in an illegal strike. I would also like to encourage other locals to stop and think about what an illegal strike means and ask them to join their colleagues in putting the Ontario public service first.

PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): This government knows that no one is stronger than all of us. That is why our vision for Ontario is one where every citizen has access to high-quality health care regardless of their ability to pay. With every new family doctor trained, with every new nurse hired, this government is defying the critics who would rather see us concede the system to the private sector.

Our vision for Ontario is one where every child has the opportunity to learn and grow. We've worked hard to bring peace to our classrooms, because we know that high-quality public education is the best way to ensure our prosperity.

I was saddened to see the Conservatives spend the weekend plotting how to dismantle two of our most precious public institutions. While Liberals are reinvesting in universal health care, the Tories plan to cut health care spending by \$2.4 billion and open the doors to a two-tier system. While Liberals are doing everything possible to revitalize public education, the Tories plan to siphon taxpayer dollars out of the public school system, starving it of the resources it needs to survive.

It's clear that the Tories' renewed commitment to the slash and burn of our province has only strengthened this government's resolve to forge ahead and invest in an Ontario where everyone, regardless of their income, gets taken care of.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL POLICY

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on social policy and move its adoption.

I'm more than happy to give it to Mark, to give to the Clerk. Thank you, Mark.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): Mr. Ramal from the standing committee on social policy presents the committee's report as follows and moves its adoption:

Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 210, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act and make complementary amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 210, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille et apportant des modifications complémentaires à d'autres lois.

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

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MORTGAGE BROKERAGES, LENDERS
AND ADMINISTRATORS ACT, 2006
LOI DE 2006 SUR LES MAISONS DE
COURTAGE D'HYPOTHÈQUES, LES
PRÊTEURS HYPOTHÉCAIRES ET LES
ADMINISTRATEURS D'HYPOTHÈQUES

Mr. Duncan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act respecting mortgage brokerages, lenders and administrators / Projet de loi 65, Loi concernant les maisons de courtage d'hypothèques, les prêteurs hypothécaires et les administrateurs d'hypothèques.

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. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): Ministerial statements.

1350

GENERAL BROCK
PARKWAY ACT, 2006LOI DE 2006 SUR
LA PROMENADE GÉNÉRAL-BROCK

Mr. Craitor moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 66, An Act to name Highway 405 the General Brock Parkway / Projet de loi 66, Loi nommant l'autoroute 405 promenade Général-Brock.

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. Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls): General Sir Isaac Brock died at the Battle of Queenston Heights while leading a charge against invading American forces in the War of 1812. A monument to his courage dominates the Niagara Escarpment just along the side of Highway 405. He is buried there. Highway 405 passes by this monument, and hundreds of thousands of visitors who travel this area are not aware of the fact that a major historic site is located there.

Other highways are named after historic figures, such as Ontario's first highway, the Queen Elizabeth Way. Highway 401 bears the name Macdonald-Cartier Freeway, after two fathers of Confederation and, of course, Hamilton named the Linc after a friend of everyone in this assembly, former Lieutenant Governor Lincoln M. Alexander. So it is appropriate for Ontario to name a highway along Queenston Heights in honour of a man who died heroically for all of our country.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The minister on a point of order.

Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services): I know you're going to say it's not a point of order, but I'd just like to take the opportunity to introduce members of Youth Justice Ontario, who are in the public gallery today. These people run facilities and programs for youth in secure, open, and community supervision who have been in conflict with the law.

The Speaker: Thank you, and are you right, I am going to say it's not a point of order.

On a point of order, the member for Oak Ridges.

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I would like to recognize two special guests in the gallery today: Mr. Don MacKinlay, who is a teacher at Richmond Hill High School, and Mr. Christian Scenna, who is a recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's award for volunteers. They were special guests today at the reception with the Governor General. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): At the request of my friends in the New Democratic Party—

Interjection.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: —and my friend Bill Murdoch as well, I have the following motion.

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): No.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: Don't say no yet. You don't know what it is.

I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Mon-

day, February 20, 2006, for the purpose of considering government business.

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

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1355 to 1400.

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

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Fonseca, Peter	Munro, Julia
Barrett, Toby	Gerretsen, John	O'Toole, John
Bartolucci, Rick	Gravelle, Michael	Oraziotti, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoy, Pat	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bradley, James J.	Jackson, Cameron	Peters, Steve
Brotten, Laurel C.	Jeffrey, Linda	Phillips, Gerry
Brownell, Jim	Klees, Frank	Racco, Mario G.
Bryant, Michael	Kular, Kuldeep	Ramal, Khalil
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kwinter, Monte	Runciman, Robert W.
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Chudleigh, Ted	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Craitor, Kim	Marsales, Judy	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Watson, Jim
Duguid, Brad	Mauro, Bill	Witmer, Elizabeth
Duncan, Dwight	Miller, Norm	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milloy, John	Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael
Horwath, Andrea	Martel, Shelley	
Kormos, Peter	Murdoch, Bill	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 54; the nays are 7.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

MORTGAGE BROKERS

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): It is my honour to rise and introduce an important piece of legislation today, the proposed new Mortgage Brokerages, Lenders and Administrators Act.

Obtaining a mortgage to buy a home is one of the most important financial decisions consumers can make. The McGuinty government recognizes this. That is why we are proposing to replace the outdated Mortgage Brokers Act with new legislation that improves consumer protection, enhances and modernizes financial regulation, and encourages greater competition and choice for consumers. It's an important part of our government's plan to improve Ontario's economic advantage and support a new generation of economic growth through modernized

financial services regulation, and it's an initiative whose time has come.

I'd like to acknowledge some guests in the House today, representatives from three organizations who participated in the consultations on this new legislation. Please welcome Mr. Ron Swift, president, and Mr. Jim Murphy, senior director, of the Canadian Institute of Mortgage Brokers and Lenders; Mr. Jeff Atlin, director of the Independent Mortgage Brokers Association; and from the Consumers Council of Canada, Ms. Eleanor Friedland, vice-president. I want to thank all of them for joining us today and, indeed, for their support of the bill. I've referred them to the opposition House leaders to ensure that this bill gets speedy time coverage and debate.

The existing act dates from the early 1970s. In the three decades that have passed since that act was legislated, the financial services marketplace has changed considerably. Ontario consumers are enjoying many new and innovative mortgage products and services. Mortgage brokers, ranging from large, sophisticated operations to single owner/operator firms, play an increasingly important role in helping consumers with their borrowing needs and in helping lenders to place their funds. More than one home buyer in four relies on the services of a mortgage broker. I think it's safe to say that when the current act was being drawn up decades ago, nobody could have foreseen the evolution of financial services in Ontario.

Consumers, lenders and the mortgage brokering industry support an overhaul of the current Mortgage Brokers Act. They recognize that a sound regulatory climate is critical to ensuring the continued confidence of borrowers and lenders, which is necessary to make markets work.

Before I go into the details of the proposed act, I'd like to provide a bit of background outlining how we got from the decision to do something about the act to where we are today. The government has undergone extensive consultation with the community. A consultation paper and subsequently a consultation draft of the proposed act were released for public comment. The Ministry of Finance also hosted a technical briefing of stakeholders, and my colleague the Honourable Mike Colle, then parliamentary assistant, chaired a round table. Some 50 written submissions on the consultation draft were received. The proposed Mortgage Brokerages, Lenders and Administrators Act, 2006 was developed out of this extensive public consultation and has the support of stakeholders.

I'd like to thank former Minister Greg Sorbara, Minister Colle, and officials at finance and the Financial Services Commission of Ontario for all their hard in getting us to this point.

The transparent process by which we have prepared this legislation will help ensure that it works for the people, businesses and economy of our great province. We are delivering on our 2004 and 2005 budget commitments to build a strong economy in a culture of transparency and accountability.

Key benefits that would result from implementing the new act include improved consumer protection, streamlined regulatory requirements, strengthened investor protection and cost-effective regulation. I'd like to briefly touch on these points now.

The proposed Mortgage Brokerages, Lenders and Administrators Act would, first and foremost, improve protection for the growing number of Ontarians who use the services of mortgage brokers. This legislation would improve accountability by all industry participants to ensure consumers are adequately protected.

First off, all industry participants involved in dealing, lending or trading in mortgages will need to meet education and suitability requirements, and be licensed by the Financial Services Commission of Ontario.

Secondly, brokerages will be responsible for the actions of their brokers and agents. Each brokerage will be required to have a principal broker, and it is intended that the principal broker will oversee conduct and act as the chief compliance officer for the organization.

In addition, the new act proposes a separate licence for those who administer mortgages, which involves handling investor funds. We are aware that some exemptions from licensing will need to be made and we've made them accordingly or will do so in regulation.

And modern enforcement provisions would provide appropriate measures for FSCO to address particular infractions of the act. Included are new cease-and-desist powers and the ability to levy administrative penalties.

Another feature of our proposed legislation is the elimination of current foreign ownership restrictions, which we heard support for during the consultations. Removing the restriction on foreign ownership would encourage greater competition and innovation, improve service and provide more options for consumers.

Before concluding my remarks, I'd like to mention that this new act does not signal the end of our commitment to updating regulation of the mortgage brokering industry. There is a comprehensive review currently under way by FSCO of education requirements, and we continue to consult with industry and consumer stakeholders on the regulations.

These are just some of the highlights of our proposed Mortgage Brokerages, Lenders and Administrators Act. Consumers and the industry fully support the new act and have been thoroughly engaged every step of the way in developing this legislation. I'm very proud of the legislation that we are putting forward today.

I appreciate the support we've had, and hope we'll continue to have, from members as we move ahead. I look forward to debate on this very important bill.

1410

ONTARIO HERITAGE WEEK
SEMAINE DU PATRIMOINE
DE L'ONTARIO

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs): It is

with great pride and pleasure that I stand before this Legislature today to encourage both members of this House and the people of Ontario to participate in the province-wide annual celebration known as Heritage Day.

The Heritage Canada Foundation designated the third Monday in February as Heritage Day back in 1973. In 1985, Ontario designated the third week in February as Ontario Heritage Week. Today, National Heritage Day kicks off our own provincial week of celebration. This year's theme focuses on our cultural heritage places.

Earlier today, I attended the Ontario Heritage Trust launch of Ontario Heritage Week at the Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre Centre. The event was attended by heritage stakeholders of every description. That's because heritage matters to people of Ontario.

Le secteur du patrimoine en Ontario a connu une excellente année. L'adoption du projet de loi 60 en avril 2005 a permis de placer l'avenir de nos ressources patrimoniales provinciales entre les mains des Ontariennes et des Ontariens. C'est tout à fait normal, parce que les Ontariennes et les Ontariens savent que le patrimoine est important et qu'il contribue à améliorer notre qualité de vie et à favoriser la prospérité économique de la province.

This morning at the Heritage Week launch, I took the opportunity to unveil the Ontario heritage tool kit. The tool kit contains four guides to help municipalities implement the new act and create successful heritage conservation programs. The tool kit is intended to support the public and local government in setting up an effective municipal heritage committee, researching and evaluating cultural heritage property and understanding the different processes to designate individual property and heritage conservation districts.

Today I also unveiled the first of a series of information sheets on cultural heritage and archaeology policies of the provincial policy statement under the Planning Act. All publications contained in the Ontario heritage tool kit are also available at the Ministry of Culture's website.

La nouvelle Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario, qui est une loi plus musclée, fait des municipalités ontariennes des leaders. La trousse de publications inclut des guides essentiels et des cartes qui aideront les municipalités à fixer leurs objectifs en matière de conservation du patrimoine. Cette trousse n'aurait pas vu le jour sans la contribution inestimable de nombreux intervenants dévoués oeuvrant dans le secteur du patrimoine. La publication de cette trousse aujourd'hui témoigne de façon tangible de l'engagement pris par mon ministère au plan de l'habilitation du secteur du patrimoine et du soutien qui lui est accordé dans le cadre de ses travaux.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Ontario Heritage Trust and its chair, the Honourable Lincoln Alexander, for its fine work in leading this year's Ontario heritage celebrations. Heritage Week is also a good time to thank the many local heritage organizations as well as the hundreds of dedicated volunteers across the

province who give their time and energy all year long to help preserve and protect Ontario's heritage.

Happy Heritage Week. Bonne Semaine du patrimoine.

HEATHER CROWE

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion): I rise to pay tribute to a courageous woman who is an inspiration in the fight to protect workers from the ravages of second-hand smoke in the workplace and in enclosed public places.

The fatal consequences of prolonged exposure to second-hand smoke have been well documented. Heather Crowe is an Ottawa-area waitress who worked in a series of smoke-filled restaurants for over 40 years, and Heather in fact never smoked a day in her life. In 2002, she was diagnosed with lung cancer from second-hand smoke in the workplace. Since her diagnosis, Heather has become a tireless advocate to ban smoking in the workplace and in public places.

On a pu la voir dans les messages d'intérêt public produits par la Fondation des maladies du coeur de l'Ontario et par Santé Canada visant à sensibiliser le public sur les dangers de la fumée secondaire. Madame Crowe a parcouru cette province, et toutes les régions du pays, poussée par un seul but : faire modifier les lois de telle sorte que d'autres travailleurs ne subissent pas le même sort qu'elle.

In April 2005, Heather Crowe appeared before the standing committee on health and social service policy during the public hearings for Bill 164, the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. Heather told the committee, "I'm hoping that you will understand that I'm not asking smokers to give up smoking; I'm simply asking them to step outside to save a life and make a difference in our workplace so we can at least be living. Workers shouldn't go to work to die."

The McGuinty government heard people like Heather Crowe and we acted to protect the health of Ontarians by introducing—and I give credit to my colleague the Minister of Health, the Honourable George Smitherman—the most comprehensive anti-smoking legislation in the province's history, which will come into effect on May 31, 2006.

It's with great sadness that I report to you that Heather Crowe's cancer is no longer in remission, yet Heather continues to fight her illness with courage and determination. She also continues to fight to protect workers and the public at large from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke.

Il y a un grand nombre de personnes et d'organisations partout en Ontario qui ont fait, à l'image de madame Crowe, d'énormes contributions aux efforts de lutte contre le tabagisme.

On behalf of the government of Ontario, last December we created the Heather Crowe Award to acknowledge the efforts of individuals and organizations that promote smoke-free initiatives in their communities. The award is for residents like the citizen who spearheaded

the development of a local bylaw to ban smoking in public places, or a former smoker who visits schools to talk to young people about the dangers of tobacco use, or a young woman who advocates against teens smoking.

On December 16, Premier McGuinty and I had the distinct honour and privilege of visiting Heather Crowe's nursing home in Ottawa and presenting her with the very first award in her name.

I've since presented the Heather Crowe Award to Sergei Sawchyn, the original owner of Smokeless Joe, a bar located in the heart of the entertainment district of Toronto. A decade ago, long before any city bylaw, Sergei made his bar 100% smoke-free, an original and courageous example that exemplifies what the Heather Crowe Award is all about.

In Sault Ste. Marie, I recently joined MPP David Oraziotti in presenting the Schools Without Borders Youth Smoke-Free Committee with the Heather Crowe Award. This youth committee played an important part during the city council debate on a smoke-free bylaw, launching a targeted campaign declaring their right to live and work in a smoke-free environment. The student committee mobilized 16 schools to participate in the campaign, which saw 1,511 paper hands signed by youth in support of a smoke-free bylaw.

I should also commend the Sault Ste. Marie hospital. It so happens that just when I was there and I walked into their board meeting to meet with them, they had finished passing a new regulation that requires individuals to smoke completely off the property. So I commend them and other hospitals, such as CHEO in my hometown, the Ottawa hospital.

In Thunder Bay, I met Jim Morris and Simon Hoad, two residents who first began lobbying Thunder Bay city council in the 1980s to ban smoking in restaurants and bars, literally decades before most others imagined a smoke-free Ontario.

Finally, I want to commend the Westin hotel chain, which was the first private company to eliminate smoking in all their hotels across North America on January 1, 2006. I was joined by my colleague the member for Ottawa-Vanier to present John Jarvis, an innovative individual who is the general manager of the Westin in Ottawa, for bringing in this very worthwhile new regulation that I believe is going to help business, not hurt business.

Je suis fier d'annoncer aux membres de l'Assemblée que ce gouvernement a reçu à ce jour près de 100 nominations pour le prix Heather Crowe.

We've received over 100 nominations for the Heather Crowe Award. I am privileged personally to know Heather. I got to know her when she worked in one of those restaurants that did not have a very progressive smoking policy. Heather Crowe Award nominations will be accepted through MPPs' offices until May 31, which is the day the smoke-free Ontario legislation comes into effect.

I thank all of those members from both sides of the House who have submitted the applications. It's a won-

derful opportunity for us to encourage these people in our communities who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to help protect the lives of people, whether in the hospitality industry or in an office environment.

I want to thank Heather for her courage and determination to ensure no future employee in the province has to go through what she has suffered.

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

1420

MORTGAGE BROKERS

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): I'm pleased to respond to the earlier statement by the Minister of Finance concerning the introduction of the Mortgage Brokerages, Lenders and Administrators Act, 2006. I too, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, want to recognize and thank Ron Swift, the president of the Canadian Institute of Mortgage Brokers and Lenders, and, in the gallery as well, the affable and very handsome Jim Murphy, who has played a role in this, somebody whose judgment we have a lot of faith in as well, among others in the gallery, and to congratulate them all on the work they have done to date in bringing this legislation forward.

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): Does that mean that the rest of them are not handsome?

Mr. Hudak: I won't delay comments from my other colleagues by rating the members across, but what I can rate is that I know they're excellent individuals, dedicated to the profession, and I have great confidence in the advice they have brought forward to government and the opposition parties as well on this legislation.

We look forward to reviewing the bill when we'll have a chance to look at its details, and we are pleased the minister has brought this bill forward to the House. There's no doubt that the mortgage credit industry in Canada is growing significantly, particularly here in Ontario, and we need to ensure there are high qualifications involved in the business side.

I do want to take a few seconds to remind the government that there are ongoing concerns with one of the minister's colleague's bills, Bill 14, in how it interacts with some of the same services done by the mortgage brokers among others in that field. So we look forward to debate on this bill when it comes forward, but we also want to register an ongoing concern with some of the provisions under Bill 14, I think standing under the Attorney General.

ONTARIO HERITAGE WEEK

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): I'm pleased, on behalf of John Tory and the PC caucus, to be able to join in with the minister in launching Ontario Heritage Week.

I think all of us recognize how important it is to our culture and our sense of identity, to our understanding of

the past, because, of course, it is only through the preservation and the viability of our heritage that we're able to define ourselves and recognize who we are.

In my own case, I look at the work done by the many people who work at fundraising and volunteering for the sites that are in my riding, including such places as the Campbell Museum and the national historic site of the Sharon Temple; and the folks who work on the Lloydtown rebellion and the Georgina Pioneer Village. They have also undertaken to launch and fundraise for a new military museum as well. So there's much, then, that all of us can take pride in.

I would suggest, however, that there are some things the ministry and, through the minister's leadership—certainly we would appreciate a much stronger voice on the issue of the provincial archives from this minister, as well as a stable commitment to funding for our small-town libraries.

Heritage is recognized around the world, and we have to accept the fact that we need to have that strong provincial voice to maintain the viability and economically sound value of our heritage property sites. Of course, the province is the owner of many of those.

We look forward to the minister accepting the challenge of continuing that kind of opportunity for all of us in Ontario.

HEATHER CROWE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): I'm very pleased to respond to the Minister of Health Promotion on behalf of John Tory and the Progressive Conservative caucus.

We rise with our colleagues today to pay tribute to this very, very courageous woman, Heather Crowe, who has been such an outstanding inspiration in her fight to protect other workers from the consequences of second-hand smoke. She certainly has been a tireless advocate. She has obviously done more than any other individual to ban smoking in the workplace and in public places. We appreciate the tireless efforts that she did undertake on behalf of all other workers who unfortunately will suffer as a result of being in a workplace with smoke.

I am sorry and I'm sad, as the minister has said, that her cancer is no longer in remission. Certainly our prayers and our thoughts go to Heather as she continues her fight. I'm pleased that so many people have come forward to recognize that—

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

MORTGAGE BROKERS

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): In response to the Minister of Finance, we welcome, of course, any reform in this area. I would like to thank all of those people who have participated to make the reforms as far-reaching as they appear to be. There are three items, though, that I would like to draw attention to at this point.

The first is that the minister has spoken about consumer protection, and I did not hear anything, nor do I see anything in the notes, about consumer education. Clearly, if this new act is going to be as far-reaching as I hope it will be, then the consumers will need to be protected by way of education as to what they might expect in this bill and how it differs from the past one.

I also would like to speak about the exemptions, because I find them rather far-reaching, and there's no explanation for them. It says, "Financial institutions and their employees are exempted." It goes on to say, "Persons and entities that provide simple referrals are exempted." It goes on to say, "Other exemptions from the requirement to be licensed include exemptions for lawyers." So it appears that there are many, many exemptions here, and I'm not sure as to the rationale. We'll be trying to find out the rationale for those many exemptions to a bill that requires licensing.

Last but not least, the bill goes on, I think puzzlingly, to explain, "The Mortgage Brokers Act imposes foreign ownership restrictions on mortgage brokers. That act also requires a prospectus to be filed with the superintendent in respect of mortgage transactions involving land outside of Ontario. The new act does not include such provisions." So it would appear that the new act will not protect Ontarians and Canadians from foreign ownership, nor will it protect people who buy property outside of Ontario.

We are going to have to look very closely at these as it goes into second and third reading debate.

ONTARIO HERITAGE WEEK SEMAINE DU PATRIMOINE DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): On behalf of New Democrats, I was pleased to be at the Ontario Heritage Trust launch of Ontario Heritage Week at the Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre. That building is a true gem that we have, and each time I go I realize the wonders of what we hold by way of heritage buildings.

The preservation of Ontario's heritage has grown in the last 10 or 15 years, has attracted a great deal of interest and has attracted a lot of adherents to the preservation of our heritage, which is very good to see, so much so that if it weren't for them, we would not have had Bill 60 before us today, because it was they who forced the Liberal government, after sitting on that bill for one year—to bring it forth. I tell you, it's an opportunity to thank the heritage activists for the great work they have done.

This too is another opportunity to remind the Minister of Culture and to remind Monsieur McGuinty, who is present with us, that in order to preserve our heritage and to maintain and build on our culture, we need to give it more support, not less. To this extent, the government last year cut the budget of the Ministry of Culture by 6.8%.

You will know and remember that the Conservative government devastated the Ministry of Culture in a good economy. We were hoping that this minister, in a good economy, would increase the support for culture. Instead, we have sustained yet again 6.8% cuts.

Je vous encourage tous et toutes à participer cette semaine aux événements organisés dans ma collectivité locale. Aussi, comme vous le savez, le ministère de la Culture a subi de grandes coupures. J'encourage les citoyens, les citoyennes et les organismes patrimoniaux de presser le gouvernement libéral d'augmenter leur appui financier. Merci.

1430

HEATHER CROWE

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): Our thanks to Heather Crowe for her tremendous courage and commitment. Heather Crowe never smoked a day in her life, but she contracted lung cancer. The WSIB ruled that her cancer was directly related to the second-hand smoke that she had breathed in every working day of her life over 40 years, working as a waitress in smoke-filled restaurants.

Heather Crowe could have taken her decision and she could have gone home, but she made a very conscious decision to become an advocate; she decided to use her first-hand experience to try and get governments to ban second-hand smoke in workplaces and public places. She had no public speaking experience, no knowledge of how to lobby government, but she visited many governments and many people who were in authority to try and convince them that second-hand smoke kills and to ensure that workers would not be subject to the same fate that she had.

We are very sorry today to hear that her cancer is out of remission, and we send our thoughts to her and our best wishes, as well.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): A question to the Premier concerning the ongoing scandals around his Minister of Transportation: In a sworn affidavit, Minister Takhar's trustee states that at his April meeting at Chalmers "Mr. Takhar's telephone rang" and he proceeded to go outside and to speak upon it.

Premier, if this is the case, why is there not a single record of his phone call or any other phone call from Minister Takhar's cellphone at that time or that day?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I will be pleased to address these kinds of questions for as long as the opposition would remain interested in them, but having said that, I think that the Integrity Commissioner dealt with this matter conclusively. Beyond that, the Minister of Trans-

portation also has taken the necessary measures that were requested by the Integrity Commissioner with respect to dealing with his trustee in an effective way, and he also has apologized a number of times now.

I have every faith that he has drawn whatever lessons should be drawn from this experience and that he will continue to work as hard as he can to uphold the public interest.

Mr. Hudak: I understand why the Premier refuses to address the facts in the question. It gets worse: Minister Takhar, in a scrum Tuesday with the media, said it was not registered on his own cellphone log because he was using his wife's cellphone. However, in paragraph 19 on page 8 of your minister's sworn affidavit, the following quote: "Towards the end of the meeting, my cellphone rang and the reception inside the building where we were meeting was poor."

Premier, you have two very different and contradictory versions of the truth from your minister. Are you going to support this minister and keep him in the executive council, when it's clear that his story does not meet with the facts?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I have every confidence that the Integrity Commissioner would have dealt with this issue and any others that would have been either immediate in nature or collateral.

There were three separate allegations made by Mr. Tory. One was whether Minister Takhar's company benefited from his position in cabinet, and the Integrity Commissioner found that the answer to that question was no. The second was whether Minister Takhar was involved in the running of his family business while also ministering and, again, he answered no. What he did find was that the minister did err when he didn't tell the commissioner that his trustee, who had originally been approved by the commissioner, had also become the CFO of his riding association, and we agree with that as well.

I believe the matter has been dealt with by the Integrity Commissioner. If there are additional issues that the opposition member feels are pressing and of concern to the public, then, again, he can raise those directly with the Integrity Commissioner.

Mr. Hudak: It's disappointing that the Premier does not seem to care that there are two contradictory statements by his Minister of Transportation on a very serious issue. I'll say again: We have an FOI of the minister's cellphone bill. It does not reveal a telephone call that day. The Minister of Transportation, in a sworn affidavit, said he made a telephone call that day. One of two things is obviously apparent: either he tampered with the with the FOI, or his statement of the cellphone does not reach with the facts. Mr. Premier, which is it, and will you get to the bottom of this or move your minister to the back row where he belongs?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The opposition, the Conservative Party, is apparently very unhappy with the Integrity Commissioner's findings and recommendations. Again, if they think they have something new that the Integrity Commissioner has not properly considered, then of

course they are at liberty to raise that with the Integrity Commissioner. But from my perspective, I believe the matter has been dealt with conclusively. I think—in fact, I know—the Minister of Transportation has drawn the important lessons that should be drawn from this experience, that he remains absolutely committed to upholding the highest standard in his capacity as a minister and as a representative of a riding, and that he will work as hard as he can to uphold the public interest.

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

Mr. Hudak: Premier, this is a serious problem. When you were on this side of the House, you raised bloody hell at the slightest whiff. It's obvious that your Minister of Transportation has said two entirely contradictory things about the cellphone at the meeting at the Chalmers Group. Your Minister of Transportation has broken the Members' Integrity Act; he has been found in violation by the Integrity Commissioner. Your minister has a sworn affidavit saying that he made a phone call, or received a phone call, that day at Chalmers, but last week he said that was not the case.

Premier, it's a question about your minister and it's a question about your ethical standards that you set for your cabinet. How can you stand by this minister, knowing that his own words indicate that a sworn affidavit has provided false information to the Integrity Commissioner?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I'm not sure about the propriety of that assertion just made by the honourable member, but let me say this: The Integrity Commissioner asked for and received the information he sought with respect to cellphone records. If for some reason the member opposite now believes that the Integrity Commissioner should have access to new information that he feels is important—and essentially what he continues to say is that he's not satisfied with either the thoroughness of the investigation made by the Integrity Commissioner or the findings of the Integrity Commissioner—then that's a matter, once again, that he should, himself, take up with the Integrity Commissioner.

Mr. Hudak: Again, Mr. Speaker, this is the Premier and the standards, or the lack thereof, that Premier McGuinty sets for his cabinet. Your Minister of Transportation had a sworn affidavit saying he received a cellphone call at Chalmers on that controversial day. The Premier is well aware of that day; he's well aware of the call. We waited some seven months for his cellphone bills through the freedom of information request. We finally got them back, we looked at that very day, and not a single call on the minister's cellphone, as he claimed there was.

Mr. Premier, how can we have any belief in the words the Minister of Transportation says, how can we have any belief in your picks for cabinet, when we find that his sworn affidavit does not meet with the facts that we found under the freedom of information request?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The member opposite is under the mistaken apprehension that somehow volume adds to the logic of his assertions.

I have every faith in the Integrity Commissioner. He has reviewed this matter. If this particular Integrity Commissioner has shown anything, he has shown himself to be thorough. He took a great deal of time to reflect on this matter and to hear evidence that was brought in over an extended period of time, and he came to the conclusion that he did.

I think the matter has been dealt with. I think it has been dealt with conclusively. Once again, I say to the member opposite that if he is not satisfied with either the result or the process culminating in that result, then that is something he should take up, once again, with the Integrity Commissioner.

1440

Mr. Hudak: The opposition makes no apology for raising the volume on this issue. The Premier is obviously voluntarily deaf when it comes to the conduct of his Minister of Transportation. I say to you again: On one hand, the Minister of Transportation says in a sworn affidavit that he used his cellphone that day; on the other hand, in a discussion with the media last week, he said he did not use his cellphone that day. We got the freedom of information request, and it showed that he made or received no calls from Chalmers that day. It's one of two things, Premier: Either the FOI request has been doctored in response to the opposition, or secondly, the sworn affidavit by the minister does not meet with the facts. Surely, even for your low standards, you'd look into this and find out, did he break the FOI or did he lie in his sworn affidavit?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Perhaps, in fairness, the member opposite has never had the opportunity to get to know Minister Takhar. Let me say, for the benefit of the members opposite, that he is a man of the utmost integrity. He considers it a genuine privilege to serve in public office, and he considers it a tremendous honour, beyond that, to serve in cabinet as Minister of Transportation.

He made a mistake. The Integrity Commissioner came to a conclusion, which I completely agree with. The minister has apologized. He has drawn the appropriate lessons from that experience. I think the matter has been dealt with conclusively.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Premier, but I'm happy to tell the House that the score is now Canada 1, Sweden 0.

Premier, you said you would listen to what the people of Ontario have to say about your \$40-billion nuclear power scheme. Last week, you held three days of so-called open houses on your \$40-billion nuclear power scheme. In community after community, working families said no to your \$40-billion scheme and yes to thoughtful energy efficiency and conservation. The question is, will you now listen to the people?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): We will continue to listen to

Ontarians. We're very pleased with the interest that was demonstrated in that 12-city consultation.

Today Ontarians will find being delivered to their mailbox and their doorstep a brochure called *Our Energy, Our Future: It's Time To Talk About Our Electricity Future*. I would encourage all Ontarians, as many as possible, to take a moment to review this literature and take advantage of the opportunity to convey to us their impressions, their opinions, their advice, their concerns at the website listed therein. This is, I would argue, the most unprecedented effort to connect with Ontarians when it comes preparing for our energy future.

Mr. Hampton: This is what people said about your so-called open houses: "a sham," "a disgrace," "totally inadequate."

Premier, you want to boast about this. This is like sending out the New Year's invitation on January 3. The party is over. The open houses were held last week. If anything, what this \$1.1-million pamphlet shows is just how big a sham it is. After the open houses are over, people get something in the mail saying, "Oh, by the way, there was an open house."

There is a way to have a real process where people have a chance to examine the situation and provide alternatives. Will you submit your Ontario Power Authority supply plan to a full environmental assessment, where people can actually look at, examine it and cross-examine it, and provide alternatives?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I really do hope that Ontarians take the opportunity to review this brochure in some detail. A specific website, www.ontario.ca/energy, has been created, which I would encourage Ontarians to avail themselves of. We are very much interested in hearing from them in this regard.

We've got a huge challenge before us, not one that any other government has been prepared to take on. What we're really talking about is what kinds of decisions we need to make today in order to ensure we have the essential supply we're going to need by about 2015. We're taking on an important debate today in order to ensure that we have reliability of supply about 10 years from now. It would be easy to duck that, but I think that would be irresponsible. So in addition to that 12-city consultation phase, we have yet another opportunity we're creating for Ontarians and we very much want to hear from them in this regard.

Mr. Hampton: The open houses, three days, inadequate as they were, were held last week. At some time at the end of this week or next week, people might get their invitation in the mail, saying, "Oh, by the way, the McGuinty government is holding an open house on the future of nuclear power."

Premier, doesn't this seem obvious to you? It seems obvious to everyone else. This is a sham. This is a hoax. This is totally inadequate. Even if people get this during the first week of March, they have to respond within a couple of days in order to make the deadline that you've set out in here. I think it's obvious to everyone that \$1.1 million has been wasted on this. It's the invitation that

comes after the party. This is all about trying to finesse through your nuclear power scheme with the minimum public commentary.

Will you do the right thing, Premier: no more sham, no more hoax, no more invitation after the party is over? Submit your Ontario—

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

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The leader of the NDP does not feel, obviously, that this is a worthwhile undertaking on the part of the government and on the part of taxpayers. I strongly disagree.

Let me tell you about some of the issues that we broach in this brochure and on which we're asking Ontarians to comment. We ask questions like: Do we have enough power right now? What about coal-fired plants? What about wind and other types of renewable energy? What options do we have? What about clean coal? Can we use more natural gas? What about nuclear energy? Can we buy power from other provinces that have more than enough? What is the least expensive choice for generating more power? What about conserving more so we don't have to build new generation? What's the most environmentally friendly choice for generating more power?

I would argue that this is comprehensive in nature. It is balanced, it is thoughtful and it's designed to provoke thinking among Ontarians. Again, we very much look forward to hearing from them.

ENERGY RATES

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): It's an after-the-fact invitation designed to hide the fact that your whole consultation process is a sham.

Premier, I want to ask you about the 6,000 jobs that have been lost in the forest sector under your government as a result of your failure to have an adequate electricity policy. Industry leaders are saying that more job losses are to come—many more. They all agree that it's your policy of driving Ontario's hydroelectricity rates through the roof that is the major factor in killing these thousands of jobs. They've been telling you this for two years now.

My question is, before thousands more lose their jobs, what is the McGuinty government finally going to do about the situation you've created in the forest sector across northern and central Ontario?

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

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): The member will know that if you go company by company, there are very different factors that affect each company. But overall, as our Minister of Economic Development and Trade has said, the rapidly increasing value of the Canadian dollar vis-à-vis the American dollar is the number one issue—

Interjection.

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: They are, Mr. Bisson—that they are saying. Some companies are saying it's the high cost of petro-energy, whether it be the direct fuels they use in their trucks or the resultant by-products and the chemicals that come from a barrel of oil. That has had a high input. All of these inputs have hit them altogether, as many financial analysts have said, as maybe a perfect storm.

As you know, we made an announcement two weeks ago extending for three years the electricity cap so that there is certainty there, and the rate, May 1, will be lower than it is today.

1450

Mr. Hampton: The minister should know that the forest sector has experienced the high value of the Canadian dollar before and they've weathered the storm. They've also had to deal with foreign competition before and they've weathered the storm. But what is different this time is that the McGuinty Ontario government is determined to drive the price of electricity through the roof. Every company that has shut down mills has said that.

Here's the reality, Minister: A mill in Ontario is paying about eight cents a kilowatt hour for their electricity. If they're in Quebec, they're paying four cents. If they're in BC, they're paying 3.5 cents. If they're in Manitoba, they're paying three cents. The reason more shutdowns are happening in Ontario is because the McGuinty government has driven the rate of electricity through the roof.

What are you going to do about that problem? Stop blaming everything else under the sun. They're your electricity rates; you set them. What are you going to do about it, or are you going to kill more jobs?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: Let's be clear what's happening here. First of all, this is not just a problem and a challenge for Ontario industry. This is happening across the country. He knows that pulp mills in Newfoundland, Quebec and BC have closed, as well as in Ontario.

Also, the member makes it seem as if there's no cyclical adjustment going on here. He knows that when he was in government in the early 1990s, there were at least 14 mills that closed on his watch, and all the same factors were there. In fact, electricity prices were not a big concern at that time, but other factors impacted that industry and so there was further adjustment.

In each industry, there will always be cyclical adjustments that happen, and companies will transition themselves to do that. We have invested \$680 million to help that transition now to make sure that this industry can sustain itself.

Mr. Hampton: Once again, the minister wants to blame everyone else. Here's the reality, Minister: When the Cascades mill closed in Thunder Bay, they announced they were moving production to where? Saint-Jérôme, Quebec. When they shut down two paper machines at the Domtar mill in Ottawa, what they also announced was they were moving production across the river to the paper machine in Quebec.

What's happening here is, thousands of jobs are leaving Ontario. They're going to Quebec, Manitoba, British Columbia, they're going to Michigan and Minnesota, and the McGuinty government stands there and says, "Oh, gee, this is too bad." You've got a responsibility to do something, because if more paper mills and more pulp mills shut down, then that means sawmills are going to shut down because they'll have no place to sell the residual wood chips.

My question again: You've created this problem. What is the McGuinty government going to do to fix it before thousands more lose their jobs in the forest sector across northern and central Ontario?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: In the last two weeks, I've been working with all the companies. I've visited Cascade headquarters in Montreal. I've spoken to them there. The assets there are going to be protected. We and the company are looking at securing new owners for that operation, so there may be very good news when it comes to that.

We've also been working on a daily basis with the companies as to what more this government could be doing to help these companies and to help the industry. We're working at that. We have some ideas we've been sharing with them, and they're very excited about what we're about to do. I would say to the member to stay tuned, because this government is about to announce some very exciting new initiatives when it comes to forestry.

OMERS PENSION FUND

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have a question for the Premier. Premier, last week, John Tory wrote and pleaded with both yourself and Sid Ryan, and other affected parties, to sit down and discuss your differences over Bill 206 so that the people of Ontario would know that absolutely everything had been done in order to avoid an illegal strike.

Premier, John Tory seeks common ground and a possible solution to avoid this unnecessary withdrawal of important public services. Sid Ryan is now willing to remove his threat an illegal strike in exchange for meaningful dialogue with and your government. Will you not take him up on his offer?

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

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Let me just say that we believe there have been 10 years of discussions about the OMERS devolution idea. There have been all sorts of legislative hearings, after both first and second readings. There has been an unprecedented number of amendments that have been put forward, discussed and debated. There will be a further debate as soon as the bill is called for third reading. We have done everything possible to try to bring in a bill that is fair to employers and employees. They are the people who should be running this plan. It's

their contributions, and the benefits that will go to the workers from those contributions, who should have the say over that plan. We truly believe that the bill is as good as it could possibly be in being fair to all parties involved. It's time to devolve OMERS, and the time to do it is right now.

Mr. Miller: The bill's a mess. You've had over 100 amendments. You have the employers and the employees upset about it.

Premier, none of us support an illegal strike. Although it may not suit your political strategy to do so, you owe it to the people of Ontario to do everything in your power to avoid this illegal strike. You promised Ontarians labour peace in our province and you promised to end the politics of division, yet you are using the politics of division with Bill 206.

Premier, why then would you break these promises and not provide Ontario families with a last-ditch effort to avoid this illegal strike that will negatively affect them now? Why not do as John Tory has suggested and take a deep breath and step back? Convene a meeting with CUPE, AMO, police and firefighters, John Tory and Howard Hampton, and work out a better solution before the bill is called for third reading.

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: As the member well knows, AMO wants changes to the legislation so that there is unanimity before any further benefits are being made available to be bargained at the local level. On the other hand, CUPE and the employees want it done on a 50% basis. The two positions are directly contrary to one another. As a matter of fact, the executive director of AMO, Pat Vanini, has stated, "What we want and what Mr. Ryan wants are diametrically opposed."

We are simply saying that the solution that we came up with when it comes to supplementary plans is the proper and fair solution, and that is that there should be 50% plus one before mediation and arbitration take place. It's not exactly what AMO wants—

Interjections.

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: —I'm sorry—and it's not exactly what CUPE wants. But it's fair to all parties concerned.

I apologize to the Minister of Energy here for unfortunately touching her, spanking her.

MUNICIPAL FINANCES

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, requiring the city of Toronto to pay for your share of provincially mandated programs has left them with a \$212-million budget shortfall for this year. Your government promised to change the Harris downloading fiasco in order to support cities, and instead they are going bankrupt providing provincially mandated programs. When will you stop perpetuating the unfair downloading of provincial costs onto the backs of the citizens and taxpayers of Toronto?

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

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): We are into discussions with the city of Toronto, as we are into discussions with the municipal world in general. As you know, currently there's the ROMA conference going on at the Royal York, which brings some 1,200 delegates from around the province—municipal elected officials—together for discussions. We're always discussing with them as to how we can improve the delivery of services to municipalities, whether it's the city of Toronto or whether it's the rest of the municipal world.

We know that as a result of the actions that that party across, the Conservative government, took for the eight to nine years before we took over, municipalities are in a difficult situation. Taking our financial situation into account, it's going to take some time to rectify that. We're willing to work with the city of Toronto and we're willing to work with the rest of the municipal world to make sure that the taxpayers and the residents of this province will get the best possible services both at the provincial and the local levels.

Mr. Prue: In opposition, the Premier said that he looked forward "to putting the city of Toronto on a sustainable footing so it can properly assume its responsibilities." But what you are doing, in effect, is allowing Ontario's economic centre to continue to pay for the downloaded programs that you have now adopted from the previous government.

Toronto's property tax base simply cannot afford to shoulder these broken promises any longer. When are you going to start assuming your own bill payments?

1500

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: First of all, the new historic city of Toronto act that has been introduced will do more for the city of Toronto than any government has done over the last 100 years for the city of Toronto. There have been many other initiatives as well that this government has undertaken. Let's take a look at the gas tax arrangements that have been made and the over \$180 million per year that the city of Toronto will benefit from. Let's look at the housing agreements that have been signed with the city of Toronto for the first time in 10 years, from which the city will benefit as well.

There are numerous ways in which we want to help the city of Toronto, and the rest of the municipal world, so that the people of Ontario—and that's really who it's all about, whether they're in Toronto or elsewhere—will get the best possible services. This government is working toward it to make sure that the damage that was done by the previous government can be overcome as quickly as possible for all concerned.

NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie): My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Minister, as you know, promoting economic development in northern Ontario is especially challenging. Our northern communities faced years of neglect under the

former two governments, and Sault Ste. Marie was no exception. We need, as much as any other community in Ontario, new, secure, high-paying jobs to diversify our local economy, to grow and become more prosperous. We also face the same challenges as other jurisdictions, particularly with the forestry industry, with the high Canadian dollar and the unresolved softwood lumber issue.

We've been working very hard in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie to seek out and develop new, innovative projects and opportunities for our community, and I want to thank you and Minister Cordiano for coming to Sault Ste. Marie on February 10 to support the recently announced Algoma-SIAG project. Minister, can you elaborate on the details of this project and explain how our government's GO North program works for communities like Sault Ste. Marie?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): First of all, I want to thank the member from Sault Ste. Marie for the question. GO North is a key component of our northern prosperity plan, and it will help attract investment and create jobs in the north. Through the hard work of MPP Orazietti and our GO North investor program, the McGuinty government is bringing high-value, highly skilled jobs to the people of Sault Ste. Marie. We're doing this by investing in the SIAG Great Lakes Ltd. Partnership, a more than \$35-million joint venture between Algoma Steel and the German-based SIAG company. This will create 140 new high-value, highly skilled jobs, which will create steel wind towers using SIAG's innovative technology.

The GO North investor program is also working with the northern Ontario heritage fund to foster economic well-being. Ontario's commitment to SIAG is that we will make a one-time conditional grant of \$1.75 million and a \$3-million loan from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp.

Mr. Orazietti: Thank you, Minister. This incredibly important investment reinforces the McGuinty government's commitment to play a major role in diversifying Sault Ste. Marie's economy. The creation of 140 high-skilled jobs is fantastic news because it means more employment opportunities and tremendous spinoffs for our city.

Minister, I know that the northern Ontario heritage fund is also an essential tool for our northern communities, especially since we have refocused the fund to focus on job creation. Minister, can you please share with my constituents and this House how the NOHFC is working for northern Ontario and what other initiatives our government is working on to attract international investment into northern Ontario?

Hon. Mr. Bartolucci: I am very pleased to say that we have met our commitment to return the northern Ontario heritage fund to its original mandate, which is fostering private sector job creation. Since October 2003, the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. has approved over \$126 million toward projects that will help create 4,768 net new jobs—that's 4,768 net new jobs. We had

funded 532 projects across the north, leveraging investments of over \$453 million into the northern Ontario economy. We are also promoting investment in northern Ontario through a new video that showcases the north's business advantage, sector strength and the quality of life to international audiences. This video is only part of our GO North investor program.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): My question is for the Minister of Energy. We learned yesterday that each household will soon receive this slick little piece of Liberal advertising, paid for to the tune of over \$1 million by the hard-working taxpayers of Ontario. Minister, what a sham. You pretend—

Interjections.

Mr. Yakabuski: Yes. If it fits, it's reusable.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Stop the clock. Order, Minister of Health Promotion. The Minister of Community and Social Services will come to order. I need to be able to hear the member ask his question.

The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. Yakabuski: Minister, you pretend to consult with people across the province because you're feeling the heat. This is a joke. If you wanted people's input, you should have been asking for it before you released the OPA's report; you should have been asking for that input two years ago. Why don't you simply admit that you don't really care what the people of Ontario think about your failed electricity policy and that this is nothing but a \$1.1-million piece of Liberal propaganda?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy): Actually, if anybody would like see slick, how about the budget of 2003: the education report, the seniors report, all those pictures that are in there—the Premier of the day, Mr. Eves; the finance minister of the day. That's slick.

The difference was that what we did was publish a document in our two official languages which simply asks questions of the people of Ontario. They need to have some information in order to give us back some information about what they believe the supply mix should look like for the future. We've put in motion the 10,000 megawatts we need for 2010, and now we're asking them to participate with us in what the future would look like.

We didn't have to resort to using our pictures; all we had to do was give them the right information and the right tools for them to make good decisions—

The Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Yakabuski: Minister, you're not asking people questions; you're trying to give them the answers. For goodness' sake, there's nothing in there but you trying to get them to accept what is a disaster in your electricity policy; you're trying to get them to accept a failed energy policy. You're not asking them what they think about electricity; you're trying sell your mess. That's what

you're trying to do. It's like offering free first-class passage on a sinking ship. Minister, why don't you simply admit that you never had a plan in electricity?

You know, there's an old saying: Measure twice, cut once. You guys are cutting up the electricity file in this province with a blunt axe. You have made a mess of it. Admit you have no plan and that we're heading for pending disaster under your leadership.

Hon. Mrs. Cansfield: I'm pleased to respond. We've always said we would maximize our existing assets, be they in generation or transmission; we would build new generation, and we have put into action in this province more generation than any other jurisdiction in North America; and we would create a culture of conservation, which we are doing. It's the first time in 12 years that phenomenal things are happening in this province, which has been absolutely dead. If they weren't cancelled by one group, they were ignored by another. They ignored generation, they ignored transmission and they sold off our assets. The difference is that we're going to change the way business has been done: engage the people in Ontario, knowing they have in place a strategy that will ultimately keep the lights on for them. We are going to continue to do that, because that is our job and it is the right thing to do.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. You promised to repeal the so-called Tenant Protection Act within 365 days of taking office. I have to tell you that you're late. Today is 871 days—871. As a matter of fact, you're very late. If you were a tenant, you'd be evicted by now. When Dalton McGuinty asked for the tenant vote, he called this act the “tenant rejection act” and promised to fix it within one year. You promised to provide real rent protection to tenants. When will you repeal this so-called Tenant Protection Act and replace it with effective tenant protection law?

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): Soon. It's coming.

1510

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I think one of his colleagues knows the answer: It's coming soon.

We want to get it right. There have been so many pieces of tenant protection legislation in this province over the last 20 or 30 years that were wrong that we want to get it absolutely right. In order to do that, we had one of the largest consultations ever to take place in Ontario.

We've already done an awful lot for the housing situation in Ontario. We've opened a rent bank in which we put \$10 million, which has prevented over 3,000 evictions that otherwise would have taken place. We signed an agreement with the federal government for a total of \$738 million to make sure there's affordable housing from a home ownership viewpoint, from a rental viewpoint, and from a housing allowance viewpoint for

low-income individuals. We've had the lowest rent guideline increases in this province over the last two years, lower than ever before in the previous 20 years. The new tenant protection legislation is—

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

Mr. Prue: From that response, I think you can just add tenant protection and rent controls to your list of broken promises. Minister, evictions in Toronto have reached record levels. You're talking about stopping them. The Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations calls the recent eviction notices—increases of 10.7% in Toronto and a whopping 14.1% in Scarborough—outrageous and distressing. That's the highest number since the Harris government introduced the Tenant Protection Act way back in 1998. With eviction notices at record levels, how many more tenants have to be evicted before you repeal this act and replace it with one that works?

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: As the member well knows, a new act will be coming to this Legislature soon. As he also knows, quite often the eviction method is used in order to get both sides to mediation, and that's exactly what is happening. We read the articles in the newspaper this week as well and realize that there is a higher level of eviction notices going out than before. We're studying that right now. We're certainly taking that into account as we come up with our new tenant protection legislation. We want to make sure that when that legislation is presented to the House, it is both fair and equitable to good landlords and good tenants. That's what we're striving towards and that's what we're going to deliver.

OMERS PENSION FUND

Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre): My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and deals with OMERS devolution as outlined in Bill 206. As members of this Legislature know, OMERS legislation devolution has been debated for over 10 years and, in 2002, the OMERS board issued a report that involved 18 months of consultation with all planned groups at the table, a report that our government used for the creation of Bill 206.

Since its introduction, the bill has gone through two rounds of committee hearings, with standing committee members hearing over 50 deputations and receiving over 100 submissions from retirees, municipalities and OMERS plan members. During this process, the government accepted a number of amendments from stakeholders and the opposition in order to strengthen the bill. What has emerged from this process is a model for managing the pension plan designed to be fair and equitable. One group, however, that has had particular concerns has been retirees. Could the minister tell the Legislature the role that retirees will play in the new model?

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I know it's a concern about the myths that have been put out there that somehow

pensioners' pensions are going to be affected. I want to say categorically that pensions will not in any way, shape or form be affected. I would encourage pensioners who are interested in this to go to the OMERS website. OMERS is the board that currently governs the pension plan. It's got seven employee representatives and seven employer representatives on there and it clearly and categorically states that pensions are not going to be affected. Current rights are not going to be affected one iota.

As a matter of fact, under the new bill that we're proposing, a pensioner, a retired individual, will have a seat on both the sponsorship corporation and the administrative corporation, which will give them a right to make the kind of decisions that we expect those employers and employees who are members of those boards to make in the future on the plan.

Mr. Milloy: I'd like to point out that Bill 206, if passed, would affect more than 355,000 active and retired workers who rely on OMERS for their pension plan. As I understand it, the province doesn't contribute directly to the plan because it's not an employer. However, the province does contribute millions in the form of transfer payments to certain OMERS agencies; for example, children's aid societies and school boards. I understand that this morning the minister addressed the ROMA/OGRA conference and indicated that municipalities ought to revisit their cost estimates for early retirement options for paramedics, firefighters and police officers. Could the minister explain to the Legislature why he believes that these municipalities need to re-examine their cost estimates?

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: Again, the numbers that have been put out on the potential cost of this plan are, in our opinion, grossly and drastically overstated. There have also been suggestions made that for the supplemental plans that may be negotiated at the local level, once the bill is implemented, there's going to be some sort of cross-subsidization from either the main plan to the supplementary plan or vice versa. That simply cannot happen.

The bill is intended to do two things and two thing only: (1) to make sure that the OMERS file is finally transferred to those employers and employees who have been paying the payments and receiving the benefits from that plan; (2) that supplementary plans be made available to our emergency workers—namely, fire, police and paramedics—who, on a daily basis, risk their lives to make sure that all Ontarians, including you and me, are safe to live in this province.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): My question is to the Premier. This past week Ontarians watched in horror as a landslide wiped out a village in the Philippines and buried hundreds of homes and a school in mud. It is estimated that up to 1,400 people are missing. On behalf of our leader, John Tory, and our caucus, I

extend our condolences, prayers and thoughts to the families impacted by this disaster.

Yesterday, the Canadian government pledged \$300,000 in initial assistance to support the recovery and rehabilitation efforts. I ask you today, will you consider sending \$150,000 to the Philippines on behalf of Ontarians to support the relief efforts and the people who have been impacted by this tragic disaster?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): Let me first of all say that I fully endorse the sentiments just shared by the honourable colleague opposite, and we offer our sincere sympathies and support to the affected communities. I can say that I issued a statement during the course of the weekend. I also have a call in, as we speak, to the consul general. Beyond that, I have not yet had an opportunity to fully consider what we might do by way of assistance. I look forward to getting a moment to speak with some of the ministers in my cabinet about that. But I can say that in the past we have found a way to provide specific assistance to others in other parts of the world in times of need, and I look forward to considering this matter very carefully as well.

Mrs. Witmer: I appreciate the fact that the Premier has indicated that he is prepared to consider making available to the people in the Philippines \$150,000 in order that we can support their relief efforts and also support the people who have been impacted by this severe tragedy. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Just to let the House know, I have spoken to the consul general of the Philippines this morning and offered our condolences and our support. I have also put in a call to our Commissioner of Emergency Management, Commissioner Fantino. Just like this government and this province helped in Katrina where we sent 66 members of the civil service to help, we helped in the tsunami and we helped in Pakistan, we've offered our support. We will have discussions with the consul general of the community to see how Ontario will help, as it always has helped. Despite the fact that some critics have said that we shouldn't have helped in the tsunami, that we shouldn't have helped in Pakistan, we will be there to help the people of the Philippines, as we are connected with the people of the world.

1520

CHILD CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): My question is to the Premier. In 2003, you promised to invest \$300 million of new provincial money for child care, but you broke your promise. You voted down an NDP motion to start spending that child care money that you committed to. You chose to rely solely on federal money instead of taking control and creating the spaces that you promised. Had you kept your promise and invested Ontario dollars in Ontario child care, families needing regulated child

care would know that you had protected their interests even as your fragile federal deal is coming apart.

Will you keep your promise today and show the parents the \$300 million you promised for affordable, licensed child care?

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

Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services): I appreciate the interest of the member for Hamilton East. She should be concerned about the federal deal, about the deal that is being reconsidered, apparently, by the government of Canada. Let me tell you what the people of Hamilton East have to lose here: 2,390 child care spaces and an additional investment of \$93.61 million.

It has been surprising to me that we have heard nothing from the leader of the third party in support of this agreement. There is an agreement in place with the government of Canada and the government of Ontario. Why wouldn't the third party, why wouldn't the member for Hamilton East, why wouldn't Mr. Hampton on behalf of the third party be standing by the parents of Ontario to support—

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

Ms. Horwath: I certainly do know what my community is going to lose, as well as the other demonstration projects, if this government refuses to invest the dollars that they said they were going to invest in child care funding in the province of Ontario. The \$300 million that you promised but didn't deliver would create a lot of child care spaces for those working families. Nine out of 10 children in Ontario can't get the child care they need, and we all know it. You asked Prime Minister Harper to honour the agreement he has with the people of Ontario. He should, but so should you. Will you honour your agreement with the people of Ontario and fund child care spaces with the 300 million Ontario dollars, and when will you do that?

Interjections.

Hon. Mrs. Chambers: I hear a member of the official opposition commenting not in support of the parents of Ontario, but in opposition to our desire to have this agreement honoured. So let me ask you, as members of the official opposition, Mr. Tory and the Tory caucus, to stand behind the people of Ontario, to stand behind parents and children. We have yet to hear anything from you as members of the opposition. So to you, Mr. Tory and your caucus, and Mr. Hampton and your caucus, let me see exactly how serious you are about representing the interests of the parents of Ontario.

Interjections.

Hon. Mrs. Chambers: This is not about politics. This is not about partisan initiatives. This is a deal between the government of Ontario and the government of Canada, regardless of the political partisan relationships, between parents and—

The Speaker: New question.

AMATEUR SPORT

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): My question today is for the Minister of Health Promotion and it's about Ontario athletes. I think all Ontarians would agree that fostering and maintaining a culture of amateur sport in this province is extremely important. In 1992, for some reason, the revenue from the Wintario lottery, which had funded amateur athletes, was redirected to general revenue. Athletes were left without the resources to support themselves while training to represent Ontario nationally and internationally. I know that many amateur athletes in Oakville commit enormous amounts of time to training and conditioning while trying to balance school and work. Minister, how is our government's innovative Quest for Gold lottery going to provide real support to the high-performance amateur athletes in Ontario?

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion): I want to thank the honourable member for Oakville for the question. The Quest for Gold lottery that we launched just a few months ago has been a tremendous success. Our government has committed \$2.5 million, as a result of lottery proceeds from Quest for Gold, to amateur athletes before March 31 of this fiscal year.

Our athletes act as role models and ambassadors for young and old alike. We watch the Olympics with great pride. I'm pleased to report that in the second period the women's hockey team is winning 2-0, and we are very proud of them.

Let me just tell you where that money is going: 70% to direct financial assistance for elite athletes; 20% to increase access to high-performance coaching; and 10% in funding for enhancing the Ontario Games program. And 100% of the net proceeds are going directly to amateur sport in this province. It's not going to a bureaucracy, it's not going—

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

Mr. Flynn: Thank you, Minister. That's great news for any amateur athlete who aspires to compete for Ontario or Canada. Finally, ordinary Ontarians now will be able to support our amateur athletes any time they buy a lottery ticket.

With the Olympics under way in Turin, many Ontarians will be wishing to help those athletes, but there have been fewer Ontario athletes over the past 10 years than ever before. The percentage of Ontario athletes on Canada's winter Olympic teams has decreased by more than half. Similarly, the percentage of Ontarian athletes on Canada's Commonwealth Games teams decreased from 60% in 1986 to 32% in 2002. Minister, how will this lottery reverse this trend, and what can we expect in terms of real revenue from this initiative?

Hon. Mr. Watson: Let me begin by congratulating the Ontario athletes who have done so well in Torino: Jeffrey Buttle from Sudbury captured the bronze in figure skating; Kristina Groves from Ottawa, silver in pursuit long-track speed skating; Christine Nesbitt from London, silver in pursuit long-track speed skating; and 10

members of the women's hockey team are from Ontario. We're very, very proud of them.

Our government, under the leadership of Premier McGuinty, with this Quest for Gold funding, has increased base funding for provincial sports organizations by 83%. That compares to the previous government that cut amateur sports funding by 42% in its first three years.

Let me conclude by quoting Adam van Koeverden from Oakville, an Olympic kayak gold medalist, who said, "This lottery will encourage athletes to stay in Ontario and train here instead of going to Quebec or British Columbia, where they become those provinces' athletes"—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. Sit down.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): I have a question for the Minister of Labour. As I'm sure you're aware, in December Mahle Engine Components announced its closure in Gananoque. That is, as you can appreciate, with 90 employees, an enormous, damaging blow to a small town. The company has since declared bankruptcy and failed to meet its obligations with respect to pensions, severance and health care. Under the Employment Standards Act, you have the authority to order an audit of the company in circumstances such as these. I'm asking why you haven't authorized such an audit to occur, as a request has been submitted to your ministry and was rejected.

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): I think we all share the concern for the employees and their families in that community. As you are well aware from my response to you, under the Canadian Constitution it's the Parliament of Canada that has the exclusive domain over bankruptcies and insolvencies. I responded to you last week in that regard that it is federal jurisdiction and, as a consequence, the Ministry of Labour is not in a position to investigate or assess the legality of a bankruptcy or the proceedings under the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act. The Ministry of Labour does conduct investigations into employment standards claims from a former employer who has gone bankrupt.

1530

There are both unionized and non-unionized employees there. Those unionized employees are encouraged to speak to their unions, and the non-unionized employees are certainly free to contact the Ministry of Labour.

Mr. Runciman: I appreciate the letter, but the minister didn't answer my question then and he hasn't answered it here today. Perhaps he should speak to his predecessor, Minister Bentley, who issued a press release last year lauding the centralized insolvency and collection unit within the ministry for securing close to \$1 million from a bankrupt company in Ajax, Ajax Precision Manufacturing. This was the former Minister of Labour

saying what a wonderful job this unit was doing within the ministry, ensuring that we could go after these companies who structured a bankruptcy so as to avoid their obligations. What's the difference, Minister, between Ajax, where your predecessor lauded an initiative under the Employment Standards Act, and what has happened in Gananoque?

Hon. Mr. Peters: I reiterate that the jurisdiction of bankruptcy and insolvency is a federal matter. This is an issue that is laid out as a constitutional issue, and it is the federal government that is charged with that responsibility. As I said in my earlier response to the honourable member, those non-unionized employees are certainly free to contact the Ministry of Labour, and the unionized employees involved are encouraged to contact their union.

PETITIONS

CANCER TREATMENT

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

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

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

"Whereas this is an inequitable, inconsistent and unfair policy, creating two classes of cancer patients 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 exemptions to meet the needs of their patients."

This has been signed with my support.

IDENTITY THEFT

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

"Whereas identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in North America;

"Whereas confidential and private information is being stolen on a regular basis, affecting literally thousands of people;

“Whereas the cost of this crime exceeds billions of dollars;

“Whereas countless hours are wasted to restore one’s good credit rating;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that:

“(1) All consumer reports be provided in a truncated (masked-out) form protecting our vital private information such as SIN and loan account numbers.

“(2) Should a consumer reporting agency discover that there has been an unlawful disclosure of consumer information, the agency should immediately inform the affected consumer.

“(3) The consumer reporting agency shall only report credit inquiry records resulting from actual applications for credit or increase of credit except in a report given to the consumer.

“(4) The consumer reporting agency shall investigate disputed information within 30 days and correct, supplement or automatically delete any information found unconfirmed, incomplete or inaccurate.”

Since I agree with this, I’m delighted to sign this petition.

CANCER TREATMENT

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

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

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

“Whereas this is an inequitable, inconsistent and unfair policy, creating two classes of cancer patients 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. I’m sending it to the clerks’ table by way of Michael.

MACULAR DEGENERATION

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): It’s a pleasure to stand and read a petition supporting an initiative by my seatmate and colleague the member for Niagara Falls. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario’s health insurance plan covers treatments for one form of macular degeneration (wet), and there are other forms of macular degeneration (dry) that are not covered,

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

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

It’s my pleasure to affix my signature to this petition, and to ask page Hannah to carry it for me.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): “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.”

As I’m in agreement, I have affixed my signature and am giving it to Nicholas to take to the table.

DIABETES TREATMENT

Mr. Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls): I’m pleased to present the following petition, and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“We are requesting that all diabetic supplies, including insulin infusion pumps and the supplies required to maintain them, blood glucose test strips, insulin and syringes, as prescribed by” the medical community, “be covered under the Ontario health insurance plan.

“Diabetes costs Canadian taxpayers \$13 billion a year and is increasing! It is the leading cause of death and hospitalization in Canada. Many people with diabetes cannot afford the ongoing expense of managing diabetes.

They cut corners to save money. They rip test strips in half, cut down on the number of times they test their blood, and even reuse ... needles. These cost-saving measures often have ... disastrous health consequences.

"Persons with diabetes need and deserve financial assistance to cope with the escalating cost of managing diabetes.

"Every diabetic deserves an equal opportunity in caring for their disease."

We're asking the government to provide all costs for this necessary medical assistance.

1540

OMERS PENSION FUND

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have a petition from CUPE Local 1457, from the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas CUPE Local 1457 is concerned by the Liberal government's legislation, Bill 206, Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System Act, 2005; and

"Whereas Bill 206 contains a multitude of changes that will cripple OMERS' ability to manage its \$40-billion pension assets; and

"Whereas Bill 206 makes no provision for oversight of pension funds or accountability; and

"Whereas Bill 206 changes the rules on resolving differences among sponsors, making it harder for CUPE to find a way to improve and protect pensions; and

"Whereas Bill 206 discriminates against women and lower-paid members while providing for special consideration for police and firefighters;

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

"That the McGuinty government abandon passage of Bill 206."

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Etobicoke—help me—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: —Scarborough Southwest. Thank you.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have nothing against Etobicoke; I think it's a great part of Ontario as well.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): I have a petition. It was prepared by Sonny Sansone, who is a resident in my riding. He has several signatures here. The petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontario farmers are facing difficulties in earning their living and supporting their families;

"Whereas urban residents, such as those in Toronto, count on a reliable food supply from Ontario farmers; and

"Whereas farming is an integral part of the Ontario economy;

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

"To ensure that Ontario farmers are supported so that all residents can count on a reliable, well-priced, safe food supply for all Ontario residents."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature to it and hand it to page Jordan.

CURRICULUM

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have a petition to do with grade 12 mathematics curriculum changes from students from the Muskoka area.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of Education plans to remove the study of derivatives from the grade 12 mathematics curriculum; and

"Whereas the grade 12 university preparation course Advanced Functions and Introductory Calculus is designed for students intending to study university programs that will involve calculus; and

"Whereas the course currently provides an introduction to the fundamental concepts of calculus, which are also required in grade 12 physics; and

"Whereas it contains three strands: advanced functions, in which students explore the properties and applications of polynomial, exponential and logarithmic functions; underlying concepts of calculus, in which students develop an understanding of the basic concepts of calculus by analyzing the rates of change involved in applications; and derivatives and applications, in which students develop, consolidate and apply to graphing and problem-solving the rules and properties of differentiation; and

"Whereas all of these strands are requirements for most university programs, and to remove any of them from the high school curriculum will leave the students of Ontario at a disadvantage when compared to the students from other provinces;

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

"To ensure that the Ministry of Education continues to retain all parts of the current grade 12 mathematics curriculum and stops making changes that put the future careers of Ontario students at risk."

I support this petition.

GO TRANSIT TUNNEL

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I hope you will be patient with this petition, because I keep getting them. It's about the dilapidated bridge on St. Clair Avenue West and Old Weston Road. The petition is to the Parliament of Ontario, the minister of infrastructure services and the Minister of Transportation. It reads as follows:

"Whereas GO Transit is presently planning to tunnel an area just south of St. Clair Avenue West and west of

Old Weston Road, making it easier for GO trains to pass a major rail crossing;

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

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

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

Since I’m in full agreement with this petition, I’m delighted to sign it.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington): I have a petition to the Legislature of the province of Ontario:

“Whereas the \$700,000 cut in funding to the Ontario Library Service (OLS) budget will have a significant impact on the delivery of public library service across the province in areas such as:

—reductions in the frequency of inter-library loan deliveries;

—reductions in SOLS’ consultation services and the elimination of a number of staff positions;

—the elimination of province-wide research on library and socio-demographic trends that all libraries need for their own planning;

—the reduction of consortia/charitable purchasing, a service that provides economies-of-scale discounts to libraries on a variety of goods and services; and

—a reduction in the amount of material that is translated for OLS French-language clients;

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

“To restore funding to the Ontario Library Service (OLS) in order to signal support for the Ontario public library system.”

This particular petition has my support and signature because of the major expansion of the library system in the city of Burlington.

FIREARMS SAFETY

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have a petition to do with hunter safety courses, and it says:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the practical examination for the handling of firearms is a valuable component of the hunter safety course; and

“Whereas hunters and safety instructors have grave concerns about the removal of the practical examination for handling firearms;

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

“That the practical examination of the handling of firearms continue to form part of the hunter education safety course for Ontarians.”

ORDERS OF THE DAY

REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 16, 2006, on the motion that the Legislative Assembly adopt the report of the Integrity Commissioner dated January 4, 2006, and approve the recommendation contained therein.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The Chair recognizes the member for Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): I want to welcome the citizens of Ontario to this debate. We’re on live. It’s 10 to 4 on Monday. We’re debating the report of the Honourable Coulter A. Osborne, the Integrity Commissioner, regarding the Honourable Harinder Takhar, Minister of Transportation and member for Mississauga Centre.

I want to, for the record, try to talk about what we’re debating so that those of you who are watching have a better sense of the issue.

You should be reminded that the Minister of Transportation had a controlling share interest in the Chalmers Group, and because he had become a minister, that interest was held in management trust, of which Joseph Jeyanayagam is the Chalmers CFO and is the trustee.

The complaint has to do with the minister having gone on a number of occasions to the Chalmers Group location: on April 29, 2005, including other occasions, December 17, 2004, which we argue is in breach of the integrity act. It is also known that there is undisputed evidence that Chalmers provided a parking place at its offices for the minister, something that may be considered irrelevant or minor by some but something we consider to be a problem, including the fact that the individual’s shares are in trust to Joseph Jeyanayagam, who is the treasurer of the minister’s riding association. So we think there’s a great deal of conflict in what the minister has been involved in, and that is what we are debating.

1550

I will read the preamble of the integrity act, which states the following: “Members are expected to perform their duties of office and arrange their private affairs in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity

of each member, maintains the assembly's dignity and justifies the respect in which society holds the assembly and its members." It says as well, "Members are expected to act with integrity and impartiality that will bear the closest scrutiny." We believe the act has been violated by Mr. Harinder Takhar, the Minister of Transportation. I will go on to show how, based on the evidence provided by the Integrity Commissioner, he has violated the act.

Page 10 of the integrity report: "In his response to the substance of the allegations the minister asserted that in the spring of 2005 he and his wife faced the prospect of paying for their younger daughter's university education starting in September 2005. The minister stated that because of difficulties in arranging a time for discussion about university-related matters he and his wife decided to meet at Chalmers on a workday when both of them were free. As to Mr. Jeyanayangam's attendance at the meeting, through his counsel, the minister stated:

"It was also decided, at the time that the meeting was being set up, that"—I'm having difficulty with his name; I hope I pronounce it correctly—"Mr. Jeyanayangam ... would be asked to attend, since he was in control of the assets from which the education would be paid for."

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): Jeyanayangam.

Mr. Marchese: Those of you who can correct me, please do so. It's a serious matter for me in terms of trying to pronounce it correctly.

The fact that the minister met at the Chalmers company is a serious breach. It's a serious matter that the minister ought to have known would cause a serious problem to him, to his office, to his ministry, to his government, yet he disregarded all the things that he as a minister ought to have known. The fact that he argues he could not find time to meet at home is incredulous to some, but I suspect unbelievable to most. Most of us who have spouses see each other on a regular basis, meet with each other on a regular basis, find lots of time to agree on things, disagree on things, debate things that we may or may not agree on, but we do find the time. It's inconceivable to me that someone's defence would be that the two of them simply could not find the time to meet to discuss a matter having to do with their daughter, who purportedly is to be sent away or wants to be sent away to Britain or Scotland for her education. It's a simple issue in my mind. It doesn't require a whole lot of time. Having been a minister, I can tell you, yes, ministers are busy, but we do have time to talk about serious issues with our partners or spouses at home, at any time of the week, but especially on a Friday or a Saturday or indeed on a Sunday. And if we can't find the time to do that, we are in serious trouble as human beings.

It is unbelievable and inconceivable to me that the argument could be made by the minister or the spouse that they couldn't find the time. Most Ontarians would find that very hard to believe. So the defence that they couldn't find the time and they had to go to the corporation, the company—the place where he should not be found is the only location where he and the spouse and

the treasurer of his riding association, who is also the person to whom his shares are in trust, could meet. A simple half-hour at home on Sunday afternoon, a simple half-hour or hour at home Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon, could easily have been found. For the minister not to be aware of the seriousness of this is beyond me. This is not to attack him, necessarily, because he's a very decent man, from what I know of him in this Legislature. The problem is that when you're a minister, these things you ought to know. The 13, 14 or 15 people that you hire ought to be helping you. If you do not find the time to read the integrity act, one of the 14 or 15 people that you hire should read the act to help you. That would be their job, assuming you have no time to understand the rules of the integrity act. It cannot be that you can make an argument of ignorance as to why you went to the place where you shouldn't be going, instead of meeting at home, or somewhere else for that matter. The defence that has been put forth by the minister is, in my humble view, incredibly weak.

On page 14 of the report, I discovered—because I wanted to read it to understand this better—that the minister's riding association uses the Chalmers Group offices as its official address. Can anybody explain that to me? Remember, he has placed his shares in trust. He should not be stepping foot into that place. We discover that the minister's riding association uses the Chalmers Group offices as its official address. Why would anybody do that? Where are the 14 or 15 people that you hired to help you out? Where are they to tell you, "Minister, this is a problem of an egregious nature," and I will get to that word in a moment. Where are they? Who is it that you hire, highly-paid individuals that are not there to help you out on a simple matter such as this? All of us would have the address of the riding association belonging to the members of the riding association who are part of our executive and the address would be not where we work, not at Queen's Park, not at the constituency office, certainly it wouldn't be at a former company. It would be somewhere beyond reproach. I wager to say that all of the members in this assembly know that, and I wager to say that the majority of the members in this place wouldn't put the address of their riding association in a constituency office or a Queen's Park number, or your own company for that matter. It's just not good politics. It makes no sense.

Mr. Siegel, the defence lawyer for the Minister of Transportation, wanted to dismiss the complaints brought forth by Mr. Tory as frivolous. It's amazing that if somebody complains about the fact that he had two meetings and the man with whom his shares are placed in trust is also the riding association treasurer, those allegations would be considered frivolous by the minister's defence lawyer. Mercifully, the Integrity Commissioner says: "I see absolutely no basis upon which to accede to Mr. Siegel's submissions that the complaint be dismissed as frivolous and vexatious or not made in good faith. The allegations made as related to ss. 10 and 11 of the act require an answer or an explanation. This complaint is

manifestly not frivolous and vexatious or made in bad faith.” The commissioner uses the word “manifestly.” Notice that there is a great deal of weight that is put to the language that is used by the Integrity Commissioner, in this case: “manifestly ... not vexatious.”

1600

I'll move on to the report, on page 27. We're coming near the end of it. “As I have said, Mr. Jeyanayangam produced notes that he said he took during the course of the April 29th meeting. I have annexed a typed version of” his “notes and a handwritten version as Appendix A to this report.” The commissioner says, “I am skeptical as to the legitimacy of these notes.” Take heed, my Liberal friends. He is skeptical as to the legitimacy of those notes.

“Perhaps my skepticism is in part caused by my concern as to why this meeting at Chalmers was held in the first place and why” he “was invited to participate.” I make mention of this. Farther down the page, “Notwithstanding my skepticism about Mr. Jeyanayangam's notes, having regard to the standard of proof—clear and convincing evidence—I am not satisfied that the evidence establishes that the minister was engaged in the management of a business carried on by a corporation. There is, however, no doubt that the minister was egregiously reckless in participating in the April 29th meeting at Chalmers. He virtually invited a complaint by his conduct.”

Note the use of the words “egregiously reckless.” When I use the word “egregious” in this assembly, I use it to make a point. It's a point of emphasis. It doesn't say it was really, really bad. When you use “egregious,” you manifestly add so many adjectives about how really, really, really bad it is. “Egregiously reckless” is strong language used by the commissioner. I say this as a non-lawyer, but we all understand that when we use language it has weight when you use certain words. The weight of these words was “egregiously reckless in participating” in that “meeting. He ... invited a complaint by his conduct.”

It goes on, on page 28: “Any inferences that I might draw from evidence that I accept must not be speculative. It seems to me that were I to conclude that the minister engaged in the management of a business, particularly on April 29th, I would be trespassing on the ground of speculation. I can find no more than an error in judgment, that is negligence, on the minister's part. I therefore conclude this aspect of the complaint has not been established.”

Remember, the commissioner is saying it would be speculation to talk about what happened on April 29, but he does say that this is an error in judgment and that it is negligence. Usually, when an Integrity Commissioner uses that kind of language, we call for the resignation of that member, as indeed Monsieur McGuinty did when he was in opposition. For the record, and for my and your enjoyment, Speaker, I will quote Mr. McGuinty with respect to what he had to say about others in the past.

Found him in conflict—this has to do with Monsieur Leach. There was no reprimand, but McGuinty called for

his resignation. Here is what the Integrity Commissioner said: “The Integrity Commissioner found that the minister,” mon ami Monsieur Leach, “is in breach of the legislation that governs our behaviour. He said that the minister has broken the law. It seems to me that in those circumstances what the Premier should have done today is he should have stood in his place and said that he has asked for the resignation of the minister, and to that he should have added that he accepted that resignation.

“Based on what he has just told this House, he should then have added that he asked for the resignation of Ms. Cunningham and the resignation of Mr. Runciman, because they too, in keeping with the finding laid out in this decision, are clearly in breach of the law. They have done something which is unacceptable, which is inappropriate and, most important of all, which is unlawful. That is very, very clear. What the Premier should have done is said that he senses that something fundamentally wrong has happened, that he is not going to allow it to stand and that he is going to take the necessary steps to ensure that the consequences are felt so that all members of his government understand the seriousness of this matter.” June 25, 1997.

There's so much more that I would love to read for your pleasure, Speaker, and mine and for those who are listening, but perhaps I'll continue with some of the quotes of Mr. McGuinty on other breaches of the integrity act when I have an opportunity, which I am sure I will have again this afternoon or perhaps another day.

Mr. McGuinty, when he was in opposition, had no problem asking for the resignation of members when they were in breach of the integrity act. I have outlined today how this minister was in breach of the integrity act. Mr. McGuinty keeps on saying the opposition takes some facts and doesn't include others, and then he goes on to do the same. He takes some comments and omits the others. He wants it both ways. He wants to accuse the opposition of taking some parts of the report, then he uses other parts of the report, omitting the parts that we, as opposition members, raised. What I tried to do today, Speaker, for your benefit and for those who are watching and for the Liberal members in this place, was to quote from the integrity report as much as was relevant.

Laughter.

Mr. Marchese: Monsieur Levac, mon ami, laughs. I included comments made by your Premier and comments made by us, that is, made by the Integrity Commissioner. I included both what your Premier likes to add in this debate and what he forgets to mention that is clearly, manifestly articulated by the Integrity Commissioner. I'm sure Dave Levac is going to stand up and point to other relevant facts that I missed.

Mr. Levac: What's the conclusion? What did he say?

Mr. Marchese: The conclusion is—I will get to it in a second, because I only have one minute. The conclusion is a reprimand, and that is one of the possibilities that the Integrity Commissioner has. A reprimand is a serious matter. He well knows that the one who calls for the resignation of the minister is the Premier and not the

Integrity Commissioner. That job remains in the hands of the Premier. To be reprimanded, to be in breach of the integrity act, to be told that you have engaged in “egregiously reckless” behaviour is a serious matter. For that, the minister should take responsibility, but more importantly, the Premier should do the right thing and do what he called on other members to do when he was in opposition: to resign when they were found in breach of the integrity act. We call for the same.

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I don’t take pleasure in participating in this debate this afternoon at all. I do see it as my responsibility, and it’s in the context of my responsibility as a member of this Legislature that I want to address three aspects of this issue: First is the responsibility of Minister Takhar, second is the responsibility of the Premier and third is the responsibility of this House and every member of this Legislature with regard to this very important issue.

First let me say that in hearing the debate and the reaction and responses to the Integrity Commissioner’s report relating to the breach of the Members’ Integrity Act by the current Minister of Transportation, it has been extremely disappointing to hear the arguments in support of Minister Takhar. I don’t speak to this on a personal level, because on a personal level, I don’t believe any member in this place wants to see another member in any way damaged politically or personally. But I also have to believe that every member of this House wants to see the reputation of the Legislature and of the position of an elected member and of the position of a member of the executive council protected. That is our responsibility.

1610

I listened very carefully when the Minister of Transportation spoke in this House in his own defence. While he spoke with a great deal of emotion and while he very clearly admitted to members of this House that he, in fact, did transgress the Members’ Integrity Act, and said, and I quote him from Hansard, “I made the error, but it was not deliberate, and the findings make it clear that there was never any intent to circumvent the rules, nor any implications of personal gain of any description whatsoever,” yet the minister did say that he was in error. He goes on to say, “I made an error in judgment by attending the meeting at this location,” referring to his former place of employment. Again he said, “The third matter dealt with my failure to inform the Integrity Commissioner when the trustee of my management trust also became the CFO of the Mississauga Centre riding association.” He said, “I should have told him about this change, and I agree.” He goes on to say, “The words of the Integrity Commissioner” relating to the report “have taught me a very valuable lesson, and I want to thank him.... I apologize for not informing him, and I take his recommendation of reprimand very seriously.”

Apparently the minister does not take it seriously enough. When will we learn, in this place, that the only way that we will be able to regain the integrity that has been consistently lost by people in elected office is by admitting to wrong and then taking voluntarily the just

consequences of that wrongdoing? When will we learn that? What I am so very disappointed about is that, as members collectively, we somehow are unwilling to admit that by allowing this matter to simply go through a technical process—and because the Integrity Commissioner somehow has not, in his wisdom—somehow we justify that. By the way, it is not within his jurisdiction to ask for any further steps to be taken relative to the minister’s position.

I hear members of this Legislature saying in debate, “This is not an important issue. This is not a matter that is so significant that the minister should resign.” I suggest that as people who observe the debate in this House hear those kinds of comments—even the individual representing the minister in his defence with the Integrity Commissioner tried to argue that the allegations were frivolous and vexatious and were not made in good faith.

I want to read into the record the words of the Integrity Commissioner, who says: “I see absolutely no basis upon which to accede to Mr. Siegel’s submissions that the complaint be dismissed as frivolous and vexatious or not ... in good faith. The allegations made as related to ss. 10 and 11 of the act require an answer or an explanation. This complaint is manifestly not frivolous and vexatious or made in bad faith.”

The conclusion of the commissioner was, in fact, as follows. In the commissioner’s report he states very clearly, “I conclude that the minister has breached section 11 of the act and parliamentary convention associated with the establishment of management trusts by allowing Mr. Jeyanayagam to continue as his trustee after he became treasurer of his riding association and by failing to disclose that Mr. Jeyanayagam was his CFO under the Election Finances Act.”

The conclusion of the Integrity Commissioner was that the minister breached the Members’ Integrity Act.

I’d like to discuss the whole issue of what the responsibility is here, I believe, of the minister. He stated in his remarks here in this House that he finds it a privilege to serve. He spoke about the freedoms and opportunities that this province has afforded him and his family. What I believe the minister has failed to do by simply relying on a technical defence of his actions, even though he admits that he did wrong, even though he admits that he transgressed the integrity act, is that he stopped short of doing the right thing. He stopped short of acknowledging in a practical way that he in fact has misconducted himself as a member of the Legislature. The right thing for Mr. Takhar to have done when he received the report of the Integrity Commissioner was, yes, say as he did, “I did wrong. I breached the act, and although there is no requirement by the commissioner for me to do anything beyond that, I will voluntarily step aside, as a minister of the crown, as an example of what elected members and ministers of the crown should be doing by way of conduct.”

Had the minister done that, he would have had the respect of every member of this Legislature. He would have had the respect of everyone in his constituency and

in fact every person in this province. It would have been an example to others. It would have been an example to other ministers. It would have been an example to every other elected person not only across this province but the country. But he failed to do that, and that's disappointing. I believe it was a missed opportunity for the minister.

I want to take this opportunity to read into the record a report from Nova Scotia, where the Minister of Economic Development resigned just last Thursday, which reads as follows:

"Halifax ... Nova Scotia's Minister of Economic Development resigned Thursday after admitting he was in a conflict of interest regarding a government loan to a potato farm."

He is quoted as saying this, and hear this, members: "On reflection this week, I now believe that I violated the ministerial code of conduct by being in a conflict of interest...."

"I realize now that I have made a mistake. I accept full responsibility for that, and I apologize to Nova Scotians and my colleagues in the Legislature."

He tendered his resignation to the Premier and he resigned. Mr. Hamm, in a statement, made this statement, "Mr. Fage is an honourable man."

The man did not break the law, and technically he did not have to resign. The matter is still being investigated by their Integrity Commissioner. But before there is even an opportunity for the commissioner to render a decision, which may well come out saying that no technical breach has taken place, that the minister did not benefit personally in any way or that there was no intent, the minister resigned, and he did so because it was an honourable thing.

1620

I would like to speak to the issue of parliamentary procedure and convention. I'd like to refer to a book written by probably one of the strongest authorities on parliamentary procedures and conventions that we have in Canada, Senator Eugene Forsey. In his book, entitled *The Question of Confidence in Responsible Government*, he makes the following statement regarding the responsibility of individuals and the role and the appropriate responses of ministers:

"Notwithstanding the pre-eminent place of the Prime Minister—in this case, it would be the Premier—"in sustaining or sacrificing ministers under attack, there does seem to be a universal acceptance of the proposition that where personal culpability on the part of a minister is shown in the form of private or public conduct that is generally regarded as unbecoming and unworthy of a minister of the crown, the expectation is that the minister should tender his resignation."

The book cites lots of examples of issues like that. I submit to members of this House that that is precisely what Minister Takhar should have done, not to claim that he didn't know—and by the way, as you know, I served as a minister of the crown as well. Other ministers here will know that, upon being appointed as a minister of the crown, we all get a letter from the Integrity Commis-

sioner. Every minister receives that; in fact, every member gets a letter from the Integrity Commissioner. In that letter, the Integrity Commissioner makes it very clear, draws to the attention of every member and every minister just appointed, that there are specific issues within the Members' Integrity Act that they should make themselves aware of, particularly when it comes down to the issue of how you conduct yourself with regard to the trustee, and the requirement and the process within which we are required to set up a blind trust.

Minister Takhar received that same letter. What Minister Takhar has claimed in his statement to this House is that he didn't know that the things that he did or failed to do he should have done and that they were a transgression of the act. Since when, as lawmakers and as examples to other Ontarians, can we as members of the Legislature claim as a defence that we were ignorant of the law or that somehow, because we didn't know that's what we had to do, everything is okay? Speaker, I submit to you that that's unacceptable.

Again I call on the minister to do the honourable thing. He still has time to do that. He still has time to save not only the integrity of his position but the integrity of his government and the integrity of the Parliament of this province by doing the right thing. By failing to do that, he continues to send the message to the public out there that as politicians, we're going to get away with whatever we can as long as technically, somehow, we can cover the bases and ensure that people will eventually forget. It's a missed opportunity by the Minister of Transportation; I suggest that it's a missed opportunity by the Premier, because the Premier ultimately has the responsibility to protect the integrity of his government and the integrity of this place.

I would like to draw attention to words found in the throne speech when this government, on November 20, 2003, asked the Honourable James K. Bartleman to read their vision for this province. Under the heading entitled, "Government That Works For You," on behalf of this Premier, our Lieutenant Governor read the following:

"Your new government has made a commitment to bring an open, honest and transparent approach to government...."

"It will open up government and its agencies, bring the voices of Ontarians to Queen's Park, and make the entire public sector more transparent and responsible to Ontarians, because transparency and accountability are the best safeguards of public services."

Then it goes on to say, "All ministers of the crown will be expected to consistently attend question period, and be accountable to the Legislature."

I suggest that this government has come a long way. I suggest the Premier may well have forgotten those words, because by not asking the minister to resign as a member of the executive council, he has failed to live up to that. I'm suggesting that we as members of the Legislature will also fail to live up to our responsibility if we don't do whatever we can—and we will be collectively indicted if we don't do whatever we can—to protect the

integrity of government by ensuring that we do not let this matter rest and that the minister will in fact be called upon by every member of this Legislature to do the right thing, not as punishment but in the interest of protecting this institution and restoring credibility to this place.

To that end, I'm going to ask that we take this debate one next level. I'm going to move an amendment. This motion reads:

"That the Legislative Assembly adopt the report of the Integrity Commissioner dated January 4, 2006, and approve the recommendation contained therein."

I want to add the following amendment to that motion:

"and that the subject matter of the penalties available under section 34 of the Members' Integrity Act be referred to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly."

I present this amendment to the table.

The reason for that is that I believe it is simply not enough—

The Deputy Speaker: Would the member for Oak Ridges just stop for a moment while we have a look at the amendment? I'm going to repeat the amendment. The amendment is: "and that the subject matter of the penalties available under section 34 of the Members' Integrity Act be referred to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly." I remind the members that we are now speaking on the amendment.

Mr. Klees: I have moved this amendment because I truly believe that it's important for us as members of this Legislature to ensure that every opportunity is given not only to the minister but to the Premier and to this House to consider the importance of the issue before us and to ensure that the right thing is done—that the right thing is done for the minister, that the right thing is done for the people of Ontario. At the end of the day, if we do not do that, there is an indictment on every member of this Legislature. We will have missed an opportunity to make a strong statement that it's not business as usual, that we all respect the privilege that we have to serve the people of Ontario, whether it be as a member of the Legislature in opposition or as a cabinet minister.

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): I was all ready to speak on the main motion, and now I'm in the position of speaking on the amendment. I'll probably focus on the amendment but also likely bring in some of the other issues, because I think they're very relevant to the amendment that's before us.

If I'm not mistaken, the amendment is seeking to have a committee review what the penalties are in such cases when the integrity act has been breached or when there has been a cause for the Integrity Commissioner to indicate that penalties should be put against a member for breach of the act.

It's interesting. It reminds me of some of my own personal experiences when I was growing up. One of the things that my parents, my mum in particular, had always ingrained in me as an individual was that you always know when you've done something wrong. You can feel it in your gut; you know in your stomach when you've

done something wrong. That really is integrity. That's the reflection of your integrity, when in your gut you have made a mistake and there is that little voice that's telling you that you've made a mistake.

It seems to me that one of the things that is missing in this whole process is the opportunity for people to take that sober second look at what they've done or what they are alleged to have done, particularly if there has been a report by the Integrity Commissioner that indicates that there has been a breach of the act. If a person is not in a position to, with all openness, indicate that they have that gut feeling that they have, in fact, done something in breach of the act, then I think what this amendment is trying to do is say, "Let's create a situation where it's not just an open-ended question as to whether there will or won't be a penalty and what it will or will not be, but in fact a committee be charged with the responsibility of determining exactly what kinds of penalties will flow from what kinds of breaches to the act." At least, from my reading of the amendment, that seems to be what is being suggested here.

1630

I have to say that had this member—any member. When I look at all of the documentation of the various times when this has occurred—of course, being fairly new to the House, this is the first time where I personally have been in this House when this kind of situation has occurred, but certainly the records show that it's not the first time that it has ever occurred. What doesn't seem to ever be happening is a satisfactory conclusion to many of these incidents. In fact, it seems that many of them simply swirl and swirl around, to no conclusion that's ever brought that's satisfactory to most parties here in the Legislature and, most importantly, to the people of the province of Ontario, to whom we should be at all times most respectful. We should be most concerned about their criticisms or their view of how we behave in this House and how we do or do not undertake responsibility for what's required under the integrity act.

When one looks at one's self in the mirror and gets that gut feeling and says, "You know, I really have done something wrong," then of course the easiest way to deal with it, the most efficient way to deal with it and the best way to deal with it is the way that my family taught me to deal with it. The way my parents taught me to deal with it as an individual was that you simply admit your mistake, apologize for your mistake, learn from your mistake and then hopefully you move on and continue in your work and not make that mistake again. It seems like such a simple response. It seems like such a simple method of addressing these kinds of problems. But unfortunately, there are all too many examples of when that hasn't happened.

We're in the situation this afternoon of initially debating the actions of the Minister of Transportation, which were reviewed by the Integrity Commissioner and noted in his report of January 4. I'm not going to go into any great detail on that report. Anybody who has tuned in this evening has noticed that there has been a great debate

about that, a detailed review of the various passages in the report. In fact, my colleague from Trinity–Spadina, Rosario Marchese, did an excellent job of reviewing the details of the actions that took place as well as the analysis that was done by the Integrity Commissioner and then, of course, flowing from that, the recommendations of the Integrity Commissioner in regard to that analysis.

The problem is that not only did the honourable minister not behave in a way that could have reduced the anxiety around this situation, that could have put a stop to the speculation and criticism, but then, not having done that and his not having had any real reprimand or repercussion from the Premier, we're now in the situation that we're in where this is being debated, where amendments are being brought and where the whole issue is continuing to cause the time and effort of the members of this Legislature to be used on it rather than some other important business that likely needs to be done in this very House.

It's unfortunate, because the Premier in fact did promise to set a higher standard when it comes to members' behaviour, particularly when it comes to integrity and the way that members are judged by both the Integrity Commissioner and their peers in regard to their ethical behaviour. In fact, the Premier was going to raise the bar when it came to these kinds of issues. Unfortunately, in reality, the bar has been set so low that we could step over it without even tripping. In fact, when I was thinking about this a little bit earlier today, knowing that I'd be speaking on it this afternoon, it brought to mind—in my mind sometimes I visualize: “Let me have a visual for what that bar looks like.” It's like the bar is so low that you couldn't even do a limbo under it because there's just no way you could get under it. That's part of the problem we have in front of us now. That's why, I think, the frustration that people have in this House has led to this amendment being put, because what it is saying is, if the Premier is not prepared to make good on this promise in terms of setting a higher standard, setting a higher bar, then the House should set a committee the responsibility of doing exactly that.

I'm not experienced enough—and I'm happy to admit that, and I've certainly got no bones about the fact that I'm not experienced enough at this House yet—to know whether or not that's the most efficacious way of dealing with this particular problem or concern. But what I do know is that, this being my first experience with this kind of situation, it's very frustrating. There's a great deal of frustration, not only from the members of the Legislature but from the community, from the people of Ontario, because it's almost like just another letdown, that once again people have had expectations set about the behaviour, about the integrity of their elected officials, only to find out that, yet again, there are no repercussions or nothing is done when there's a breach of the integrity act. It's not just an accusation; again, this is something that did occur, that the minister has admitted has occurred, that the Integrity Commissioner has taken the time to

investigate and to come to the conclusion that there was a breach of the act. So it's not speculation that any of this problem exists; it does exist, it's documented that it exists, and it's also documented that a reprimand of some sort needs to be made.

Unfortunately, that's where we've run into a bit of a brick wall, and that's what has led to the amendment that was just put forward by the member from Oak Ridges. In so doing, he raised, quite interestingly, a situation where the opposite occurred. In another province of this great country a similar situation occurred, but instead of it going down that road where the minister actually did more of a procedure that I had described earlier, one that says, “You know what? My gut tells me I made a mistake. So what do I do? I admit to the mistake, I apologize for the mistake, I learn from the mistake and I move forward, hopefully not only not to make that mistake again, but to demonstrate good, positive, decent behaviour of integrity of an elected member”, unfortunately, that wasn't done in this case. If it had been done, we probably would have saved ourselves a lot of precious time in this Legislature. Not only that, now we're in a position of having to, out of the frustration of the member from Oak Ridges and many other members of this Legislature, charge a committee with the responsibility of further fleshing out how it is that we go about determining what the repercussions should be, should there be a breach of the integrity act.

I think that there are a couple of things that need to be said about this. Again, sometimes “Just apologize and demonstrate good behaviour” seems like such an easy thing to do; the kind of “Be proactive” way of dealing with things seems like such an easy thing to do. But you know what? Maybe it's not such an easy thing to do. But when that's the case, then it's incumbent upon the government, incumbent upon the Premier, who made promises in this regard, to restore the faith in the political process; to hold the minister to the higher standard that was promised during the election campaign. Unfortunately, that's not happening, so residents of Ontario get the sense that there's all kinds of activity happening in the back rooms as to how to make sure this particular minister is able to keep his position and not resign. Really, it should be the opposite; there should be an open and transparent process by which the minister is brought to some kind of reprimand or some kind of result for the behaviour that he has engaged in that is in contradiction to the integrity act.

1640

I guess that's the other frustration that people have, that there is an opportunity—if the minister is not prepared to take that proactive step himself, then an immediate proactive reaction by the Premier would have been in order. That not only would have, I think, reduced the concern about the situation, not only fulfilled a campaign promise around integrity and behaviour of ministers and members, but it also would have sent a clear message to other ministers and other members about what is and is not acceptable in terms of behaviour

from the Premier. So it would be a way of saying to others: "Here's what happened. It's not acceptable. This is what the result is of this kind of behaviour." Ergo, there would be less of that kind of behaviour because people would see, from example, that it's not acceptable and that in fact swift action would result should the requirements of the integrity act be breached by ministers.

But instead, nothing was done. Unfortunately, now we're in a situation of dealing with this breach of the integrity act in a very unpleasant way, a very public way and a way that hopefully, through this learning experience, will lead to some changes in the future. If the vehicle for that is the movement of this particular function to a discussion at a standing committee, then so be it.

It seems to me that something has to be done to take this whole idea of reprimand, the sanctioning of inappropriate activity—bad behaviour, if you want to call it that—to the next level. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem like Premier McGuinty is prepared to undertake that kind of activity, not prepared to put the ministers on notice that it's not acceptable, and is therefore not prepared to do what is necessary to restore public confidence in the integrity of our elected officials here in the province of Ontario.

So, with the lack of decisive leadership by the Premier, we're now in a situation of perhaps, if this amendment is passed, moving the leadership on these issues to recommendations that would come out of a committee process. Again, I don't necessarily think that is a bad thing; in fact, with lack of anything else going on in terms of the situation, it's probably a good thing.

One of the things we need to recognize and acknowledge is that this is not the first time this has happened. This is not the first minister who has gotten into hot water. The sad thing about it is that this is not the first government that has had to face this kind of challenge. When the previous government was in office, the Premier himself was very critical—of course, he was in opposition at the time and wasn't sitting as the Premier—and others have raised this issue as well. He was very critical of a number of members on the government side of the time, the Harris government and the Eves government, and also criticized the lack of action by that government in regard to breach of integrity matters and poor public behaviour, if you will, behaviour that reflects poorly on ministers and on the government.

I have several quotes, but I think many of them have already been read into the record in regard to this debate. So, instead, what I would like to do is read out some of the commentary that has come from our government watchdogs in the media. I wanted to just read a couple of these things in, because I think this is what we always have to remember when we are determining how to deal with these issues. It's certainly the requirement, the responsibility, of the individual member to make those calls and to resign if these incidents occur. Failing that, certainly quick and decisive action by the Premier of the day is required. But if none of that happens, you really do start to erode the confidence that the public has in the

integrity of the people they elect and put into this House. The London Free Press on January 8, 2006, a mere four days after the report was issued, had this to say:

"Given the gravity of Ontario Integrity Commissioner Coulter Osborne's finding in the case of Harinder Takhar, the transportation minister should resign his cabinet position...."

"For violating the Members' Integrity Act, Osborne recommended a reprimand. But given the moral imperative of ethics in government, Takhar should instead resign." Again, that was not done, and unfortunately the Premier didn't see fit to do something about that.

The Toronto Star a couple of days prior, said this: "After a seven-month investigation, Ontario Integrity Commissioner Coulter Osborne has issued a damning report on Transport Minister Harinder Takhar that concludes he committed a 'serious' breach of the Members' Integrity Act by failing to maintain a proper arm's-length relationship between his business and political interests."

"While Osborne cannot call for Takhar to be dumped from cabinet, he did recommend the minister be reprimanded for his actions...."

"McGuinty is wrong to argue that the reprimand by Osborne is 'significant' and enough punishment."

"The people of Ontario deserve to be served by cabinet ministers who act in accordance with that preamble. That's why Takhar should resign."

I would further add, that's why the Premier should have taken some action; he unfortunately didn't. Following that, that's why we're now debating an amendment that would see a committee put in place or a committee that exists charged with the responsibility or the job of further fleshing out or further determining what kind of repercussions should flow from breaches in the integrity act rules.

Again, in the Windsor Star of January 14, 2006: "The facts speak for themselves. Coulter Osborne, Ontario's Integrity Commissioner has ruled Transportation Minister Harinder Takhar broke rules outlined in the Members' Integrity Act. Specifically, that Takhar failed to properly sever his ties with the individual the minister had entrusted to oversee his personal business assets...."

"Osborne's conclusion was that Premier Dalton McGuinty should reprimand Takhar. The inference seemed to be that Takhar should be removed from cabinet—and that would be a fitting punishment in this case."

"However, McGuinty says he won't take any action against Takhar because his minister has already been punished enough as a result of Osborne's report...."

"But it is also quite clear that Takhar broke rules. Rules that are in place to instill confidence in the integrity of an MPP, and particularly a cabinet minister."

So I don't think it's too late. I think the Premier can fix this. I think the Premier can do the right thing and do what is expected by the people of Ontario, which is to have Mr. Takhar removed from cabinet and stop this charade right away.

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey (Brampton Centre): Speaking to the proposed amendment on the floor from the per-

spective of a relatively newly elected member of provincial Parliament, I hold the greatest respect for the Office of the Integrity Commissioner. I know the office was created to uphold high standards of ethical conduct in the public service. I know the office also assists members of the Legislature in keeping the public interest in the forefront, against which individual members' right to privacy must be weighed. The office attempts to guide elected members of provincial Parliament on how the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, impacts on their day-to-day activities and also ensures compliance with financial regulations.

I believe the role of the Integrity Commissioner is to promote public confidence in the integrity of each member and to maintain the respect society holds for the Legislative Assembly and its members. As a relatively new MPP, the Office of the Integrity Commissioner has been particularly useful in helping me navigate through the rules, providing support and direction. How to deal with lobbyists who come before you, whether or not they're registered—those are issues that new members are not familiar with, and when you deal with municipal issues, you don't have the same responsibilities.

1650

The commissioner regularly provides guidance and reinforces our responsibility as elected members to maintain high standards of ethical conduct. The office is meticulous in their research, and I have found them to be very timely in their recommendations. I have consistently been able to draw upon the Office of the Integrity Commissioner for instruction and guidance. Their ability to identify boundaries and conflicts of interest helps hold me and all members of this Legislature accountable to our constituents. With many extensive reports the commissioner has released on members from all sides, we all have the opportunity to learn how to prevent ethics transgressions before they occur.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate? The member for Lanark–Carleton.

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm sure the member from Lanark will appreciate this point of order to inform the House that Canada's women's hockey team just won the gold medal 4-1, and we're very proud of them. So congratulations to them.

The Deputy Speaker: I just want to check to make sure—and the table will help me—that there was no indication that we were going to—okay. Thank you. We know what we're talking about up here, even if you don't.

Member for Lanark–Carleton.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): Like many other members have said, this is not a happy moment when one talks about an integrity report and a criticism of one of the members of the Legislature.

My particular concern with regard to the Premier's reaction to the Integrity Commissioner's report goes deeper than this one report. I have observed over the last two and a half years that this Premier does not under-

stand his duty to the institution of Parliament, the institution of our justice system, and that worries me much. As politicians, as MPPs of this institution of Parliament, we have two duties. We have, of course, our duty to our constituents, our loyalty to our party, our ability to play the political game with regard to the thrust of the debate. We have the duty to represent the opposition's view of legislation. The government has the obligation of putting forward legislation, of running the government of Ontario. But we also have another duty, and that is, we have to step above the political element from time to time and say, "We must protect the integrity of the institution. We must protect the integrity of politicians in general." I have seen a demonstration by this government and this Premier that he does not understand that second duty.

Perhaps I have had, in some ways, a more relevant experience with regard to a dual duty in my past. As you may know, I have served in a number of government cabinet portfolios, but in one of those particular portfolios I held a dual duty and that was as the Attorney General of this province. The Attorney General of the province, notwithstanding that he or she is a member of cabinet, also has a duty to the Legislative Assembly to tell cabinet, to tell the Premier when he's stepping out of his bounds with regard to the laws of Ontario or the rule of law, and this doesn't seem to be happening in this present government.

The very first indication I had that this Premier did not understand what the institution of Parliament was about was on the election of our first Speaker. I was amazed that before we even met in this place to elect our first Speaker, Mr. Curling revealed to the press that he was going to be Speaker, that the Premier had told him he was going to be Speaker. As you know, in 1990 this institution had legislation passed in which we said that the Speaker was going to be elected by the assembly. This was the first indication by the new Premier, Dalton McGuinty, that he was going to lay a heavy hand and play politics where politics were not supposed to be involved.

The second thing that he did—well, actually, it was probably a tie with regard to the election of the Speaker of this place—was hire the former auditor of Ontario to undertake an audit of the previous government. The Auditor General is part of the institution of Parliament. He is supposed to be non-partisan and objective in what he does. When Mr. McGuinty hired Mr. Peters, the former auditor, to do an audit of the previous government, he put Mr. Peters in a terrible position. I don't think Mr. Peters should have ever taken the job, quite frankly, because I think that he has done great harm to his long-term reputation as an objective Auditor General in the past. He hired the Auditor General, who retired on September 30 with a deputy minister's pension, for \$1,500 a day on October 1 to do a consulting job.

The Premier and his staff did not understand, nor do they understand, that the Auditor General, the Integrity Commissioner, the Ombudsman, the Privacy Commissioner and the Environmental Commissioner are all independent and objective parts of this Legislative Assembly.

This Premier and his ministers have on several occasions disregarded and attacked these individual commissioners. I'll mention another one where one of his ministers attacked one of the other independent commissioners in the past.

I mentioned the election of the Speaker. I mentioned the hiring of the former auditor for political purposes with regard to looking at the books of the former government. I want to talk now about some of those broken promises made during the election, things like allowing MPPs to have more free votes. We've had probably about 500 votes in this Legislature with regard to second and third reading of various pieces of legislation outside of private members' hour, and there's only been one occasion that I'm aware of where the governing party actually had three members vote against a piece of their legislation—and it had to do with a very local matter with regard to some of the MPPs from Brampton.

The people out there want to have more trust in us; they want to have more trust in their politicians. So if we don't uphold our institutions, if we don't keep the words that we say during an election campaign and we break those promises, we hurt this institution very, very severely.

Another matter on which the Premier has failed this institution is with regard to the whole matter of the former finance minister, Mr. Sorbara. He held on and held on until a police investigation took place. In my view and in the view of former Premiers of this province, what would have happened and did happen in former governments is that those ministers immediately stepped aside and waited until the investigation, the inquiry, the matter before the Integrity Commissioner was completed and then the minister would return to cabinet if, in fact, nothing became of that inquiry. This Premier continues to play the political side rather than recognizing his duty with regard to upholding this institution and taking the higher road, the straight road, when necessary.

I mentioned before the attack on another commissioner, and that happened last year, by the Minister of Community and Social Services, when the privacy commissioner stood up and disagreed with the adoption disclosure legislation. Instead of the minister standing in her place and saying that there is another view, "We disagree with her view," what this minister and this government did was that they attacked the office of the privacy commissioner. They said that she had no jurisdiction in legislation, which was technically correct, but the commissioner had every right to make comment with regard to policy and what the government was doing with regard to privacy concerns. As well, as you know, every other privacy commissioner in Canada agreed with our privacy commissioner, notwithstanding the government's disagreeing with that particular person.

1700

Another area where this government has disregarded this institution and the processes of Parliament to ensure that fairness occurs is with regard to our elections. We have passed a bill here, which the Progressive Conserv-

ative Party voted against. We are going to have the next provincial election, unless it goes to court before that time, and it's going to be the first election in over 50 years where we've never had an electoral boundary commission setting the boundaries for our election constituencies. "Gerrymandering" is what I call it. Gerrymandering is what in fact took place. This government, in order to fulfill a promise to the north to have more seats in the north, said that instead of going through a boundaries commission to set up boundaries right across Ontario to have 11 seats in the north, which follows a bill that I introduced in the Legislature, decided instead that they would gerrymander the boundaries and set them down in legislation without an electoral boundaries commission. That is why I feel that the main motion to consider this matter is in some ways inadequate and that we should have further discussion of this at a committee in accord with the amendment put forward this afternoon by my colleague from Oak Ridges.

As well, this Premier and this government have forgotten about some of the very basic institutions of our civilization here. I've talked about a number of concerns I have about their defending the institution of Parliament. We saw a piece of legislation come here with regard to the Adams mine some time ago. Papers across this province lambasted Dalton McGuinty for abrogating his support of the rule of law. What we did in that legislation was that we took away an individual's right retroactively. That is why I could not support that particular piece of legislation.

Another matter that really gets to me with regard to this government's penchant for going to the political element: Rather than sitting back and thinking, "Hey, we have to, in this case, protect the institution, be concerned about the public's overall view of politicians," what this government did with regard to its reaction to my leader's request of the Integrity Commissioner to look in this matter is an interesting case in itself. People haven't talked about the Integrity Commissioner's report from the standpoint of what took place after June of last year, when my leader put forward his request that the Integrity Commissioner look into this matter. What happened was that Mr. Takhar's solicitor immediately said to the Integrity Commissioner, "I don't want you to look into this, because we think this is a frivolous matter." There's a section in the integrity act where the Integrity Commissioner can just say, "Somebody is just being very political in their attack on a member of the Legislature and therefore it's frivolous and vexatious."

I don't think anyone who had the basic facts of this—and I assume the Premier had the basic facts that the meeting took place in the minister's place of business—could say that this was frivolous and vexatious. I think that the immediate defence that the minister put up and the government put up to protect their minister shows their lack of appreciation for the process and for the Integrity Commissioner's office. Interestingly enough, one of the very clear findings of the Integrity Commissioner was that this was not a frivolous and vexatious claim against Mr. Takhar.

I guess the other part of the process that bothers me is that our party was trying to get to the bottom of what actually happened with regard to the records with regard to Mr. Takhar. It took some seven months for them to respond, under a freedom-of-information request for various different documents and papers. That shows me that this government didn't want to come clean on this matter. They wanted to do everything they could in a political way to shove off, to obstruct, to meddle in the Integrity Commissioner's mandate and his report. They wanted to sweep it under the carpet. They thought they could get away with this by their normal political interference with regard to this matter.

I also think, for those members who have not read the report, that they should actually read the report. It's not only what the conclusions of the Integrity Commissioner were with regard to the arm's-length relation between the minister and his CFO, his business partner. That was not the only question in the report—there are some real, lingering questions in the Integrity Commissioner's report about the minutes that were kept at the meeting with regard to the CFO's minutes.

When you read the report, you start to think—and Mr. Takhar said that there were other meetings with regard to which he had gone to Chalmers, his place of business—there were real questions there. I think the Integrity Commissioner said to himself, "If I come out with this particular report, it's a slam dunk that this minister is going to resign." I haven't talked to him about it, but that's what I believe he must have said to himself when he was writing this report, because he said that he didn't need the inquiry to go much further into the background of it. As you know, under our act the Integrity Commissioner does not have the right to subpoena records; he doesn't have the right to demand records; he can't get witnesses in front of him. All of it is done on a volunteer basis, more or less.

I think there are enough questions in the integrity officer's report to really have questions as to whether all the facts are there or they're not all there. Notwithstanding that, I believe that the real failure lies at the feet of Dalton McGuinty as the Premier of this province and his unwillingness to recognize his duty as the Premier, as the leader of this institution, to protect this institution and protect the participants in it: the politicians in this institution.

We have seen, over the two and a half years of the McGuinty government, a Premier who is willing to forget his duty to the institution. He is willing to forget that we have officers of this legislative body who should be respected and their opinions should be respected. When they in fact find against the minister—we have never had, since the act was created in 1994, an Integrity Commissioner finding against a minister—I'm certain that that Integrity Commissioner must have thought that the Premier of the day would act on his particular finding.

Again, it is unfortunate that Mr. Takhar did not understand the rules which he was obligated to follow as the minister of the crown. But that cannot be an excuse and,

as a result, it is absolutely necessary for this Premier to take action on this matter.

1710

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): I'm pleased to rise in debate on the amendment to the motion. Actually, I regret that we have to be here to participate in this debate. It seemed elementary. It seemed like everybody's expectations were rational, that the Minister of Transportation, having been found in violation of the Members' Integrity Act and being reprimanded by the Integrity Commissioner, would no longer find himself in cabinet. It seemed like a basic tenet. It's not even a high standard. But the fact that Dalton McGuinty has refused to relieve this minister of his duties, that he continues to serve in cabinet, shows that Dalton McGuinty has not only lowered the bar, he has eliminated the bar altogether.

It was no trivial report by the Integrity Commissioner. There's some very strong language that I think members of the assembly, if they haven't already, should draw attention to. The Integrity Commissioner described Minister Takhar as having displayed "negligence," "being egregiously reckless," and concluded that his contact had violated the Members' Integrity Act.

Throughout the Integrity Commissioner's report he seems to indicate that he didn't put a great deal of credibility in the statements of the minister or his trustee. For example, regarding evidence from a lawsuit against Minister Takhar prior to Minister Takhar becoming a minister, evidence that Mr. Takhar said he had never worked at Chalmers, the Integrity Commissioner says, "the evidence from the lawsuit started by the minister's uncle establishes that, at least in the capacity of a consultant, the minister worked for the Chalmers Companies and that he did attend directors' meetings," in the 1990s. The Integrity Commissioner says, "It does, however, undercut the evidence of Mrs. Takhar and" the trustee, "both of whom stated that the minister 'never' worked at Chalmers."

Again, of the so-called witnesses, those who made sworn testimony, it seems the Integrity Commissioner has good reason not to believe everything that they put forward.

Similarly, regarding notes of the April 29, 2005, meeting taken by the trustee, the Integrity Commissioner says in his report, "I am skeptical as to the legitimacy of these notes. Perhaps my skepticism is in part caused by my concern as to why this meeting at Chalmers was held in the first place and why" the trustee "was invited to participate." The trustee's "notes are in some respects detailed and in other respects somewhat vague. After the meeting had concluded, for reasons that I find somewhat bewildering," the trustee "concluded his notes by referring to Mrs. Takhar making lunch arrangements, the minister going out to make some mobile phone calls and to the fact that" the trustee "went out to the parking lot with the minister."

This really begs credulity, that the notes made at the time would indicate that somebody went for lunch,

somebody responded to a cellphone call and went to the parking lot and who went to the parking lot. It's hard to believe that at the time the trustee wrote these notes down—I think the Integrity Commissioner, by highlighting that in that report, indicates that he has some doubt as to the veracity of sworn affidavits made by those involved, including the minister.

Today in question period I brought up some serious concerns about whether the minister told the truth regarding when a cellphone call was made. As you know, under freedom of information requests, we asked for Minister Takhar's phone records. He indicated to the media, to the House and in a sworn affidavit that he had received the call on his phone. It took us seven months, when it should have been a routine request in a matter of weeks—you'd expect those bills back in a matter of weeks. We finally received the bills, after seven months of kicking and screaming here in the Legislature, finally forced the minister to reveal those phone records. Lo and behold on that very day, this important phone call in question—no record on the minister's cellphone bills. When he found that out and was called on it by the Queen's Park press, the minister's story took yet another turn where he said, "Oh, it wasn't my cellphone; it was my wife's."

It begs the question whether the statements made by the Minister of Transportation always meet with the facts. I think you see clearly here in the Integrity Commissioner's report serious concern expressed by the Integrity Commissioner regarding the veracity of the sworn affidavits that were brought before him.

I have no doubt that the members of the opposition, including members of the third party and, I suspect, many of the members on the government benches here today, would agree with me that Minister Takhar should no longer be serving in the capacity of a cabinet minister.

This could all have been resolved if the Premier had made the right decision months ago and asked the minister to tender his resignation pending the outcome of this investigation. He may very well have come back and served in cabinet. The Premier indicated that he is a charming fellow. He may very well be. He must be one heck of a charming guy for the Premier to ignore this report.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): Are you jealous?

Mr. Hudak: The member from Northumberland asks if I'm jealous. I am curious about what hold the Minister of Transportation has over the Premier of Ontario that he would drop all standards altogether and allow him to continue to serve in his cabinet, given the scathing report by the Integrity Commissioner.

Ironically, the Minister of Transportation probably continues to serve in cabinet because of the scandal erupting. I'll bet the Premier said, "Do you know what? I don't want to back down. I don't want to take the minister out of cabinet. Because this scandal is around him, we're going to keep him in there."

Speculation was rife, whether in the media, here in the assembly or out in the hallways, that the Minister of

Transportation was going to be removed as part of a regular cabinet shuffle. Perhaps the member for Eglinton–Lawrence, Mr. Colle, who became the citizenship minister, was favoured to become Minister of Transportation. Ironically, because Minister Takhar involved himself in a scandal, he managed to keep his position and Mr. Colle ended up somewhere else. I'm sure that's just rumour. I obviously don't know what the Premier thinks; I have no idea why he's keeping the minister in cabinet. But I'll bet that if some day all the facts are revealed, it was intended that Minister Takhar would no longer find himself in cabinet. He got involved in this scandal and somehow saved his seat by becoming enveloped in the scandal, and Dalton McGuinty did not want to have two ministers step down in succession.

Of course the member for Vaughan–King–Aurora, the former Minister of Finance, had to step down a bit earlier, and I'll bet you that the advisers around the Premier said, "We don't want to lose two ministers at once. There's a federal election happening. The House doesn't meet again until February. We can skate through this and avoid doing the right thing. The issue will pass and we won't have two ministers in succession resigning under a cloud of scandal." Ironically, Minister Takhar saved his seat.

I've got to think there are some members in the assembly tonight, and other members who may not be here but listening to the debate, wondering why Minister Takhar stays in his capacity in cabinet regardless of the Integrity Commissioner's report. I would say that a significant portion of the controversial decisions or bad-news stories to hit the government in its first half have come from the Ministry of Transportation, whether it's bad decision-making, bad communications—embarrassments that have slowed the government down and caused them to reset, caused them to ask softball questions in the House to correct the record. My goodness, if you look for a long list of omissions, errors in judgment, scandals and bad policy decisions, nothing is going to beat the list by the Minister of Transportation.

1720

I bet you there are some very capable members here who thought, "You know what? I have a chance to get into cabinet. Maybe I could be the Minister of Transportation," that because of these problems Minister Takhar would be out and they would have a chance to take that seat. I think there's a lot of befuddlement on the other side about why he remains in cabinet, because of not only the Integrity Commissioner's report but also his conduct and decision-making as a minister to date.

I think the fact that only three members of the government side have taken the floor in the minister's defence, have taken the time—and I don't blame them. If I were the member for Northumberland, I'd be worried about where I was hitching my train. You've got to be worried about how people back in the riding are going to perceive you defending the indefensible. There's no doubt there are a number of ministers here who are contemplating being the successor to Dalton McGuinty after

the 2007 election. They don't want to hitch their wagon to the Minister of Transportation and have their own reputation sink as a result when that goes off the rails. I understand that's why we've only had three members of the Liberal caucus, other than the Premier, responding to this issue. I don't blame them. I do hope that behind closed doors—and I know the integrity of a good number of the members across the way—they've brought this up with the Premier, they've brought this up in caucus and quite frankly have raised bloody hell about why this minister continues to serve. I would enjoy seeing one or two of them stand up in the Legislature today to talk about it.

Let me give you some examples of problems that we've had in the Ministry of Transportation. Folks will remember some columns by Christina Blizzard back in 2004, probably, about the Minister of Transportation letting a contract to Edelman Associates to wage a public relations campaign against some of the owners of the 407 in Spain. They were doing an IPO. Ontario tax dollars were used in Spain. Regardless of what you think about the 407—and people have strong opinions about that—I think the vast majority of taxpayers would step back from the notion of using their tax dollars in Spain to wage a campaign against a company going through an IPO.

One wonders if the Minister of Transportation accurately described, when he was questioned in the House about this, the facts behind the matter. He said, in fact, on December 9—according to Ms. Blizzard, she asked the Minister of Transportation if MTO or Edelman sent out the release in question. “The Minister of Transportation backed up his press secretary, saying the MTO or Edelman had nothing to do with it when in fact, we found out that the opposite was the case, that it was written by a member of Edelman and then published by Edelman in Spain.”

I've already talked about the issue with the cellphones and the discrepancy between what the minister said in a sworn affidavit and the truth in his cellphone records.

One wonders, too, on the 407 issue, if the minister has been fully forthcoming with the facts. We actually asked him at committee the costs of the ongoing court battles in that respect. The minister refuses to release those costs, estimates of those costs, the lawyers performing that work or the advice those lawyers have given him about his likelihood of winning those decisions.

The minister's batting record is certainly not admirable—far from it. Of five major decisions that have come forward, the minister is batting 0 for five. That's a record that makes that of the Washington Generals, who play the Harlem Globetrotters regularly, look like one of success. I'm sure millions and millions of dollars were wasted here, and the minister has not brought forward the facts behind the decisions nor the true costs of that ongoing court battle.

Another Toronto Sun article, Christina Blizzard: “\$31,000 Goes To Grit Pal. Peterson Aide Lands Untendered Contract.” Again, this has to do with the Minister of Transportation and whether that contract was an

untendered contract to folks who had very good, very strong connections with the Liberal Party. That was back in November 2004.

I know my friend and colleague the Minister of Northern Development and Mines had one heck of a time when the Minister of Transportation talked about tolling Highway 69. My colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka rose up in the House many times, calling on the minister to rescind that move, to say that he was not going to do that, to say that there was no way they should put tolls on Highway 69. I sat here beside the member. He did a great job. Eventually, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines had to come out and say they were not going to do that. But what an embarrassment, for weeks, to the government that the minister was talking about tolling Highway 69 when, I expect, the government had no intention of doing so from the beginning.

It's reminiscent also of a recent slip-up by the minister, or a bad off-the-cuff policy decision, where he talked about taking away one of the lanes on the 401 and turning it into an HOV lane. The current high-occupancy lanes along the 403 and other 400-series highways were actually begun by my colleague the former Minister of Transportation, Mr. Klees. We're pleased to see that the current government followed through on the work that he had done—and let's not forget that was adding lanes. He didn't take away existing lanes, he added lanes. Then the Minister of Transportation publicly mused about taking away one of the 401 lanes and making it an HOV lane, which would cause a huge bottleneck and increase the already burdensome gridlock faced by working families in Ontario. It was embarrassing to have to see Liberal members rise in the House and toss the minister some softballs so he could backpedal from that bizarre policy announcement.

Drivers' licences: I don't have the exact date, but back in about February 2004 I brought a question to the floor of the Legislature, directly to the Minister of Transportation, around drivers' licences, the problem with people accessing the licences and the strange qualifications they have. It centred around the fact that people were no longer using health cards at the MTO offices as ID. They were accepting Costco cards and library cards. The minister's response to me was basically, “It's not a problem. Don't worry. Be happy.” At the end of the day, thankfully, the auditor pursued this issue simultaneously and brought it forward with a big bang in the media. In January, almost two years later, the Minister of Transportation finally had to admit they had a major problem. He had no plan to fix it, but finally had to admit they had a major problem that he had denied just two years earlier. If he had taken the friendly advice of the opposition, he could have fixed that back in 2004, but instead chose to deny it existed and, as a result, had a major negative story as part of the auditor's report earlier this year.

The mid-peninsula corridor: a very important issue to the people of Niagara, Hamilton and the western GTA. It would be an artery for investment in tourism, in trade, in safer travel, and it has been slammed into reverse by the Minister of Transportation. I've asked him questions time

and time again in the Legislature—always assuring me that it was on the go, that things were happening, that very soon we'd have some big news on the mid-pen. But, sadly, the only direction we have gone is backwards, with the previous needs assessment from 2001 justifying the need for the highway tossed out, and the minister's responses to me, his assurances that things were moving forward, turned out to be nothing but the contrary.

The Niagara Falls Bridge Commission: This is a curiosity that still has not been fixed. I had this as number 9 of my top 10 screw-ups by the Minister of Transportation. The Niagara Falls Bridge Commission, with a 70-year history of having local individuals, who understand the community, who can work with the mayor and council, with business representatives, with local community groups, appointed to that board—all fired and replaced by civil servants from the Ministry of Transportation. No doubt, the individuals appointed are very well qualified in their fields. They are not from Niagara. They have no connection with the community. The minister indicated that he had given very clear directions as to what those appointees were supposed to do. And it's not just me saying that you have to take the minister's words with a large grain of salt. The Niagara Falls Review did an FOI, a freedom of information request, and found that the minister had, in fact, given no written direction whatsoever to his new appointees. So the minister, on the one hand, says that they have clear direction and an FOI request tagged him and indicated that that was not meeting with the facts.

1730

And who can forget GO service to Dryden? Remember that one? This is an oldie but a goody among the Minister of Transportation's mix-ups. The leader of the third party, the member for Kenora-Rainy River, asked about transportation issues in northwestern Ontario, and the minister responded that he would speak with GO Transit officials to address problems with bus service in northwestern Ontario. GO Transit goes nowhere near northwestern Ontario; it goes nowhere near Dryden. I know that caused embarrassment to the government members.

There's no doubt that the minister has an admirable background in business—I listened to his remarks in the Legislature—and has a story that obviously won over the voters his riding, and there are many admirable aspects to what the minister has accomplished to date. If the minister were the type of man described, I would suggest that the honourable thing to do would be to step back from his cabinet position; the Premier may restore him down the road. But I find it sad that he retains that seat and sadder still that the Premier of Ontario, who sang a totally different song on this side of the Legislature, has now effectively eliminated the bar of standards for his cabinet ministers.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I'm extremely pleased to take part in this debate, but I'm very surprised to see that the official opposition has no trust in the Integrity Commissioner. I was very surprised to hear this.

As a former parliamentary assistant to Minister Takhar, let me tell you that the first day I joined that ministry I immediately recognized that the minister had a goal. The main goal he had for the people of this province was safety and security on our Ontario roads. To improve the safety and security of Ontarians on our roads, the minister introduced Bill 169, the Transportation Statute Law Amendment Act, which received third reading on November 15, 2005.

What happened with this case was that the minister did recognize he had made a mistake. He recognized and he apologized immediately after, probably because, as they would say en français, c'est l'ignorance; c'est ne pas connaître à fond la loi. The Premier has done what was recommended by the Integrity Commissioner. As I said, the minister did recognize that he made a mistake. He apologized to the people of Ontario and also apologized to the Premier.

Just to show how much this minister does believe in the safety and security of the people of Ontario, when he introduced Bill 169, he said that the first thing we had to look at was taxi scoopers at Pearson airport. Why did he say he needed to cover that? Because passengers taken by scoopers, who were not licensed, were sometimes charged over \$100 from Pearson airport to downtown Toronto. In one case, a local taxi driver advised me one day that those people did not have licence plates for Pearson airport. By the way, to get a licence at the airport costs over \$300,000. This is why we have to stop scoopers: first of all not having any insurance coverage, not having to pay for a licence plate and also having no meters or a way of charging tourists coming to Ontario. This was for the protection of travellers coming to Ontario.

Besides taking care of scoopers, the bill also covered the need for booster seats for our children, again because the minister was concerned about the security of our kids travelling in cars—the pedestrian crossing safety rule that was put in place; the studded tires for northern people; and the truck safety check that we have done.

I was just reading the latest trucking industry report. Even though we have 49% more truckers on the road, fatal collisions have gone down by 21%. It's just to show you that Mr. Takhar, our Minister of Transportation, was concerned about the security of our people and that's why he has introduced Bill 169.

This is all the time I have. Even though the member for Erie-Lincoln said a little while ago that the minister should be moved back as a backbencher, does that mean that anybody who is sitting in this House as a backbencher is not a person of integrity? I'm questioning this. Once again I would say that the minister has apologized, and that should be it for now with this discussion.

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): It is my pleasure to have a chance to speak on, I guess, a motion by the House leader to accept the Office of the Integrity Commissioner's report. Is that what we've actually been doing for the last three days?

The Deputy Speaker: Now that the member has asked, frankly, we're speaking on an amendment to that

motion that this be referred to the standing committee of the Legislative Assembly. I know you will speak to that.

Mr. Murdoch: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad we got that out of the way. After we're done speaking to the amendment, does that mean we will speak again to the report, that we'll all get 20 minutes to do that again? I'm not sure, but I get my time to speak on the amendment and I haven't had time to speak on the report yet, and maybe then it will go to committee. I'm not sure.

This is something new. I don't believe that we have done this before, especially spending—this is the third day, I believe.

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): A long time; you're right.

Mr. Murdoch: Yes. It is a long time to speak on one report. But there's a problem here. I've sat here for a number of years, I think 15 years, and I'm sure some other members have been here longer. But when somebody messes up like this, it's the job of the opposition to bring this point to the government. I remember Runciman, Wilson, Cunningham, Leach, Jackson, and there were little things—

Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal): Stockwell.

Mr. Murdoch: Stockwell. Yes, I was going to talk about that one too. Somebody mentioned Stockwell's name and some more names too. The Treasurer of this government I think even got into some trouble and he has stepped down until that is looked at.

We do have a report from the commissioner. But when you're over there, it's different than when you're over here, I guess. I can remember when some of the same members—not everyone who is there today—sat over on this side, and with some of those names I mentioned, it wasn't nearly the same: “You've got to resign; you've got to sit on the backbench; you've got to get out of your job because you've done this.”

In the case of Jim Wilson, it was one of his staff who had done something, or they thought he had, anyway. Of course, he stepped aside and they had a report and everything was fine; the same with Cam Jackson and Bob Runciman. They all stepped aside when this happened.

Now all of a sudden you have a Liberal who has done something, or supposedly—and I guess he has because in the report it does say he has done something wrong—and it doesn't seem the same. They should have to step aside.

You can't have two separate rules. This is what happens, and I have said this all along: The government of the day has to remember that they are the government. It's almost two and a half years now we're into this. You've got to finally figure it out: You're the government, and when these things happen, your Premier, Premier McGuinty, must do the proper thing. In this case, there's only one thing he can do: He can ask this minister to step aside for a certain length of time. I'm sure there are all kinds of other members over there who could do this job—there certainly are. They should be given a

chance. This is the time, especially when the Premier of the day talked so loudly and screamed so much from this side of the House whenever one of the ministers got in trouble.

1740

I even go back to when the NDP were in government. They had some of these same problems and some of their ministers had to step aside. One—I think he was the Attorney General; I can't remember. I think he was from Kitchener. His staff sent some letters out and used his letterhead, but he hadn't signed them. He had to step aside for a while. I can't remember what his name was. But they have to do the right thing. This is up to the Premier again.

Now, I imagine Mr. Takhar is a good person. I have no thoughts at all that he isn't a good person. It was nice to hear Mr. Lalonde stand up and talk about him, and talk about the good things he had done. That's fine; that's the way things happen. But when you break the rules and your Premier had been so strong on rules, that they can't be broken, then it doesn't matter about all those good things that he has done. That's fine. They'll stay with his record. But he did break some rules here. That is the job of the Premier of the day: to do something about this, or integrity is lost in this House.

Again, I can go back to a few days ago, when Mr. Runciman spoke and people were accusing him of being so upset. Well, he should have been upset and he had every right to be upset, because look at what happened to him. I was here when that happened. All he did was have somebody's name in the budget and he hadn't got approval for it, so he stepped aside until everything was solved. You know, Mr. Speaker—I think you were here at the time—there was an awful lot of hollering and screaming from this side of the House, from the opposition, wanting him to step aside. In that case, the Premier of the day said he must do that, and he did. The same thing with Mr. Wilson, and Mr. Jackson—he was the Minister of Tourism. They accused him of all these wrongdoings which, in the end, they weren't. He came back and sat in cabinet. Just because this minister were to step aside doesn't mean that at some time he wouldn't be able to come back into government.

It wasn't only Mr. Lalonde, but other members over there stood up and said some of the good things he had done, and that he was a good person. I think Sandra Pupatello said that she was on the search when they went out and searched for candidates to run in the last election, and his credentials stuck out and she was so impressed. That's fine. They probably did. Unfortunately, when he got here, he didn't remember all the rules. Sometimes that happens, so you've got to pay the price.

But not always, not all the things that this minister has done have turned out for the best. As I listened at home last week—I wasn't here last week—to some of the debate, one of the members of the government spoke about the trouble you had with all the fraud in getting licences. The Auditor General mentioned that there was a whole lot of fraud within that system. So the Ministry of

Transportation came up with this new idea for people to get their driver's licence, their first chance to get their licence. If you're a person born in Ontario and you're between 16 and 20 years of age, it is almost impossible to get a driver's licence. I would think some of the other members over there must be getting calls from people. I know there was one up north who drove for two hours—because up north all the licensing spots aren't close together like they are down here in the south—only to find out that his son did not have the credentials to get his driver's licence. This was put in by the new minister. So everything just isn't working out fine.

Would you believe, if you're 16 to 20 and you go in to apply for your driver's licence, you must be able to prove your age and your birthdate—which you can do on a birth certificate, that's fine. But then you must be able to prove who you are with a signature on a card with your picture. Okay. That doesn't sound too bad to you or me maybe. One of the things you can use is a passport. Well, a lot of kids between 16 and 20 don't have passports, and if they don't have one, it's going to cost them around \$85, whatever it is, to get one, plus they're going to have to wait for who knows how long to get it. That's one of the things you can use; well, you don't have that.

One of the other things you can use is your health card, if you have a new one with your picture and your signature on it. Not a lot of people have those. I've had people come to me and say that they've gone to the health people and they won't get a new one if their old card is still the one with the red strip on it, which I have. I don't know, Mr. Speaker, whether you have that one, but if you don't have a new one—and a lot of kids between 16 and 20 don't have one of the new cards.

Now, you're okay if you have an immigration card. Unfortunately, in rural Ontario there are not a lot of kids with an immigration card. That may work quite fine down here in the city, but it certainly doesn't work out in rural Ontario very well.

The other one you can have is an Indian status card. That's not going to help a kid who's not a native. That's not going to help either if he or she cannot get a card.

So far, we have not found anything. All they've got is their birth certificate. They're standing there, having driven to try to get their licence.

One of the things they can use, it says on the report, is their driver's licence. Well, that's what they've gone to get, so that doesn't do much good.

Now what do they do? They phone their MPP, and I've been getting a lot of calls. Unless that's changed by this minister, then we have a big problem out there. People born, as I said, in this country who want to get their driver's licence are in trouble.

Everything isn't perfect over there. I hope the parliamentary assistant is listening to this, or any of the members over there today are listening, and will go to the minister and say, "Hey, we've got to change this, because it's not working for rural Ontario." Again, people travel a long distance to get a driver's licence.

One other card they can use, though—I forgot about it—is their student card. The problem is, no one told the

boards of education about this and generally they laminate their cards before they sign them. Now you have a card with your picture on it, but you haven't signed it—and you can't sign it because it's laminated when the school boards give it to you. So that doesn't do you any good.

They won't take an affidavit from their parents, so you're pretty well euchred. There's no way they can get a driver's licence.

We phoned some of the drivers' licences places and asked about this. They said, "It could be my next-door neighbour, but if they don't have that card with a signed picture, we can't allow them to try for a driver's licence." So we have a big problem, especially a problem in rural Ontario. And the reason it's more of a problem in rural Ontario is because down here in the city maybe you can wait for a while for your passport, if that's what you want to get. At least you can get around because you have busing systems. You don't happen to have that in rural and northern Ontario. It's not easy for kids to get around and they need their driver's licence.

So I tell the government today that everything is not perfect in the Ministry of Transportation. We need to do something differently with that. I just wanted to put that in since we are talking about the amendment to the commissioner's report. I don't know whether we're going to talk on the commissioner's report another day or not, but it does seem like a long time to spend on one report that's come through here. I would hope that we would get on with some business. I know that the government has—I think they must have—some bills they would like to get through, and this session is almost over, so I would hope we'd get on with this.

1750

One way we could get on with it is if the Premier of the day would just say to the Minister of Transportation, "I believe it's time for you to step down." I don't know, but I hope, when they mention that he should be sitting in the backbenches—I think we are as important as anybody else. He may even sit in the back row, but I think they meant the backbenches. I'm sure that the ones in the back row today anyway, for sure—we wouldn't have a big audience if we didn't have the back row. It's not so much right here right now, but the government has a good back row over there today, and I'm sure all those guys are every bit as important. So I think that wasn't the way it was meant to come out. I think it was a question to the Premier saying, "Hey, he shouldn't be in cabinet." They could have said it a different way, but they didn't.

I know, Mr. Speaker, you can imagine how some of the members feel in opposition, even in the NDP. When the Liberals sat over here, when they weren't in government, they did get quite upset, quite vocal, and were vicious sometimes with some of the people who had maybe made a mistake or when somebody in their ministry had made a mistake, and they were asked to step aside. I can't remember any who didn't do that when we were in government. I think maybe when the NDP were in, there were a few who took a bit of coaxing, but in the end they stepped aside too. I think to keep decorum and

try to get things done in this House, that would be the simplest thing to do. Then we could get on with the business of the House and debating some of the bills that are in this House that we all want to get a chance to look at and debate. But unfortunately, this has come up. You have to say that the government of the day hasn't had a lot of problems. They have had the one with, the Treasurer, but he took the high road for now and decided to sit—he is actually in the front bench, but I don't think it really matters whether you're a frontbencher or a backbencher. But he left cabinet to clear his name, until things are cleared up.

I just can't see, when this government was so ferocious when they were in opposition—any time there was a hint of any kind of mistake being made by any of our ministers, they were so upset and so incensed that they should step down, and I think in most of those cases, it happened; they did step down. So I just find it very peculiar that the Premier of the day could stand up there and say, you know, "I've dealt with it. I'm fine with it." It just doesn't seem to be the same person.

I think it goes back to the fact that they are government, and when you are government, there are a lot of things happening: a lot of bills, a lot of pressures on them. They have some bills coming up, like 206. There has got to be a lot of pressure on the government of the day. The pressure maybe is getting to them and they just don't realize that this is something they can do and get on with the work. So I think that would be the thing to do, to just ask the minister to step aside and let things cool down. That's not to say that he won't come back and it's not to say that he didn't do good things. One good thing I would mention that he did in our area was for the fire-fighters being able to go through signs when the roads are closed, to be able to go in. That was a good thing to do, and no doubt he has intentions of doing everything.

but he did make a mistake, and sometimes you've got to pay for the mistakes. Because what happens next time? Next time a minister, maybe not knowing, makes a mistake the same way, why should he or she step aside? You let the other person stay on. Then we lose control in this House, Mr. Speaker, and there is no decorum in here any more, no rules. Who knows what happens then?

So I think the bar had been set. We can't have double standards. I looked at a lot of the speeches here, and a lot of the time the words used are "double standard." We don't want that.

I also want to say that I listened to Mr. Prue. He had an excellent presentation on this whole thing, and I really thought he put his whole feelings into this and felt that something should be done, and he seemed very sincere in his comments. I thought he did an excellent job, as I say.

Jim Wilson and Bob Runciman were a little upset. You can't blame them, because they were over there when they were accused of different things, and they stepped down and I think did the honourable thing.

I would think, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier of the day would do the honourable thing so we can get on with more business in this House, get on with looking at what bills they would like to bring in. I'm sure any bill that they want to bring in should benefit Ontario. You would hope that is what they are thinking. So I would hope we will hear that the minister has stepped down. As I say, you've got a wealth of people over there who could take his place.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you to all the speakers. It being 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1757.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

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

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

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

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

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

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

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Finances et affaires économiques**

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Phil McNeely, Carol Mitchell, John O'Toole,
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Chair / Présidente: Linda Jeffrey
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Brad Duguid, Andrea Horwath,
Linda Jeffrey, Jean-Marc Lalonde,
Deborah Matthews, Jerry J. Ouellette,
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski
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Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

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

Justice Policy / Justice

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Jim Brownell, Bob Delaney, Kevin Daniel Flynn,
Frank Klees, Peter Kormos, Jennifer F. Mossop,
Shafiq Qaadri, Mario G. Racco, Elizabeth Witmer
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

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

Public accounts / Comptes publics

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

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

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

Social Policy / Politique sociale

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

Electoral reform / Réforme électorale

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

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 20 février 2006

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

Loi de 2006 sur les maisons de courtage d'hypothèques, les prêteurs hypothécaires et les administrateurs d'hypothèques, projet de loi 65, <i>M. Duncan</i>	
Adoptée.....	1939
Loi de 2006 sur la promenade Général-Brock, projet de loi 66, <i>M. Craitor</i>	
Adoptée.....	1939

DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

Semaine du patrimoine de l'Ontario	
M ^{me} Meilleur	1941
M ^{me} Munro	1943
M. Marchese.....	1944
Heather Crowe	
M. Watson	1942
M ^{me} Witmer	1944
M ^{me} Martel	1945

CONTENTS

Monday 20 February 2006

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Conservation officers	
Mr. Barrett	1937
Transportation infrastructure	
Mrs. Jeffrey	1937
Children's treatment centres	
Mrs. Witmer	1937
Health care	
Ms. Martel	1937
Black History Month	
Mr. Brownell	1938
Progressive Conservative Party	
Mr. Runciman	1938
Mr. Fonseca	1939
Myles McLellan	
Mr. Hoy	1938
OMERS pension fund	
Mr. Zimmer	1939

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

Standing committee on social policy	
Mr. Ramal	1939
Report adopted	1939

FIRST READINGS

Mortgage Brokerages, Lenders and Administrators Act, 2006, <i>Bill 65, Mr. Duncan</i>	
Agreed to	1939
General Brock Parkway Act, 2006, <i>Bill 66, Mr. Craitor</i>	
Agreed to	1939
Mr. Craitor	1940

MOTIONS

House sittings	
Mr. Bradley	1940
Agreed to	1940

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

Mortgage brokers	
Mr. Duncan	1940
Mr. Hudak	1943
Mr. Prue	1944
Ontario Heritage Week	
Mrs. Meilleur	1941
Mrs. Munro	1943
Mr. Marchese	1944

Heather Crowe

Mr. Watson	1942
Mrs. Witmer	1944
Ms. Martel	1945

ORAL QUESTIONS

Ministerial conduct

Mr. Hudak	1945, 1946
Mr. McGuinty	1945, 1946

Nuclear energy

Mr. Hampton	1946
Mr. McGuinty	1946

Energy rates

Mr. Hampton	1947
Mr. Ramsay	1947

OMERS pension fund

Mr. Miller	1948
Mr. Gerretsen	1948, 1951
Mr. Milloy	1951

Municipal finances

Mr. Prue	1949
Mr. Gerretsen	1949

Northern Ontario development

Mr. Oraziotti	1949
Mr. Bartolucci	1950

Electricity supply

Mr. Yakabuski	1950
Mrs. Cansfield	1950

Tenant protection

Mr. Prue	1951
Mr. Gerretsen	1951

Disaster relief

Mrs. Witmer	1952
Mr. McGuinty	1952
Mr. Colle	1952

Child care

Ms. Horwath	1952
Mrs. Chambers	1953

Amateur sport

Mr. Flynn	1953
Mr. Watson	1953

Employment standards

Mr. Runciman	1954
Mr. Peters	1954

PETITIONS

Cancer treatment

Mr. Jackson	1954
Ms. Horwath	1955

Identity theft

Mr. Ruprecht	1954
--------------------	------

Macular degeneration

Mr. Delaney	1955
-------------------	------

Services for the developmentally disabled

Mrs. Munro	1955
------------------	------

Diabetes treatment

Mr. Craitor	1955
-------------------	------

OMERS pension fund

Mr. Miller	1956
------------------	------

Assistance to farmers

Mr. Berardinetti	1956
------------------------	------

Curriculum

Mr. Miller	1956
------------------	------

GO Transit Tunnel

Mr. Ruprecht	1956
--------------------	------

Public libraries

Mr. Jackson	1957
-------------------	------

Firearms safety

Mr. Miller	1957
------------------	------

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Report, Integrity Commissioner, government notice of motion 61, *Mr. Bradley*

Mr. Marchese	1957
Mr. Klees	1960
Ms. Horwath	1962
Mrs. Jeffrey	1964
Mr. Sterling	1965
Mr. Hudak	1967
Mr. Lalonde	1970
Mr. Murdoch	1970
Debate deemed adjourned	1973

OTHER BUSINESS

Visitors

Mrs. Chambers	1940
Mr. Klees	1940

Continued overleaf