



No. 64A

N° 64A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 38th Parliament

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

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 24 April 2006

Lundi 24 avril 2006

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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



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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Monday 24 April 2006

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Lundi 24 avril 2006

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ANNIVERSARY OF
ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): Yesterday, the Canadian Armenian community of Toronto commemorated the 91st anniversary of the Armenian genocide of 1915. I had the honour of attending this historic event together with the leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, John Tory, who expressed his support to the Armenian community on this solemn occasion, confirmed his acknowledgement of the Armenian genocide and condemned this act as a crime against humanity.

I referred to yesterday's event as historic because it marked the first such occasion on which the Armenian people were rewarded for their persistent appeal for justice with the declaration by a Prime Minister of this country that the government of Canada formally recognizes the Armenian genocide. Representing Prime Minister Stephen Harper was the member of Parliament and parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister, Mr. Jason Kenney, who delivered a statement on behalf of the Prime Minister in which, for the very first time, a Prime Minister has had the courage and the moral integrity to bring the policy of the executive branch of the federal government on the Armenian genocide in line with the House of Commons and the Senate of Canada resolutions.

The Prime Minister's statement read, in part: "Ninety-one years ago the Armenian people experienced terrible suffering and loss of life. In recent years, the Senate of Canada adopted a motion acknowledging this period as the 'first genocide of the 20th century,' while the House of Commons adopted a motion that 'acknowledges the Armenian genocide of 1915 and condemns this act as a crime against humanity.' My party and I supported those resolutions and continue to recognize them today...."

"I join with you today in remembering the past, and I encourage you to continue honouring your forefathers by building a bright future for all Canadians."

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I rise today to mark the 90th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. April 24, 1915, was the start of a systematic campaign to eradicate the Armenian people from present-day Turkey, the last century's first case of ethnic cleansing. One and a

half million Armenian men, women and children were brutally killed.

At the time, the world community, constrained by politics, sat idly by and did nothing. Thus, the stage was set for other genocides and human tragedies, such as the one that occurred in Rwanda in 1994. In fact, upon unveiling his final solution for the Jewish people, Hitler noted that the world would not lift a finger because, in his words, "Who today remembers the Armenians?"

"Those who ignore history are condemned to repeat it." We accept this axiom as basic truth, but all too often the world has failed to follow it. Perhaps if other nations had acknowledged that the horrific reality that happened to the Armenians in 1915 was genocide, it is possible that subsequent genocides might have been averted.

Today, many of my colleagues from this assembly and I will be at the Armenian Community Centre in Toronto to commemorate the lives lost in this first genocide of the last century. I urge all members of the Legislature to commemorate this event with the Armenian community in Toronto.

ORGAN DONATION

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): Today marks the beginning of National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week. On behalf of John Tory and my colleagues of the Progressive Conservative caucus, I want to express our support for all who dedicate themselves to making the gift of life available through organ donation.

We recognize the work of the Trillium Gift of Life Network, who have the responsibility of coordinating Ontario's organ donation system, and we pay tribute to the medical professionals who, over the years, have placed Ontario on the leading edge of organ donation. Lives are saved daily through the miracle of organ transplants made possible by the uniting of medical expertise and the selfless gift of organ donation. Yet the waiting lists for organ transplants continue to grow. Some 2,000 people are on waiting lists in this province, and one person dies every three days waiting for an organ transplant. We must do everything possible to raise awareness of the life-saving gift of organ donation.

To this end, I encourage all members of this House to ensure that the private member's bill being proposed by the member from Oak Ridges receives final approval by this House and is implemented by the government without delay. That bill will ensure that every Ontarian is reminded regularly of the importance of organ donation,

yet fully respects the personal right of every individual to make this decision. We as legislators must do everything we can to increase the awareness of the importance of organ donation. By doing so, we will ensure that lives are saved.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): The plight of seniors, our eldest citizens in Dalton McGuinty's Liberal Ontario, is getting worse. They are left sitting in wheelchairs like pieces of garbage, says Kathy Borisenko, who is co-chair of the family advisory council at Rapelje Lodge in Welland. She is a personal witness to the last three years of the life of her father, Sam Dickson—betrayed, along with other women and men who have worked so hard and built so much and given so much to their communities, to their province and to their country, by the Liberals and Dalton McGuinty, who doesn't deliver on his promise of \$6,000 a year in new money for residents of long-term-care facilities so they can have even the most basic and minimum standards of care while they're living out those final years in those facilities: adults forced into diapers, left to sit in their own waste because there aren't enough staff to assist them with the toilet and with bathrooms.

Does this government, with its \$3-billion windfall in unexpected revenues, invest it in seniors? No; \$1.2 billion in accelerated tax cuts for banks and insurance companies, and our folks and our grandparents are left to decay in seniors' homes. You cut in half the mere 3% inflationary funding increase that the province provided on an annual basis for long-term-care facilities. In October, you cut it in half.

Shame on Dalton McGuinty and every—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Members' statements.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill): Recently, two constituents of mine from Thornhill, Frank Dimant, executive vice-president of B'nai Brith Canada, and Ruth Klein, national director of the League for Human Rights and a leading Canadian expert on anti-Semitism, released the 2005 Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents, an annual study on patterns of prejudice in this country. The audit is recognized as a most credible source on anti-Semitism in this country.

Disturbingly, 544 anti-Semitic incidents took place in Ontario this year, an increase of 2.6% over 2004 numbers. While the cases of vandalism and violence dropped in Ontario, cases of harassment rose by 29.8%. Incidents included vandalism against synagogues, swastikas on public sites and private homes, physical assaults against Jews and hate propaganda via the Internet.

B'nai Brith Canada operates its anti-hate hotline 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-800-892-BNAI, or 2624, which I encourage the public to use to report acts of anti-Semitism, hate-motivated crimes, harassment and

Internet hate. Reports can also be made online at www.bnaibrith.ca.

I commend B'nai Brith Canada for providing the world with this important service and look forward to continuing to work with them to eliminate racism, discrimination and intolerance.

1340

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby-Ajax): Gridlock is a serious problem in many parts of the greater Toronto area, but nowhere is it worse than in Durham region. The recent budget tabled by the McGuinty Liberals was touted as a transportation and infrastructure budget, yet there was nothing in it for transportation in Durham region, one of the fastest-growing regions of the province. This is totally unacceptable.

As I went from door to door in Whitby-Ajax during the recent by-election, people's frustration with the lack of action by the McGuinty government on the gridlock issue was evident. People are concerned about the effect that gridlock is having on their families and on their communities. This is reflected in terms of personal stress and in the fact that it's difficult to help in your community as a volunteer, be it as a coach of a soccer team or a board member of a charitable organization, if it takes you several hours to get home every night. This lack of infrastructure funding also stifles economic growth by impeding the free flow of goods and services, an essential component in the manufacturing sector.

Currently, Highway 407 stops at Brock Road in Pickering. An extension of the 407 to Highway 115 is urgently needed for Durham region. While environmental assessments have commenced, there seems to be a lack of political will on the part of the McGuinty Liberals to move the Highway 407 project forward and give it the priority it requires.

Why has the McGuinty government ignored the transportation and infrastructure needs of the residents of Durham region? For the sake of the personal and economic well-being of our residents and our communities, we need relief from gridlock and we need—

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

CITY OF CORNWALL

Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): The member who, for the time being, is representing Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey visited the city of Cornwall on Friday to talk about the closure of the Domtar plant and made every effort to paint the city and riding as being in a state of decline. This is further proof that the member aspiring to represent a Toronto riding just doesn't get it. Cornwall is not a city in decline. In fact, it is a city with a bright future. It is a community in a period of transition, and this government is doing everything in its power to aid its renaissance. Through new hospital and school projects, repaired roads and

water and waste water infrastructure, as well as funding for cultural events and attractions, the McGuinty government is assisting an entrepreneurial spirit so prominent in the riding.

Many of my colleagues on the government side of this House are impressed by this spirit and have visited Cornwall and met with its leaders to see the development going on in the city—just a week and a half ago, my friend Mr. Zimmer was in the riding. Businesses are beginning to look at Cornwall with new eyes.

Cornwall is a city with a proud past and a bright future. Make no mistake: There are still hard times ahead and many of its citizens need assistance in preparing for what lies ahead. This government has been there in support of those affected by the plant closures and will continue to be there to help them through the transition process. The people of Cornwall are determined to look ahead rather than dwell on the past, a lesson the Leader of the Opposition would do well to heed himself.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre): I'm delighted to tell the House about a wonderful new resource in Ontario for internationally educated professionals and for employers seeking trained workers. I often hear from my constituents about foreign-trained professionals arriving in Ontario with credentials, degrees and experience that would impress the toughest interviewer. Unfortunately, however, many new immigrants cannot find jobs in their fields and end up underemployed or unemployed. This is very demoralizing for the immigrants and an unforgivable waste of highly skilled talent for Ontario employers.

However, one part of the solution has been found. Thanks to an initiative led by the WIL Employment Connections centre with the Waterloo Region District School Board and COSTI Immigrant Services in Toronto, a great new website has been launched. With very generous support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, skillsinternational.ca is online and receiving hits every minute.

Skillsinternational.ca features internationally educated professionals who are ready to work and have the skills that employers need. Immigrants, through an approved agency, post their resumé on this site, and employers can search resumé by skills, experience, location and education. This online tool is cost-effective, efficient and the first of its kind in Canada. Recently in my riding, Anne Langille, Lissa Foster and Sohail Khan from the WIL employment centre showed me how this website matches the many foreign-trained professionals who are ready to work with the employers who need these skilled professionals.

CANADIAN FATALITIES IN AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): I rise today to pay tribute to four courageous young men

who died while bringing peace, stability and security to a region and country so desperately in need of both.

Four Canadian soldiers died in Afghanistan early Saturday morning when a roadside bomb detonated under their Jeep as they were returning from a goodwill mission to a northern village. There are no words that can truly or properly express the devastating death of a young person taken in life's prime. It is hard to comprehend and difficult to accept. Their commitment to duty was the ultimate sacrifice, and for that we are eternally grateful.

Corporal Matthew Dinning was born in Richmond Hill and had been stationed at 2 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group in Petawawa. Corporal Dinning had followed in the footsteps of his father, who had served in Bosnia, protecting the people and the values we hold so dear.

Lieutenant William Turner, born in Toronto, was of the Land Force Western Area Headquarters, stationed at Edmonton. Lieutenant Turner was a reservist and a Canada Post letter carrier. Lieutenant Turner had the specific job of liaising with village elders in Afghanistan as a volunteer civil-military co-operation officer.

Bombardier Myles Mansell was born in Victoria, BC. He was of the 5th Field Regiment, stationed at Victoria. Myles was also a reservist and had been a carpenter by trade. It was Bombardier Mansell's life-long dream to fight for Canadian values as part of the military. He served our country with great valour.

The fourth soldier was Corporal Randy Payne of Canadian Forces Base Wainwright, Alberta.

To the families of these fine soldiers, we offer our deepest sympathies on their loss. These men sacrificed all they knew, all the comforts, love and safety of home, in order to defend the rights and freedoms of others. They died so we can live with the freedoms we enjoy and so the people of Afghanistan can come to enjoy peace. Their efforts in bringing stability, peace and harmony to a country and its peoples and in defending their fellow soldiers, and their devotion to duty, will always be remembered. In recognizing their efforts to help others gain a better quality of life today, let us remember their sacrifice and dedication always.

I would ask unanimous consent that we all rise for a moment of silence in recognition of the lives of our soldiers.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Berardinetti has asked for unanimous consent for a moment of silence. Agreed? Would members please stand.

The House observed a moment's silence.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly and move its adoption.

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

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

1350

WEARING OF RIBBONS

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: This is organ and tissue donation week in Ontario. I'd like to seek unanimous consent for members to wear the green ribbon in recognition and to prepare for a ministerial statement on Thursday.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

GREATER TORONTO TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY ACT, 2006

LOI DE 2006 SUR LA RÉGIE DES TRANSPORTS DU GRAND TORONTO

Mr. Takhar moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 104, An Act to establish the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority and to repeal the GO Transit Act, 2001 / Projet de loi 104, Loi visant à créer la Régie des transports du grand Toronto et à abroger la Loi de 2001 sur le Réseau GO.

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

Does the minister wish to make a brief statement?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I will make the statement during ministerial statements.

KEEP YOUR PROMISE ON THE GAS PRICE WATCHDOG ACT, 2006

LOI DE 2006 SUR L'OBLIGATION DE TENIR LES PROMESSES ÉLECTORALES CONCERNANT L'AGENT DE SURVEILLANCE DES PRIX DU CARBURANT

Mr. Bisson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 105, An Act respecting the price of motor vehicle fuel and the appointment of a Gas Price Watchdog / Projet de loi 105, Loi concernant le prix du carburant pour véhicules automobiles et la nomination d'un agent de surveillance des prix du carburant.

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

The member may wish to make a brief statement.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): This bill was introduced by a number of Liberal members in opposition at the time who believed—I don't believe it would have been you, Speaker. It was introduced by a

number of Liberal members in opposition to the then Ernie Eves-Mike Harris government to create a gas price watchdog. I thought it was a good idea, and as I looked at the price of gas this weekend, which went from about \$1.02 to \$1.41 in a period of one day in Timmins, I said to myself, "We need to have a watchdog; we need to have something in order to deal with the price of gas, because clearly at the end of the day consumers are being gouged at the pumps."

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Monday, April 24, 2006, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 112. 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 rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Hardeman, Ernie	Phillips, Gerry
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Bartolucci, Rick	Hudak, Tim	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bentley, Christopher	Jeffrey, Linda	Racco, Mario G.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Kular, Kuldip	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Kwinter, Monte	Runciman, Robert W.
Bryant, Michael	Levac, Dave	Ruprecht, Tony
Cansfield, Donna H.	MacLeod, Lisa	Sandals, Liz
Caplan, David	Marsales, Judy	Scott, Laurie
Chudleigh, Ted	Matthews, Deborah	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	Mauro, Bill	Smith, Monique
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Smitherman, George
Delaney, Bob	Meilleur, Madeleine	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	Miller, Norm	Tory, John
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Van Bommel, Maria
Dombrowsky, Leona	Munro, Julia	Watson, Jim
Duguid, Brad	O'Toole, John	Witmer, Elizabeth
Duncan, Dwight	Oraziotti, David	Wong, Tony C.
Dunlop, Garfield	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Yakabuski, John
Elliott, Christine	Parsons, Ernie	Zimmer, David
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Patten, Richard	
Fonseca, Peter	Peters, Steve	

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	Tabuns, Peter
Kormos, Peter	Murdoch, Bill	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 64; the nays are 8.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

VISITOR

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like the members to recognize the mayor of Port Colborne. His Worship Ron Bodner has joined us in the assembly today.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to talk about legislation I am introducing to create the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority, known as the GTTA. Many of us live and work in different places, and we all want to spend less time commuting. The GTTA will make it as easy to take public transit as it is to drive a car.

The greater Toronto area occupies less than 1% of Ontario's land area, but nearly half of the province's residents live in this region. Traffic congestion on GTA roadways is a significant concern for the whole province. The 400 series highways that pass through this area are some of the busiest in North America. Much of the \$900 million in two-way trade that crosses the Ontario-US border every day travels on these roads. Delays threaten our prosperity.

It is in everyone's interest to reduce congestion and keep traffic moving quickly, reliably and safely. It is critical to our economic success and quality of life.

In the next 25 years it is estimated that we will see an increase of nearly two million vehicles in the greater Toronto and surrounding area. The amount of time spent stuck in traffic could increase by four times and drive the cost of congestion as high as \$20 million a day. We can't let that happen.

If passed, our legislation will create an agency to bring together the province, the regions of Durham, Halton, Peel and York and the cities of Hamilton and Toronto as well as local transit agencies to create a seamless and convenient transportation network—a network that takes into account road, rail and transit services, and all other modes of transportation.

The GTA is one economic region and our prosperity depends on a reliable and efficient transportation system that can move goods and people effectively and efficiently. We need to take a region-wide approach to transit and transportation, one that meets the growing number and the growing needs of commuters in this region. This is consistent with the government's overall approach to planning as outlined in the Places to Grow growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe.

Our transit and transportation problems and solutions are interregional in nature, crossing municipal boundaries. The GTTA will play a critical role in planning for a seamless, integrated transit network so that people can

use public transit to travel easily from Hamilton to Newmarket to Oshawa.

What does this mean for commuters? Convenience; better value; less time waiting for a connecting bus or train.

Our key objectives for the GTTA are to improve service, reduce congestion and remove artificial barriers to traveling. When people take public transit, they don't think about municipal boundaries. They just want to get from one place to another, and they want to do so quickly, efficiently and in a reliable manner. We must avoid duplication in routes and services.

Under our proposal, the GTTA will also be responsible for the GTA fare card system, spearheading the coordination of purchasing public transit vehicles and managing GO Transit.

It makes sense to transfer GO Transit to the GTTA at the appropriate time. As the province's largest inter-regional transit provider, GO Transit supports the GTTA's mandate of planning and identifying strategic investments. It also supports our goal of integrating transit and fare card systems.

The highly successful provincial gas tax program has increased ridership by 3.4 percentage points across Ontario. This program has allowed transit agencies to purchase new buses, hire new drivers and add new routes. To put it in perspective, that is the equivalent of eliminating 18 million car trips a year.

The proposed GTTA will report to the Minister of Transportation. The authority will be overseen by a board appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Under our proposed legislation, the GTTA will be governed by representatives from Durham, Halton, Peel and York regions, the cities of Hamilton and Toronto, and the province. We will also establish an advisory committee of stakeholders representing seniors, students, persons with disabilities and the business community.

One of the GTTA board's first tasks will be to create a region-wide, multi-modal transportation plan. Annually, the agency will submit a rolling five-year capital plan with an investment strategy.

1410

Our government is bringing forward legislation that, if passed, will fulfill another election promise: to integrate transportation in the GTA and Hamilton area and relieve congestion and gridlock. That will take much more than a quick fix. We need a broader comprehensive vision. We need to ensure that the transit and infrastructure are in place to support strategic growth throughout the greater Golden Horseshoe.

We need a vision that puts transit in areas where we need future growth to happen. Our economy depends on how quickly and efficiently we can move people and goods through the region.

Transit is our key priority. Now is the time to move forward. This is an important and exciting day for Ontario. I encourage all members of this House to support the legislation that I have introduced today.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

SOUTIENS À L'EMPLOI

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for franco-phone affairs): I rise in the House today to announce that more than 2,000 Ontario Works clients are working right now, thanks to the McGuinty government's innovative pilot program Jobs Now.

One year ago, our government introduced Jobs Now to help long-term Ontario Works clients move into lasting employment and ultimately off social assistance.

Je suis très fière de faire un compte rendu sur les progrès et les succès du programme ActionEmplois, un projet pilote qui a fait une différence réelle et très positive dans la vie de bien des Ontariennes et des Ontariens et leurs familles.

Jobs Now recognizes that many people who rely on social assistance want to find meaningful work, work that will last and that will allow them to make a better life for themselves and their families. Jobs Now provides ongoing employment counselling, job placement and, most importantly, job retention support to help people find and keep jobs so they can become financially independent from social assistance. These are not make-work jobs. These are real jobs, paying well above minimum wage in areas like sales, finance, administration and transport.

Je voudrais féliciter chacun et chacune des 2 000 et plus participants au programme dans toute la région de la province qui ont maintenant un emploi. Après avoir touché des prestations d'aide sociale pendant plus d'un an, ces personnes ont réintégré le marché du travail et leurs perspectives d'avenir se sont améliorées. Leur réussite est une source d'espoir et d'encouragement pour les bénéficiaires de l'aide sociale de la province.

As we continue to place more and more people in steady jobs, we will not forget to support those who are currently working. Jobs Now will provide long-term job retention services, up to 18 months' worth of follow-up support once somebody is placed in a job, because we know that keeping a job is as important as finding one in the first place. This is how we will make sure people stay on the right track, because we want to do everything we can to make sure they succeed in their jobs, to help prevent them from needing to rely on social assistance ever again in the future.

I would like to take a moment now to acknowledge those who have had a hand in making Jobs Now a success.

Mes sincères remerciements à nos partenaires du programme ActionEmplois.

The six municipalities—Peel region, Durham region, Hamilton, Windsor, Ottawa and Nipissing—that have taken pride in hosting this project; the local chambers of commerce and 1,590 employers currently employing Jobs Now participants in these municipalities who have shown their tremendous support for Jobs Now, and set a positive example for other businesses in these areas and across the province; and WCG International, our partner

in improving employment prospects for social assistance clients in Ontario.

Jobs Now is a wonderful example of how this government is meeting its commitment to help move people off social assistance into steady jobs. It is part of our plan to restore integrity to Ontario's social assistance programs: a plan that is helping improve the lives of thousands of Ontarians; a plan that is good for Ontario's economy and good for the people of Ontario; a plan that recognizes that our people are our greatest resource and, when they can fulfill their potential, the entire province benefits.

I trust my honourable colleagues will join me in celebrating the progress Jobs Now has made so far and will continue to make in the future.

Je vous invite à vous joindre à moi afin de souligner les progrès et les succès d'ActionEmplois.

VOLUNTEERS

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Last week, Swedish officials announced that Ontario's own 23-year-old from Thornhill, Craig Kielburger, had been awarded the 2006 World Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child, otherwise known as the Children's Nobel Prize.

As many of you are aware, Craig has been a tireless advocate for the rights of children. This award is an acknowledgment of the tremendous work being carried out by Free the Children, an organization that Craig founded in 1995. Over the past 11 years, Free the Children has engaged youth in Canada and the United States in the struggle to release young people from poverty and exploitation. With programs in 45 countries, Free the Children has helped fund 420 school projects, has established clean water initiatives and has sent health supplies to children around the world.

Craig's organization is a driving force behind a new generation of volunteers. Free the Children works tirelessly to get young people excited about volunteer opportunities. Craig's work ensures that young volunteers get enthused about working on projects based in Canada or overseas. It is wonderful and reassuring to see young Ontario volunteers getting international recognition. Craig and Free the Children youth coordinators Silvia Borzellino, Jessica Bentley-Jacobs, Theresa Karsner and Robyn Read are with us today in the gallery. I want to acknowledge their presence and pass on our gratitude.

Craig and his young army of volunteers are a testament to the power of volunteerism. As the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, I want to congratulate Craig and his volunteers on this extraordinary honour.

The announcement of Craig's award is timely given that it is now April, a month when Volunteer Canada asks Canadians to celebrate National Volunteer Week. This year, National Volunteer Week is being celebrated between Sunday, April 23, and Saturday, April 29. It is a great opportunity for us to shine a spotlight on the thousands of Ontarians who donate their time and energy to

volunteer activities in their communities—in their towns, cities and rural areas across Ontario.

Volunteers have built Ontario, and they're still building it. They make our province strong, healthy and proud. Volunteers bring hope. Whether it's a flood in Peterborough or a tsunami in South Asia or helping the frail and elderly at our local hospitals and homes for the aged, volunteers, young and old, are there 24/7. Volunteers are always there to support Ontarians in need. They provide comfort to those living with AIDS through projects like the Canada Africa Community Health Alliance, which offers skills and resources to those suffering from that dreaded disease. They provide food and clothing for the homeless through programs like Out of the Cold in Toronto. They bring music and laughter and friendship. Volunteers give generously of their time and skills and they make a positive difference in virtually every aspect of community life. From culture and education to health care, social services, sports and the environment, their contributions improve the quality of life for all of us.

The people of Ontario have an impressive tradition of volunteerism. According to the most recent statistics, 2.4 million Ontarians donate over 390 million hours each year to 45,000 charitable and non-profit groups. Ontario's volunteers give generously because they believe in the spirit of helping others and they are committed to making their communities better places to live. In this way, they help build a civil society and strengthen the social fabric of our great province.

1420

To help observe this special week, National Volunteer Week, I will be hosting a volunteer service award ceremony this Thursday evening, April 27, in Scarborough, one of the 40 such events held in communities across Ontario to recognize and thank over 8,000 local heroes every year. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the province's volunteer service awards. I am proud to say that since this program was created in 1986 under Premier Peterson, the government of Ontario has awarded approximately 100,000 volunteers for countless years of service. This program will honour another 8,000 in communities like Aylmer, London, Owen Sound and Atikokan.

Many members of the Legislature have participated in these remarkable award ceremonies and I encourage them to continue to partake in their local events. Volunteering is the bedrock of Ontario communities. It is an intrinsic part of who we are. Volunteers began the earliest hospitals, they began the earliest homes for the aged and other health and welfare agencies. Today's volunteers are continuing this proud tradition of giving. More than nine out of 10 Ontario residents make annual donations to charitable organizations totalling more than \$2 billion. Three quarters of Ontarians give clothing or goods and more than half donate food.

Volunteers are leading Ontario in the present and they are making a brighter future possible. They build better neighbourhoods and a better Ontario. They show commitment, passion and excellence and they empower

others to reach their own potential. Like Craig Kielburger and Free the Children, they have turned idealism into action.

The sense of responsibility that Ontario's volunteers show for the well-being of fellow citizens and for the betterment of society must be continually recognized and nurtured. That is why I urge my colleagues to join with me this week to show Ontario volunteers that we truly care and value their contributions. Thank you to all of Ontario's incredible volunteers.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): It's a pleasure to respond to the Minister of Transportation. I would start by saying a promise is a promise is a promise. It's like that Liberal expression that proof is a proof is a proof. Mr. Speaker, you would know that technically this has been announced four times. That is a record to date. It's been over two years. I would say to you that on this side of the House we're quite surprised—in fact, we're happy—with this announcement on two fronts. First of all, it's unusual for the Liberals to keep a promise. But we're not sure of that just yet, until all of the numbers are in. On the second part, when in government, we committed \$40 million to this very same initiative. So the question becomes then, what took so long?

I understand the minister has been busy with the Integrity Commissioner, and there may be other excuses. But we will keep a close eye on this file because if you look at the governance, it's very strategically structured to isolate Durham region. In fact, if you look at this announcement, there's nothing here until 2010. In fact, there's a lot of fluff and no substance. It is a typical Liberal charade. We'll have to see. On the five-year capital, to date Durham region has been ignored, and they are but one voice on the overall committee. If you look at the bill itself, you'll see that sections 5 and 6 substantiate what Gord Perks, a well-known a lobbyist on public transit, called tinkering.

There's more work to be done on this file. What's taken so long?

VOLUNTEERS

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): I'm pleased to respond to the message of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. First of all, on behalf of John Tory and the PC caucus, I'd like to welcome Craig Kielburger to the Legislature and congratulate him on the fine work he has done in the past few years. In recognition of volunteer week, I would also add my thanks and acknowledge all the volunteers across the province who devote their time and effort to volunteerism in their communities. I would also like to particularly thank the volunteers in my riding of York North, who give so much of their time and energy to make our community a better place to live.

Currently, there are over 7.5 million volunteers in Canada, involved in 180,000 not-for-profit organizations.

These people are committed to improving the quality of our lives. They are found assisting seniors, organizing fundraisers, teaching English as a second language or volunteering for a political party. In my riding, thousands of volunteers contribute to hundreds of organizations.

This week honours those who make a difference: people like Bob Doure of the Kinsmen, whom I helped honour as a life member this past Saturday, the same night I joined the Pefferlaw Lions as they celebrated their 50th anniversary of service to the community.

Many will tell you that they volunteer to take on new challenges, share knowledge and abilities and also have fun. I believe it is very important to recognize our volunteers, because they are the key players in holding together the fabric of our communities.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): On behalf of the PC caucus, I'm pleased to respond to my colleague the Minister of Community and Social Services.

We're always very pleased to hear about the success of the work-for-welfare policies instituted by the Mike Harris Conservative government in the province of Ontario. We agree fundamentally that the best social program is a job. When people move from social assistance to the workforce, that is worth celebrating, as they bring home a paycheque, raise their families and move on to buy a home and invest in the local economy. In fact, our success was some half a million individuals who left the welfare rolls under the Mike Harris government, and we hope this trend will continue with the new government.

I remember—I'll point out the irony—that when my colleagues opposite were on this side of the House, they decried the work-for-welfare policy and said they were against work for welfare, but now, on that side of the House, they have embraced work-for-welfare policies in a responsible manner, and I congratulate them for that.

I certainly hope these individuals will be the beginning, and those who worked in Cornwall, Kitchener-Waterloo or Niagara or the thousands of individuals in the forest industry sector, who are now without jobs in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, will see a turnaround so they can get back into the workforce.

Eighty thousand lost manufacturing jobs in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario is nothing to boast about. I say to my colleagues opposite: Reduce taxes, get hydro rates under control and control government spending, and those jobs will return to our province.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): I rise to respond to the introduction of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority bill by the Minister of Transportation.

As you know, this initiative has been waited for for a long time. We recognize that an initiative to integrate transit systems can contribute significantly to getting

commuters out of their cars. If we want to deal with smog and congestion, we're going to have to get those commuters moved on to transit. But it's not clear to us at this point whether this bill will actually make the difference that needs to be made. As all members of this House know, the devil in these matters is always in the details.

So I look forward to analyzing the legislation that has been put before us. I want to see if the lessons that have been learned from both the successes and failures with regional transit authorities in other jurisdictions have been recognized and incorporated in the bill. I want to see if the lessons from Ontario's own past have been incorporated in the bill. As you know, the Conservatives in the past tried to create a regional transit authority that failed for a number of reasons, one of which was a lack of power for that authority that effectively left it without the ability to act.

1430

In this announcement today, we're told that the GTTA will have the ability to develop and submit an annual capital plan and an investment strategy. If this legislation, however, is to succeed, the province needs to reassume its role as a prime funder of transit in the GTA, in Ontario. Otherwise, this legislation, standing on its own, is not going to change things.

As you know, since coming to power, the McGuinty Liberals have not taken up the responsibility of adequately funding municipal transit in the GTA; they have not taken on the responsibility of adequately funding GO Transit. If we are to have transit that takes people out of their cars, puts them on rail, puts them on buses, puts them on subways, then we will have to see an introduction of funding that will take a fairly empty shell and make it something that will actually have an impact.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): I rise in response to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Like you, Madam Minister, I rise to salute the indomitable spirit of those who seek full-time jobs and those who are actually successful enough to find them. But I wonder where this government gets off trying to take kudos for what you do. Certainly, I can see that the municipalities that have been involved have done what they were supposed to do, I can see that the chambers of commerce have done what they are supposed to do, but you took the initiative to contract out your responsibilities to a private firm, WCG International, which through its own organization and its own PR firm, Artemis, goes around telling us about the job that they do all the time. I will tell you, you have absolved yourself of your responsibilities and in fact you have bypassed the very municipal and community-based agencies that, before this, were doing an excellent job.

What success have you really had as a government or has WCG had as an agency? They don't do the work; all they do is broker the work. They give it to the municipalities, they give it to the community agencies, they take their fee for doing it. That's what they do in Peel region.

They have a success rate that is almost identical to that of the community agencies they replaced: 13.5%. So from the 2,000 people who found work, we have to surmise that about 13,000 or 14,000 were not helped at all.

I don't know how much this company gets paid here; I haven't been able to find out yet. In British Columbia, they saved about \$18 million from welfare payments, but the British Columbia government paid them \$31 million to do it: a loss of \$13 million to the taxpayer.

The reality is you have tried to reinvent a program that was working very well with community-based and municipal agencies, and in the end all that has happened is that you are helping the same number of people. You're having no greater success, but it's costing the taxpayers a bundle in the process.

VISITORS

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Mr. Speaker, I think all members of the House would want to join with me in offering a very warm welcome to the Ontario Medical Students Association, affiliated with the Ontario Medical Association.

ORAL QUESTIONS

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs. As the minister knows, we were given a briefing this morning by senior public servants concerning the Caledonia situation, which we appreciate. We noted then, as I would note now, the steps forward that were achieved over the weekend, with hopefully much more to come as soon as possible.

We know that your office had correspondence a year ago bringing this matter to your attention. We learned in the briefing this morning that there had been information pickets present on this site some time ago—last fall some time. We know that the occupation began on February 28 and that there was an interministerial committee established that day. Of course, the occupation has now been going on for more than 50 days. We were also told this morning, however, that direct negotiations involving senior officials of the government began only 10 days ago, and this was months after you got a letter, months after the first information picket on the site, which should have indicated trouble was coming and so on.

Why the delay on the part of yourself and the Premier, when an earlier start to negotiations might have led to less tension and to an earlier resolution to this very serious matter?

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): I'd like to thank the Leader of the Opposition for attending the briefing this morning, as did the member from Parry

Sound–Muskoka and the member from Timmins–James Bay. You understand, as we do, that it's a very serious matter.

I would say to the member that over the last two years, both the federal government and the Ontario government have established a process to resolve these issues with the Six Nations. We called it the exploration. We explored what we are classifying as an accounting claim, to see if the land, as it was disposed of over the years, was properly accounted for to the Six Nations community, as had been promised in the original proclamation. That has been ongoing and, in fact, has made some great progress over the last six months. What really happened was that a faction of the community lost patience with the progress of that process and acted out as we've seen from the newspapers.

Mr. Tory: To the minister again: I had the opportunity to visit the area again this morning and speak to the local officials and to local residents. It's interesting and, I would say, reassuring that the predominant sentiment among those I spoke to is the hope that the relationship that has evolved over hundreds of years between the First Nations people and the other residents in the area won't be impaired by this series of events. I think we all would share that hope.

Another theme from the people I spoke to this morning—average people, in one place or another, who are down there—is that they feel they don't have very much real, hard information. They see certain things in the media and so on, but they don't really know who is talking to whom and what's going on. The local government, as you know, is not really at the table. While I know you have been in touch with them, they're really dealing with second-hand information.

Aside from what I know the OPP has done, and I commend them for it—going from door to door in the immediate area around the occupation—could you tell us what steps you have taken—I think they're very few in number—and what steps you will take in order to make sure that the people who live in this area, broadly speaking, are properly informed of what is going on and can receive that information with a certain sense of reassurance and so on? What are you going to do to better inform them?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: I do appreciate the tone of the questioning from the Leader of the Opposition. I'd like to say to the member that today, Mayor Trainer and council will be receiving a full briefing, as you did today, about the situation. I have been keeping in constant contact with her, and we feel that a full briefing before her and council will help with that.

You have also outlined some of the other steps that are being taken. Representatives of the OPP have been going around trying to assure some calm with the residents, whose lives have obviously been disrupted. Understandably, people are concerned and emotions can run high, and we are concerned about that. So they're going door to door to residences and businesses to inform them of what is going on, because we want everybody to know

that everybody is working around the clock to solve this situation.

Mr. Tory: I think the minister helped make the point of my final supplementary, because the OPP, in going around from door to door, can really only address security concerns, if I can call it that, or policing concerns. As the minister knows and made reference to, there is a public meeting tonight, organized by the local residents. I think we all hope that would be an opportunity for informed discussion, communication and understanding.

In the briefing we had today, one of your senior officials indicated that he would indeed be briefing the local council this afternoon but that nobody from the Ontario government would be present at the meeting of residents tonight. I asked in particular whether that meant both public servants and elected officials, and he indicated that he could only speak to the fact that there would be no public servants there, but I'm assuming there won't be any elected officials there as well.

In light of the importance of this being a constructive, informative kind of meeting with as positive an outcome as possible, will the minister commit that an elected official, preferably a minister, will be there to represent the government of Ontario and ensure that people at that meeting are given the kind of accurate, up-to-date information that is needed to ensure a successful outcome?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: That's why we're having the full briefing with the mayor and the council this afternoon, so that the mayor can address this local rally she is going to speak to with full information about what is going on. As the member should appreciate, we are in a very delicate balance right now, and a delicate phase of this particular negotiation, and discussion is ongoing. I think that for an elected official of the government to come to a meeting or rally on just one side now could obviously tip the balance of this discussion. Up till now, the general meetings around the large table involved all the partners in this, and I think that is the way to carry on.

1440

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): I should say it's not "one side" that's there tonight; it's the people who live there.

My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Can you confirm to the House today that there seems to be some discrepancy as to exactly how many times—I just want you to confirm that this is the seventh time you have announced the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority.

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation): Let me tell you that what is really important is for us to develop a seamless, integrated transit system in the GTA area. Let me also tell you what we are not going to do. We're not going to have GTTAs like the GTSB that the previous government had. What we're also going to do is make sure this GTTA is going to work. That's what is really important.

Mr. Tory: Let's check the record: It's been announced in three budgets, two throne speeches and all the other announcements you've made at Union Station. Including today, it may even be eight or nine; I was trying to be conservative, as I should be, in saying seven.

There are no details on when this is going to be up and running. There are no details on how much it's going to cost. But what we can see from this bill and from your public statement today is that the single-fare system that you talk about so much will not be in effect for four more years. That will be seven years after the first of your seven announcements that you've made—seven years to actually get some progress on this.

Why can't you put a hurry-up on the single-fare initiative, not get it bogged down in all of your bureaucracy and so on, and get on with actually implementing something instead of just doing public relations announcements?

Hon. Mr. Takhar: What is really important here is to address the needs of the commuters. The population is increasing, and the previous government paid no attention to transit in this province. Those are the facts. I'm hoping that the Leader of the Opposition is going to direct his people and his MPPs here so that they will support this legislation, because it's important legislation. It's not important whether I've talked about this six times, seven times, eight times or maybe 1,000 times. What is important is that the people need to know that I've been moving on it and that the previous government didn't do anything for nine long years.

We are making investments and there's proof of that in our budget. This year we are putting \$670 million for our subway system, \$95 million for Mississauga Transit, and we are putting another \$95 million for Brampton Transit, so we are making real progress on this file.

Mr. Tory: Of course, this thing is so meaningful that you didn't even wait for it to make the announcements that you made in the budget. But let's talk about what you've done or, more importantly, what you haven't done. This bill provides for an authority to run GO Transit. We already had an authority doing that. All you've done is changed the name from the Toronto Area Transit Operating Authority to the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority. Knowing you guys, you'll spend millions on letterhead and new offices to accommodate that bureaucratic change.

It provides for certain procurement responsibilities and then after that—let's look at the words that are in the bill: "coordinating," "promoting," "coordinated decision-making," "advising," "working towards," "guiding." There's actually no power in there, no language to get anything done, to get any transit bill.

Why have you chosen to create an agency that will have no real power to get anything done and whose only specified project, the single-fare system, will take until 2010 to get implemented? People can't wait that long. You'll talk about it another 993 times.

Hon. Mr. Takhar: Let me tell you what is important here. We need to reduce congestion on our highways.

We're going to create a system that will be integrated, that will be seamless, and it will work.

Let me give you a little bit of a—maybe the Leader of the Opposition hasn't read the legislation yet. It is going to develop a long-term plan: It's going to developing a five-year rolling capital plan and an investment plan. We are moving on developing a fare card system. For nine long years, they didn't do any damn thing on that, but we're going to have a fare card system. People will be able to move from Hamilton to Durham on a single fare card. We're also going to set up a transit procurement agency so that all the municipal systems can actually save money when they're procuring those buses. So this is a great step forward and a great day for Ontario.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Acting Premier. Before last Thursday's use of force by the OPP at Caledonia, were there ongoing discussions and negotiations with First Nation representatives and had those negotiations or discussions broken down before the use of force by the OPP on the morning of Thursday, April 20?

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): To the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs.

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): There have been ongoing discussions between the two levels of government, and the chief, council and confederacy of the Six Nations. Obviously, there have been discussions with the developer involved and the eight contractors supporting the developer on the development of that community there, that subdivision, besides the long-range processes that have been up and running for the last two years to deal with the land claim issues.

Mr. Hampton: The reason I ask is because this is a copy of the framework for police preparedness for aboriginal critical incidents. It talks about promoting and developing strategies that minimize the use of force. It says that where there is "colour of right"—in other words, a potential land claim by First Nations—the OPP are to emphasize that negotiations will be used at every opportunity and communicate that all people will be treated with respect. So if discussions and negotiations were continuing, have you asked those in charge of the OPP why they would resort to use of force, when their own document says that they should promote discussion and negotiation?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: I'll refer this to the Minister of Community Safety.

Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services): You should understand that this is a two-track situation. You're absolutely right: If it is a matter of negotiating treaties, land claims and things of that kind, there is a framework in place. You have to understand that there is another track, and that track was a private individual, a developer, who

bought the land 15 years ago. He had title to it and a certificate from the province of Ontario guaranteeing that title, and found that someone was actually blocking him from accessing his property. He went to the Superior Court of Ontario and got an injunction. That injunction ordered the OPP to remove these people from the site. The OPP used great restraint. They waited and waited, and from an operational point of view made the determination that this was the time when they had to act. I can't second-guess that, but this was a separate issue dealing with the injunction that was authorized by a Superior Court judge in Ontario, which directed and ordered the OPP to act on it.

Mr. Hampton: With respect, the minister hasn't answered the question. Did you ask the Ontario Provincial Police why they resorted to use of force in a situation where discussion and negotiation were continuing, where their own protocol says that where there is "colour of right" by aboriginal people, where they may have a legitimate land claim, that discussion and negotiation are to be used and use of force is to be avoided? Did the OPP discount the colour of right? Have you asked them that? If you haven't, you ought to ask them that. Please tell us the answer.

1450

Hon. Mr. Kwinter: I should say that the member was invited to a briefing today and the OPP was there. He didn't show up, but it hasn't stopped him from asking this question.

I should tell you again, and I said it in the response I gave previously, there are two tracks to this. If, in fact, this was strictly an issue where there was a land claim and a dispute on that point, you're absolutely right: That was going on and those discussions were going on. But we have this added component, and that is a developer who went to a Superior Court judge and got an injunction, and that injunction said, "You OPP are ordered to remove those people from that site." So they had that direction. It wasn't a matter of following—if this were a simple land claim and they were suddenly moving on it. This was a directive from a Superior Court judge, and they decided—not only decided; they were given the order to do it, and they did it.

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

Mr. Hampton: My next question is again to the Acting Premier. What is puzzling about this is, here we have a situation where the McGuinty government clearly could have headed off a serious situation. What we see now is, after there's been an altercation, a mediator has been appointed to hold discussions. What the First Nations want to know is, why wasn't there this effort towards mediation; why wasn't there this effort to understand the point of view; why wasn't there this effort to resolve this situation before the OPP resorted to use of force?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: To the minister of aboriginal affairs.

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: I think I'd like to reiterate the invitation that we did give the leader of the third party,

who didn't attend the briefing. I acknowledge the other members who did because, to get a full understanding of this—but if the member wants to do this in question period, we can do it in question period. I think what's important for the member to realize is that there was a full engagement over the last two years on this issue between both the federal and the provincial governments and the duly elected chief and council of the Six Nations.

There is an issue here, and we've been working on it. If you ask Chief David General, he would tell you that there has been great progress made over the last six months, and it was only when a group in the community became impatient with the progress of the process that this occupation started. But we have been engaged with this, and want to resolve this with the community.

Mr. Hampton: With all due respect to the minister, your briefing today, which was attended by our staff and our representatives, really didn't answer the question that I'm asking you here. You knew about the seriousness of this situation for over the last year. The warning signs were all there. But there was no mediator appointed. Things were allowed to drift along. No leadership was shown. Then you get yourself into a situation where the OPP, despite their own protocol, enter into and use force in a situation where at the same time you're trying to say to First Nation leadership, "Let's discuss and negotiate." Tell me, what message should anyone take if, on the one hand, you're saying, "Let's discuss and negotiate," but not much is happening and, on the other hand, the OPP is using force?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: All I can do is reiterate for the leader of the third party that this process, called the exploration, comprised of the two levels of government and the elected chief and council of the Six Nations, had been steadily working over the last two years and made great progress over the last six months. This exploration has published a document called Six Miles Wide. That is a reference to the original land grant that was made by the crown to the Six Nations of land, six miles either side of the Grand River, along the length of it, from Lake Erie all the way to Orangeville, and the rules and regulations in regard to that. What's in question is, was the appropriate crediting of the disposition of that land made to the Six Nations or not? We're all involved in that. We've made great progress on that and we continue to make progress. Hopefully out of this, we will expedite that process and get this resolved once and for all.

Mr. Hampton: With due respect to the McGuinty government, when thousands of travellers cannot get between Montreal and Toronto on the VIA Rail line, when you've literally got tasers and pepper spray being used in an altercation at Caledonia, where people are being arrested and where force is being used, that doesn't sound like progress to people.

It seems to me that the McGuinty government needs to show some leadership here. You have had over a year to appoint a mediator and get down to brass tacks. Why did you allow this situation to disintegrate to the point where the OPP are using force once again against aboriginal

people, but then the day after that happens, you suddenly find the will to appoint a mediator? Can you explain that to people?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: What the member has to understand is how complex an issue this is. I would ask the member to think about this: It's not like a labour negotiation: one side versus another side. There are at least six parties to this dispute that have to be brought into this. It is very complex. So we're working with all the parties. I think you'd have to understand that the province has taken a leadership role even though land claims, as you know, are primarily a federal issue. But we have appointed the mediator. We are making sure that the talks take place. We have our own negotiator there also, as does the federal government. I was in Ottawa today talking to the federal minister to keep him apprised of what we've been doing there and make sure we're working together to resolve this. We are working together and we are going to resolve this.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. I'm confident that you, as the minister responsible for the Ontario Provincial Police, are briefed each day on the situation at Caledonia. Minister, my question is fairly simple; it's not complex like some of the questions the minister just responded to. My question is, how much does it actually cost on a daily basis to have the OPP at Caledonia?

Hon. Mr. Kwinter: Operational issues with the OPP are the responsibility of the commissioner of the OPP. The commissioner does not check with me to see if they're spending the right amount of money or anything else. Any questions of that kind should be directed to the OPP. This is an operational issue for them. The commissioner deploys her personnel in a manner that she and her executives deem to be appropriate. Whatever costs they have, they have to deal with that in their budget.

Mr. Dunlop: It's interesting to hear you answer the question that way. When we asked a couple of weeks ago, when we called the OPP, it was someone from your office who responded to our call.

Minister, a week ago in this House I pointed out to you that the expenditure estimates for this year indicated that the field and traffic services of the OPP had to be slashed by some \$31.3 million. You denied this. The Caledonia crisis has created a huge drain on the OPP budget. Officers from across the province have been sent to Caledonia, leaving serious gaps in the staffing at their home detachments, things like overtime at the home detachments. My question is very simple: Are you prepared to allocate additional emergency funding to the OPP, and if so, how much funding would you allocate?

Hon. Mr. Kwinter: The OPP have to be prepared for many, many contingency things that happen. This is part of their responsibility and part of their operation. Again, the commissioner has the responsibility to allocate her personnel resources, the people, the manpower, in a way that will provide security and safety in the best interests

of the public. I do not interfere with that particular aspect of her job. I can tell you we have increased the funding to the OPP regardless of what you feel about it. I can tell you that if you take a look at the budgetary estimates, they'll show you that. I can tell you that in my regular communication with the commissioner, there has never, ever been a question raised about inadequate financial resources.

1500

KASHECHEWAN FIRST NATION

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): My question is to the Acting Premier. You would know that there is currently another crisis in Kashechewan, this time another spring flood. What is troubling—I was contacted by one of the media outlets yesterday and I've checked this out: Yesterday, in attempts to get up to Kashechewan, this particular media outlet, MCTV of Timmins, was actually being hindered by EMO staff. What is more troubling is that it was confirmed this morning by chief and council that EMO staff at the briefing yesterday in the town of Kashechewan was trying to encourage the community to keep the media out. Is it the policy of this government to keep the media out of a situation like that?

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): The Minister of Community Safety.

Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services): The member will know that last year at exactly this time when there was a flood, I flew up to Kashechewan with a media person—on your airplane, though. It was on your airplane. You have to understand: This is an operation where there are evacuations taking place going to Greenstone, Cochrane, Timmins; there's flooding.

The ability of the media to go up there is their responsibility. It is not the responsibility of the EMO to accommodate media people there. That doesn't mean they can't go, but they have to make their own arrangements to get there.

I'm sure you know better than all that it's a very, very difficult situation because of the weather at the moment. The airport is flooded in Kashechewan; the road to the airport is flooded. They're going by helicopter from Kashechewan to Fort Albany. It is a major operation, and the last thing that EMO needs to do is to also take responsibility for moving media around.

Mr. Bisson: My question is not asking EMO to organize the transportation of journalists; they know how to do that themselves. That wasn't the question. The question is, is it the policy of the EMO now at this point to try to keep the media out once they get in the area? That is, first of all, what the media has told me, but it is also what the chief and council have told me yet again, and I've confirmed it two or three times to make sure. So my question to you is a simple one, back to the original question: Is it the policy of the McGuinty government today to keep the media out of situations like Kashechewan?

Hon. Mr. Kwinter: The answer is a very simple no. But you have to understand, at the present time the only way into Kashechewan is by air and the only way to really get in there is by helicopter. Again, the last thing they need when they're using these helicopters to transfer evacuees from Kashechewan to Fort Albany and then to Timmins, to Cochrane, to Greenstone, is to have another aircraft out there that has no reason to be there other than they want to cover this thing from a media point of view. That is their responsibility. EMO also has a responsibility, and they have to determine whether or not this is something that is going to complicate their operations.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, I know you've visited my riding and you know just how important Brant is to the provincial economic outlook. We're within the boundaries of Places to Grow; we're located in the hub of a transportation system. We're a prime geographic area for development and delivery of goods. The downtown core is undergoing a dramatic revitalization led by the institutions offering post-secondary education, not only to the residents of Brant but to many individuals and students from around the province looking for very specialized courses that are offered in Brantford.

We have newly arrived companies like Procter and Gamble, Ferraro, Maidstone, Chiporama and many others. Just around the corner from us is the expansion of Toyota Canada. The new companies that are being attracted to Brant and Brantford are looking for skilled workers. Minister, would you tell us, as a government, what we're doing to assist employers in finding workers who have the right skill sets to support and encourage this exciting new growth in my riding?

Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): I'd like to thank the member for Brant for all the work that he's been doing in advising this government about not only the great business opportunities that are developing in the Brantford area, which, as he says, are key to the economic growth of the region, but also on the specific training and educational needs of those workers: how we can make sure that the community itself develops its appropriate set of workers.

We have some initiatives through the labour market development and labour market partnership agreements that have been recently signed by this government, the first time ever that we have those, and we are working with communities such as his right now on how to make sure that those investments accrue to the benefit of workers locally. I've been speaking with the member about projects such as phase 2, the Heritage Block, and phase 3, in determining what will best meet the skills development needs of the community and the businesses in the region.

Mr. Levac: Minister, thanks for the clarification. I'm glad you brought up those projects that are coming. I

know you've been informed of recent inferences by some individuals about the role the province should and could play in the Brantford Centre for Post-Secondary Education—a Wilfrid Laurier University/Brantford/Mohawk College/city of Brantford/Grand Valley Educational Society proposal. I find it interesting that, even within the stakeholders' groups, there seem to be individual interpretations of what role the province should play and does play. We want no more speculation, Minister.

Quite clearly, I am interested in the direction of this government with respect to post-secondary education and the skills development groups and trades in my riding. Minister, I know that you and former ministers have toured the sites right there on campus and met with various stakeholders of all the groups that are concerned about growing Laurier-Brantford in my riding.

Would you please state clearly what took place at those discussions and commitments and what commitment the province made on phase 2 of the Brantford Centre? I appreciate a direct answer.

Hon. Mr. Bentley: I applaud the initiative of the people in the community of Brantford and the surrounding community for the hard work they've been doing in developing post-secondary education institutions in the community.

No, the province did not commit to directly fund phase 2, but is the province there? Absolutely. First of all, approximately six years ago, there were no university students in the community of Brant. Now, through the Laurier-Brantford project, there are 1,400. Who funds those? The province of Ontario funds those students.

Mohawk-Brantford students are in the community—900 of them. Who funds those? The province of Ontario.

The institutions which join together to develop further capital projects, both Mohawk and Laurier, have been funded in their own home bases through capital projects of the province of Ontario, enabling them further capacity to build in Brantford. We're there in a big way, and we'll continue to be.

COAL-FIRED GENERATING STATIONS

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): My question is for the Minister of Energy. Given the fact that the Premier admitted last week that your coal replacement plan is not working, describing natural gas as “volatile” and wind as “expensive and unreliable,” why have you refused, while other jurisdictions have taken advantage of technologies available to them with regard to clean coal power, to even consider this clean, reliable, economical source of electricity for the province of Ontario?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy): There is no technology for clean coal. There's technology for cleaner coal. There are four types of technology: Endopipe, which is your scrubbers; the second is fluidized or supercritical, which is just as expensive as or more expensive than many and gives you the same emissions as natural gas. The third is integrated gasification

combined cycle currently used in chemical and rarely used in electricity. The final is zero emissions, which is totally theoretical and doesn't exist, except in the laboratory. So there is no such thing as clean coal. There is cleaner coal technology, but we still have to deal with CO₂ emissions, mercury emissions and toxins.

We have made a decision. Our commitment is firm. There is no question that in the integrated supply mix they have looked at the issue of gasification in the future. When the technology's improved and there's a possibility of that being applied in an economical way for the people of Ontario, I'm sure the Ontario Power Authority will consider it.

Mr. Yakabuski: Minister, given your own response that it was as good as natural gas, equal to natural gas in your own statement, the fact that your replacement of natural gas is not adequate and wind is a dream, and the fact that last year we produced record amounts of power from coal-fired stations and imported record amounts of coal-fired power from the United States, how do you square it with the environmentalists in this province and in your caucus that, on one side, you condemn the use of coal, but on the other side you have refused to invest one nickel in the technologies available to clean up our own coal plants while you continue to run them, and it is very likely that we will continue to run them long before your coal closeout deadline? Why will you not invest in cleaning up those coal plants on behalf of our environment?

1510

Hon. Mrs. Cansfield: I would say to the member that I indicated the same emissions as natural gas. I understand that he may have wanted to have the same dream that we have of clean, green, renewable energy. Too bad you didn't have that dream. As a matter of fact, what you dreamed instead was how to reduce the power in this province by almost 2,000 megawatts before we turned things around and put a plan in place that's going to make a difference for the people of Ontario.

We've made a commitment to get rid of dirty coal plants. That commitment is firm and we're moving on. I've given the member the answers around the cleaner coal technology. There is no question that there are jurisdictions around the world that are looking at this technology. As a matter of fact, two of them are in Canada; here just outside of Ottawa, where they're looking at that technology.

We've just invested \$4 million to go into research and development to look at alternatives in biomass. We know that there are opportunities out there. It's too bad you didn't have a chance—

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

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): My question is to the Minister of Energy. Can you explain to me what international factors caused the price of gas in the

city of Timmins to go from \$1.08 Saturday to \$1.40 Sunday morning and back down to \$1.08 Sunday afternoon?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy): What I can say to the member is I'm thinking, what an opportunity we have here now that we have Mr. Flaherty in Ottawa—Mr. Flaherty, who at one time challenged Ottawa to freeze the gas tax the way Ontario had.

Interjection: Really?

Hon. Mrs. Cansfield: Absolutely. We're suggesting maybe he could take his own advice. Also, Mr. Flaherty called the GST "a galloping tax on gasoline that was unfairly tied to rapid price measures." I think that maybe you and I could go to Ottawa and see Mr. Flaherty. Let's see what we can do to make a difference about those rising prices in Ontario.

Mr. Bisson: Minister, why don't—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Order. We can wait.

Mr. Bisson: Minister, why don't you try tapping the shoulders of people like Michael Colle in the Liberal caucus, Mr. Bartolucci in the Liberal caucus, Mr. Crozier in the Liberal caucus, Mr. Bradley in the Liberal caucus—all the Liberals who in opposition said they wanted to do something when they got to government? And you want me to go and lobby James Flaherty? Come on, it goes fast. I asked you a question, and the question was very simple: What happened internationally to allow the price of gas in Timmins to go from \$1.08 Saturday night to \$1.40 Sunday morning, only to drop by 30 cents two hours later? What international pressures did that?

Hon. Mrs. Cansfield: I'm sure the member reads the same newspapers that I read, and he's well aware of the international pressures that are out there dealing with Iraq and the US. So I know that he's asking the question because he really wants to come with me to Ottawa so that we can make a difference in terms of that GST.

But he also is well aware that in fact it is the responsibility of the federal government and not the provincial government, and that in fact there's also the Competition Bureau. Now, the federal government itself identified the Competition Bureau as having the responsibility, that they were the ones who were going to oversee, they were the ones who were going to investigate. That same Competition Bureau indicated that if they could find any differences in what was reviewed in the United States or what was reviewed in Canada, they would be prepared to look at it once again.

So again, I suggest to the member that I'd be more than pleased to go with Mr. Bisson to Ottawa to raise—

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister. New question

RENEWABLE FUELS

Mr. Vic Dhillon (Brampton West–Mississauga): My question is to the Minister of Energy. More than 15 years of neglect and cancelled energy projects means our existing power sources are aging and may soon provide less power than we need. Some, like coal plants, are just

bad for our people's health. I know our government is turning this sorry situation around. In the past few weeks, you've drawn the attention of the House to three wind projects which are providing clean power to our province.

Minister, citizens in my riding are counting on our government to ensure that we have enough safe, clean and reliable electricity in Ontario to meet the province's needs, and they're prepared to see their community play its part. Can you tell us some other steps being taken to ensure Ontario has enough power, and power that is clean and sustainable?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy): I'd like to thank the member from Brampton–Mississauga West. He's right: We have announced a number of wind projects that are clean, green and renewable. But also today, I had the opportunity to be very close to where the member's riding is, and that's where we introduced the Britannia Road landfill gas plant. Enough megawatts are being produced at that gas plant that would actually deal with the power needs not only of the water treatment plant but also of the town of Streetsville. Again, it's another opportunity where, right in a local community, distributed energy—we can look at the needs that are there in the community and use an existing landfill site. Instead of burning off that methane into the air where it's causing huge emissions, we've now captured it and are producing energy from it. I have to say the region of Peel, Enersource in Mississauga and certainly the proponent all worked together over a good number of years to make sure this has happened. The bonus: There's a golf course right on top of it all.

Mr. Dhillon: Thank you, Minister. I'm glad you shared this example of how people in my region can help provide renewable energy to meet our needs and the needs of our province.

Minister, can you tell me what you see as the benefits of this project, from both an environmental and an energy perspective?

Hon. Mrs. Cansfield: Again, I thank the member. One of the most important things is the reduction of emissions into the air. The other is to be able to use a local energy source for the local people. We have had over 19 projects that have been agreed to by the Ontario Power Authority. We have announced a significant number of those. They include biomass. The Lynn cattle biogas digester is going to be up and running soon, not only for that farm, but also for that local community. The Britannia landfill is another example; Eastview landfill; Melancthon, up in Shelburne; Erie Shores—99 turbines. I'm sure that the member, Mr. Barrett, was thrilled to have \$186 million go into his community, when that land—

Hon. Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade): Is that Toby Barrett?

Hon. Mrs. Cansfield: That's right. That's Mr. Barrett's community.

It was amazing that what we've been able to do by shutting down the coal-fired plants is reduce the emissions and have cleaner air not only for ourselves and

our children, but for our children's children. They are up. They are running. I'll take you to show you. Those turbines are phenomenal.

NORTHERN ECONOMY

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have a question for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. The city of North Bay is facing serious fiscal challenges and your government is not helping. In fact, you don't even seem to know that North Bay exists. The Premier recently visited North Bay, and I'll quote from the North Bay Nugget after his visit: "Premier Unprepared for Visit: McGuinty Vague with Answers, Calls City by Wrong Name During Stop."

Minister, councillors are talking about massive cuts to city services because of shortfalls in provincial funding. Why are you ignoring the city of North Bay?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): Well, let me tell you that the area of Parry Sound–Muskoka should be represented as well as the area of Nipissing–North Bay. North Bay—and all of northern Ontario—is very much on the radar screen of this government. Let me just highlight two projects that I believe are very important and that were advocated quite aggressively by Monique Smith, the member from North Bay: There's the brand new hospital which is going to be built and, in the first round of COMRIF, a \$45-million water treatment plant. This government is committed to all of Ontario and we are showing by our actions that northern Ontario finally counts in a government in Ontario.

1520

Mr. Miller: Minister, I hate to disagree with you, but the North Bay city councillors seem to have a different perspective. In fact, they say your government is unresponsive to issues of provincial funding shortfalls for North Bay, and I'll quote from the North Bay Nugget. This is what the councillors say: "The city has been trying to draw provincial attention to the issue for the past two years."

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Stop the clock.

Member for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Mr. Miller: "Little ground has been gained despite raising the concerns with Nipissing MPP Monique Smith and other provincial officials.... 'And we can't even get a phone call,' he said, noting the many meetings, phone calls and letters have gone unanswered."

The city is facing a \$4.3-million shortfall this year. When is the government going to respond to the calls for help from the city of North Bay?

Hon. Mr. Bartolucci: Let me continue what this government has done for the city of North Bay: 2006 Ontario municipal partnership funding, almost \$17 million; roads and bridges, almost \$4 million; 2006 gas tax allowance, \$975,000; COMRIF funding, almost \$15 million. The good news goes on and on and on—a new hospital, a

new water treatment plant, completion of the four-laning of Highway 11—all because we have a member from North Bay who believes that advocacy is extremely important, unlike the previous government and the government before, which turned their backs on North Bay, turned their backs on Sudbury, turned their backs on Kenora, turned their backs on all of northern Ontario. Finally, a government cares about northern Ontario.

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE BOARD

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): A question to the Minister of Labour: Workers across this province have been waiting for the appointment of a new chair of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. Can the McGuinty government assure them that this government will not fill this important position with an unqualified, anti-worker, partisan appointee like unemployed Liberal Steve Mahoney?

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): I thank the member for his interest in the WSIB, because we all recognize the important role the WSIB plays in looking after the needs of injured workers here in the province of Ontario.

As the member should well be aware, there was an advertisement placed in the *Globe and Mail*, engaging a process for the recruitment of a new chair of the WSIB. This was in keeping with the commitment we made as a government for more open and transparent processes in the appointment of important individuals in this province. An interview process has been undertaken, and I'm confident that the honourable member will hear an announcement in the near future.

Mr. Kormos: Minister, last year you assured this House that a new chair would be appointed by January in "an open and transparent process." Workers across this province are extremely frightened about rumours that the fix is already in, that Steve Mahoney has got the job. One thing he could never do is keep his mouth shut. Mahoney is not only a partisan selection; he's the author of the notorious "back to the future" report that called for rate cuts for bosses, no extending of coverage for workers and no compensation for stress.

Will you tell this House and workers across this province today, will you let them sleep well tonight and assure them that you have no intention of appointing this anti-worker Liberal hack as chair of the WSIB?

Hon. Mr. Peters: I thank the honourable member again for the question. For the first time ever in the province of Ontario, we have embarked on an open and transparent process of hiring the chair of the WSIB. It's never happened in the province of Ontario before. As well, I think the honourable member recognizes—I look at the correspondence that I've received from the honourable member—the various challenges that workers in this province are facing. Many of those challenges are a result of the Friedland formula that was implemented by the NDP government, which started to cut the benefits for

injured workers, and that was accelerated by the Conservative Party. We have forgotten about the damage that the NDP did to the WSIB.

My predecessor ordered an independent audit of the WSIB; the WSIB has moved forward on the implementation of those audit recommendations. We're trying to turn things around at the WSIB. We've been through the process. You'll hear very shortly of this—

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

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West): My question is for the Minister of Transportation. The announcement today of the creation of the transportation authority, including the Hamilton-Toronto corridor, was welcome news to the people of Hamilton. The congestion on our highways costs Hamilton in lost economic opportunity and extra pollution as thousands of cars crawl down the highway day after day, in addition to the huge people cost. Can you please tell the House what the mandate of the transportation authority will be and how this will help my constituents? Also, as a sidebar, I would like to add Hamilton to the name, such as the greater Toronto-Hamilton transportation authority. Could you just explain that to us, please?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation): I want to thank the member from Hamilton West for asking this question. I also want to thank her and the other colleagues of mine from the Hamilton area who helped us actually come to this conclusion that Hamilton needed to be included as an important part of the GTTA.

For us, the key objectives for the GTAA are: (1) to improve service; (2) to make sure that congestion is relieved; (3) to make sure that there are no artificial barriers to travelling.

The key mandate will be that the GTTA will make sure that there's a long-term plan in order to address congestion. There is a five-year rolling plan for the capital and an investment plan for the capital so that we can address some of these important issues that have been ignored for a long time.

Ms. Marsales: Statistics show that we will have another 3.7 million people moving into our region over the next 25 years. The time is now to have in place a transportation system that supports this population growth. As population increases and we see more and more cars on our roads, the introduction of the greater Toronto-Hamilton transportation authority, which will integrate and coordinate transit systems, is certainly great news for commuters from Hamilton right through to Whitby.

Hamilton needs a regular, reliable, full-service GO train. Can you please explain to me what we as a government have done for Hamilton's public transit system since coming into office?

Hon. Mr. Takhar: I couldn't agree more with the honourable member that we need a transportation system

that is reliable, effective and efficient. That's why we are moving ahead with the GTTA, so that we can create an integrated public transit system that is seamless, by which people can go from one place to another in an effective and efficient manner, and so that it becomes a real choice to take public transit instead of using cars.

The other thing that we are doing is making sure there is one fare card system that people will use when travelling from Hamilton to Durham. They will also have the choice to go by rail, bus or highway when commuting from one place to another. At the end of the day, what we really want to make sure is that people travel from one place to another quickly and efficiently, that there's less congestion and that we can move goods effectively on our highway system. GTTA will go a long way for us to accomplish some of those objectives.

1530

HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey): My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Rather than restarting the construction of the realignment of Highway 26 between Stayner and Collingwood, which your government cancelled shortly after coming to office, your ministry announced last week that it will start a five-day engineering value audit. Your ministry staff are spending today in Collingwood and then they're going to spend the following four days at a Toronto hotel reviewing this project that you cancelled three years ago. They don't even have the courtesy to stay in a hotel in my riding or in the Collingwood area.

Having said that, Minister, can you confirm that this is true, and can you explain once and for all to my constituents why you cancelled the realignment of Highway 26 between Stayner and Collingwood, a mere 6.2 kilometres of road?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation): As the member said, the detailed design is on hold pending value engineering studies scheduled for spring 2006. It's important for us to make the right decisions. In order to make the right decisions, we need to do the value engineering study to see what are the most effective ways to do these kinds of projects, and that's exactly what we are doing. The detailed design eventually will be devised to incorporate the recommendation of the value engineering study, and the regional provincial approvals it requires will be obtained at that point in time. At least we are moving ahead on that project. There was nothing done on this project before.

Mr. Wilson: That simply isn't true. I'm going to send over via the page a sampling—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): We need you to withdraw that comment.

Mr. Wilson: Sorry; I withdraw that. Clearly, what you said is inaccurate. In fact, when I sent these cards out to the people in my riding, it contained a picture of the half-built highway. I gave a copy of that to you one day and I also gave a copy to your assistant deputy minister.

The fact of the matter is that this highway was started. It was approved in the 2000 budget and \$31 million was set aside. They call it the stealth freeway up there; it's only good for landing airplanes on at the moment. The fact of the matter is that it was half built. I don't know whether it was for partisan political reasons or just out of spite of some sort, but you cancelled it. In fact, in the summer of 2003, you took the construction vehicles off the highway. That's unfair. You're holding up thousands and thousands of jobs. You're holding up malls. You're holding up housing developments. This is an area that has lost over 540 manufacturing jobs in the last few months. It's been hard hit. Again I ask—

The Speaker: The question has been asked. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Takhar: If I heard the statement right, the member said that we took the crew off in the summer of 2003. I don't think we were in power in summer 2003, so I'm sure it's your government that did that.

In addition to that, I want to tell the member, and I hope he's aware of this, that we came across an issue. There's a graveyard along the way and we need to address that issue with the community before we can resolve these problems. I hope the member stays in touch with the community to see what the real issues are.

Mr. Wilson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I wish to correct my record. The minister is right. It was the summer of 2004.

The Speaker: Thank you. New question.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is to the minister of aboriginal affairs. Minister, the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation, otherwise known as Big Trout First Nation, has indicated that they are opposed to the Platinex mining exploration company operating on the traditional territory of the First Nation. Yet when the First Nation members protested and picketed this mining exploration company, the McGuinty government's response was to send in the OPP. The First Nation is asking the McGuinty government now, will you tell Platinex mining exploration company not to operate on the traditional territory of the First Nation until your government starts to meet its responsibilities to the First Nation under the Mikisew Supreme Court of Canada decision?

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): I refer that to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): As with the earlier case that was discussed, our ministry remains in contact with the community, and we will continue that contact and that dialogue. Certainly I'm not going to debate what actions are going to be used or what actions aren't going to be used at this point in time, but clearly that dialogue between my ministry staff and the First Nations community is an ongoing one.

PETITIONS

GASOLINE PRICES

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

As I support it, I affix my signature.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly from a group of citizens in the city of Mississauga who are fed up with the inaction of the federal Harper Conservative government, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the United States government, through the western hemisphere travel initiative, is proposing that American citizens require a passport or single-purpose travel card to travel back and forth across the Canadian border; and

“Whereas a passport or single-purpose travel card would be an added expense, and the inconvenience of having to apply for and carry a new document would be a barrier to many visitors; and

“Whereas this will mean the loss of up to 3.5 million US visitors in Ontario, losses of \$700 million, and the loss of 7,000 jobs in the Ontario tourism industry by the end of 2008; and

“Whereas many of the northern border states in the United States have expressed similar concerns regarding the substantial economic impact of the implementation of this plan; and

“Whereas the safe and efficient movement of people across the border is vital to the economies of both of our countries;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the establishment of a bi-national group to consider alternatives to the proposed border requirements

and inform Prime Minister Harper that his decision not to pursue this issue with the United States is ill-advised.”

I couldn't agree with this petition more. I'm pleased to affix my signature to it and to ask page Philippe to carry it for me.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I have here a petition signed by a great number of my constituents, primarily from the area of my riding called Kintore.

“To the Parliament of Ontario:

“Whereas the Thames Valley District School Board has created its five-year draft capital plan without school board trustee or public input (relying on questionable data provided by C. N. Watson and Associates Ltd.) and in doing so, targeted several rural, small-town and single-school community schools for closure as a means of reducing inventory, we ask not only that the Thames Valley District School Board be required to adhere to the 10-step capital planning process, but that the rural-urban diversity that exists within the board's jurisdiction (one of the largest in Ontario) be acknowledged and maintained.

“We, the undersigned, strongly oppose in principle the Thames Valley District School Board's proposal to close A. J. Baker Public School in Kintore, Ontario, as it is a vital rural school situated in a single-school community, and petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

“To ensure that the Thames Valley District School Board be held accountable for every step, followed or otherwise, in the 10-step capital planning process and for all recommendations that are out of sync with current Ministry of Education financial and philosophical support pertaining to rural and small community schools, as described in ministry backgrounder documents issued in December 2005; and

“To bring forth the release of targeted funding for rural elementary schools who, under the current funding formula, are being marked for closure by the Thames Valley District School Board and thus unfairly bearing the weight of system-wide budget constraints.”

1540

As I said, it's signed by a great number of my constituents, and I will affix my signature too.

COMMUNITY MEDIATION

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly from a group of people in Mississauga regarding community mediation. I especially want to thank Lesley Jones, Jennifer King and Imelda Fisher for having gathered signatures for it, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas many types of civil disputes may be resolved through community mediation delivered by trained mediators, who are volunteers who work with the parties in the dispute; and

“Whereas Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services established the Peel Community Mediation Service in 1999 with support from the government of Ontario through the Trillium Foundation, the Rotary Club of Mississauga West and the United Way of Peel, and has proven the viability and success of community mediation; and

“Whereas the city of Mississauga and the town of Caledon have endorsed the Peel Community Mediation Service, and law enforcement bodies refer many cases to the Peel Community Mediation Service as an alternative to a court dispute; and

“Whereas court facilities and court time are both scarce and expensive, the cost of community mediation is very small and the extra expense incurred for lack of community mediation in Peel region would be much greater than the small annual cost of funding community mediation;

“Be it therefore resolved that the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of the Attorney General, support and fund the ongoing service delivery of the Peel Community Mediation Service through Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services.”

This is an excellent petition, and I'm pleased to sign it and to ask page Connor to carry it for me.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): I have a petition that comes from many nursing homes, especially Summit Place in Owen Sound and the Meaford nursing home. It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years....”

I have signed this.

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;

“Therefore 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 am in agreement, I have affixed my signature and give it to Alicia to deliver.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward–Hastings): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas it has been shown that crossing control arms on school buses reduce or virtually eliminate instances of students being struck by their own bus; and

“Whereas 91% of all front-bumper fatalities involve buses not equipped with crossing control arms; and

“Whereas the safety of the children of Ontario is our number one priority;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to require that all future school buses be equipped with crossing control arms and that all existing school buses be required to be immediately retrofitted with crossing control arms.”

I am pleased to add my signature to this.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

“Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

“Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

“We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents’ councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007).”

It was presented to me by many long-term-care centres in my riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock.

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): I’m pleased to present a petition from over 200 Ontarians concerned about the government’s inadequate funding for long-term care in this province. The petition reads as follows:

“Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

“Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

“Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

“We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents’ councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007).”

I agree with this petition and have affixed my name to it and send it to the table by way of Gemma.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex): This petition was presented to me by the residents, families and friends of Fairfield Park in Wallaceburg.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

“Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

“Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

“We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents’ councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007).”

I send this to the table with page Elliott.

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound): I have some more petitions to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from the Hanover Care Centre and McVean Lodge in Hanover and from the Golden Dawn Nursing Home in Lion’s Head.

“Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care

homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

“Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

“Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

“We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents’ councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007).”

I have signed this also.

1550

IDENTITY THEFT

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario, and especially to 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 Bill 38, which passed the second reading unanimously in the Ontario Legislature on December 8, 2005, be brought before committee and that the following issues be included for consideration and debate:

“(1) All consumer reports should be provided in a truncated ... 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 petition 100%, I am delighted to sign it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION LAND STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2006

LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE ET AUX TERRES PROTÉGÉES

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 19, 2006, on the motion for second reading of Bill 51, An Act to amend the Planning Act and the Conservation Land Act and to make related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 51, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire et la Loi sur les terres protégées et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? The member for London–Fanshawe.

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe): Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity and honour to stand up and speak in support of Bill 51.

It's about time a government in this province took the chance and the opportunity to reform the Municipal Act. As you know, for many years the Planning Act has not been taken into any government's consideration. There was a lot of neglect of the municipalities in this province, left alone, acting without any direction, without any support from the government. Now, under the direction of Dalton McGuinty's government, we are, through this bill, going to reform and to assist municipalities across the province of Ontario, help them and give them the ability to use and to facilitate planning in this province.

As you know, there is a lot of dispute in many different municipalities. There are a lot of issues concerning land use and questions of transportation. There are many issues facing municipalities across Ontario, but they never had the chance before to get support from the provincial government. Now, through this bill, through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the direction of Dalton McGuinty's government, we are taking charge. We are going to assist them and create a new Planning Act in order to help facilitate their growth and help them to prosper more and give them the ability to use whatever land they have to increase their potential ability to be better for the future.

As you know, the OMB has been trying to be reformed in such a fashion as to fit every municipality in a different way. I was listening to the opposition last week talking about the intent of the bill. Of course, they have misinformation about the focus and the intent of the bill. I want to tell the member from the opposite side who's laughing right now that this government is taking charge. This government, for the first time in many years, is coming to the table with municipalities to form a partnership. It's time to treat the municipality as a partner. That's what we wish and we hope from the federal government, to treat us as a partner. Without a

partnership, without teaming with the municipalities, we cannot have as strong a province, we cannot have a strong country. That's why the most important thing is to reform the Municipal Act, because it's overdue. Many municipalities were complaining about their inability and the inflexibility they face when dealing with many different issues.

As you know, especially in the rural areas, there are so many difficulties, especially clean water, roads, highways, bridges. All these issues are very complex. That's why this plan and this bill will give them the flexibility, will give them whatever support financially in order to continue their mission to transform their municipalities.

I want to tell the opposition members that I was listening to them last week when they were talking about this bill. They said the government of Ontario didn't give the support. I know they mean the past government, not this government, because we truly believe in a partnership. We truly believe in giving the municipalities whatever tools they need in order to serve their communities and their people.

When we introduced the partnership with municipalities—I want to give you an example, just one example—the city of London got more than \$13 million as a sign of true partnership between the province and the municipalities. Also, when we introduced the gas tax, it was true accountability, a true honouring of the partnership with municipalities in order to enhance their transportation systems. Also in the past budget, as you know, all the municipalities across the province of Ontario got a significant amount of money. London got more than \$14 million to assist them, to help them build roads, infrastructure, bridges and many different things. It's a way to help the municipalities upload what had been downloaded from the past government.

As you know, the past government downloaded so many different responsibilities without attaching any financial support to them. The McGuinty government addresses this issue, dealing with it face to face. We formed some kind of partnership to reform the act that runs the municipalities and also gave them money as support in order to implement whatever project they needed. I think that shows the accountability. It shows the significant investment in our municipalities, because as our leader, Dalton McGuinty, mentioned many different times, we cannot be strong without all the communities—from rural to urban centres, from the north to the west to the east and to the south. All of us in the province of Ontario have to work together in order to create a stronger, able province. We cannot do that without a partnership. We cannot do that without financial investment in those communities across the province of Ontario. We cannot do that without giving them the tools, which are the laws and the flexibility to move from spot to spot, to use the land they have, to reform their water systems, to build the bridges, transportation, and deal with many different issues concerning municipalities across the province.

The issue is not just the money; the issue is about planning. We have to plan for the future, we have to plan

for the next generations, to connect the small town with the larger town, to connect the big cities with the small cities, because we believe that by connecting people together we can have a strong province. We cannot do that without planning. Planning means to plan for the future. Planning means planning for the next generations. Without planning, we cannot succeed in the future.

I think this is a very important bill in order to give municipalities the ability to plan without any hesitation, to give them the ability to plan without being in fear of a government not listening to them. This bill will give them the chance to map the future, to plan for the future, for our kids to see the vision of this province in the future.

One of the greatest things in this province is when people work together. One of the greatest things too is when they have a government that listens to their concern and acts on it and works with them in order to solve it. A government cannot do it all by itself, but the government can work when all the people believe in that government, when all the communities across the province, from smaller to larger ones, work together to put together a strategy all of us will benefit from.

1600

You start seeing the results when you go everywhere in Ontario—to London, Windsor, Toronto, Sarnia, Chatham, Thunder Bay and Sudbury—that they feel the effect of this government; that they feel they are connected, not being left alone. The wealth of this province is being spread all over the province, not just in one area.

I'll give you a great example of part of our planning for the future: when we created the greenbelt. The greenbelt is a great indication of this government's vision to maintain the image of this province as a green province, not just dry and full of buildings, roads and highways. This is part of our planning. We don't plan for tomorrow; we plan for 100 years from now.

That's what responsible government is and what a responsible leadership will do when they get the responsibility and the ability to be in the driver's seat. They should lead their people to a prosperous future, planning not just for small things but bigger things—a bigger role that this province might play by opening up the whole partnership with municipalities. We have a great plan to engage all the people in this province, to fit and to link all communities, from larger to smaller, because that's the only way when we work as a partner with municipalities. I hope the federal government also gives all of us a chance to partner, from federal to provincial to municipality. We can create a great future for the population that lives in Canada. We can create a great country, and this country will be able to face all the challenges in the future.

I think a successful government will be measured by its vision, by its planning for the future, not by short-sighting the issues and dealing with them as temporary measures, but by planning for the 100 years and 1,000 years to go.

Thank you again for allowing me to speak on this important bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I want to thank the member opposite from London–Fanshawe for the presentation on Bill 51. I'm just somewhat disappointed that it wasn't on Bill 51. The member spoke about government planning, and it sounded to me like planning for the next election as opposed to the land use plan, which is what is in this bill.

It comes out in the fact that he said this is the provincial government taking charge of the planning process. The minister pointed out when he introduced the bill that this was a bill to give municipalities the ability to do local planning, that we're going to empower the municipalities, so that it was no longer the province. But the member speaks of taking charge and taking that power away from the municipalities.

One of the things I found rather interesting in the presentation is that if you go through the bill, the number one issue in the bill, and the number one issue you hear when you talk to the public about this bill, is the reform to the Ontario Municipal Board, which is that it's going to have a different focus from what it presently has. I heard absolutely nothing from the member about that part, which is the most significant part of Bill 51 and which I think the public has the most concerns with. I wish I had heard something, so the government could have explained to those of us sitting on this side the benefits of the changes they're making. From where we're sitting, the benefits are not an improvement. We all realize that the Ontario Municipal Board needs to be reformed, but the way it's being done within this structure is going to make it ever more cumbersome and ever more time-consuming for the development industry and for municipalities to get applications through the system. Everything is going to take longer, and everyone is going to have to prepare larger documents, and more documents, in order to get a planning process approved.

Again, this is the government taking charge of something they know very little about, and it's not going to work the way it's supposed to. I wish I could have heard that part of the discussion in the presentation that the member opposite made.

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): I also listened carefully to the member's comments in regard to Bill 51. I found it interesting that his initial comments were around the fact that opposition parties had misinformation on the bill. I was then surprised to hear some of the assertions that he made during his remarks, because I'm confused as to who's got the misinformation: whether it was the member who was speaking or in fact the opposition that's here in the House today.

I say that because the member talked at length about partnerships and how this bill is somehow meant to be more reflective of the government's claim to partnerships with municipalities, and he used the example of rural communities to illustrate that point. But I have to tell you that in the same vein, he used those examples to talk about the downloading situation and how this is not going to be like downloading but it's going to be uploading. Particularly when it comes to rural areas, this

member must know that what this bill does is download responsibility and cost into rural and smaller communities because those are the very communities that are going to have a very difficult time finding the wherewithal in their budgets to put in place parts of this bill that are being introduced in the process. Those are, of course, the local appeals bodies. Larger municipalities are going to be able to do that because they have the staffing infrastructure and the professional infrastructure already in place, but the smaller municipalities certainly are not going to feel that this government has done anything for them, because the local appeals bodies are not going to be something that they'll easily be able to implement.

I have to say that instead of uploading, this really is another form of downloading. There are many other problems with this bill that I know my lead critic in this area, the member from Beaches–East York, is going to be reflecting on very soon.

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): I'm pleased to respond to the comments made by the member for London–Fanshawe, and good comments they were. This bill is about rebalancing the process and the relationship between all the parties as we move forward with development in this province. It's an important bill because there was a need for rebalance. I think "balance" is probably the key word when it comes to describing what this bill is about. We looked at balancing the needs, for instance, of ratepayers, of communities, balancing the needs of municipalities and balancing the needs of the building and development industry, which is something that was also very important to all of us here in this province. When you consider that this industry contributes something like \$60 billion a year to our local economy, when you consider that close to 250 million people—it could be even more than that—are employed in this industry, it's very important that we do strike a balance.

I'll go over a few of the areas. There are many changes that are taking place through this legislation, all of which I think will work in the interests of all Ontarians; for instance, the need to have up-to-date official plans and zoning bylaws. What that does is ensure that in fact there should be fewer appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board. If zoning and official plan bylaws are up to date, there will be less need to apply for amendments to those particular things.

It ensures complete applications are required at the beginning. That will work out in the interests of all players in the development industry and of ratepayers because it will ensure that the homework is done up front, and it gives municipal councillors the opportunity to make good, solid judgments to ensure that the development that takes place is in the best interests of their community and of their local economies.

Those are just a few of the changes. There are many more that will benefit Ontarians right across this province.

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): It's my pleasure to respond to the speech from the member from London–Fanshawe on Bill 51, which is, just to remind

him, An Act to amend the Planning Act and the Conservation Land Act and to make related amendments to other Acts. It's obviously about planning, but he seemed to be talking more about other things. In particular, he talked about the gas tax, so I thought that's what I'd make my comments about.

I would just like to say, from the perspective of mainly small, rural municipalities in the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, that there's only one municipality that benefits from the gas tax that goes to transit that this provincial government brought into effect—only one, and that's Huntsville, of all the 22 or so municipalities. Most of the rural municipalities are being ignored.

There is a private member's bill that the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has introduced, a very good bill, that would bring fairness to all of rural Ontario. It would allow all those municipalities that rely on the automobile as their public transit to use gas tax funding for things like roads, bridges and all the basic things that are transit in rural areas. I would say to the government that I hope they'll look seriously at the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke's private member's bill and go about implementing that bill.

1610

I would also like to highlight, as I did in question period today, the way some other regions are feeling about this provincial government's funding for them; for example, the city of North Bay, which is facing a \$4.3-million shortfall in their Ontario municipal partnership fund. Just read back through the last few weeks in the North Bay Nugget and you'll see negative article after negative article to do with this provincial government's support for the area of North Bay.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for London–Fanshawe, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. Ramal: I want to thank the members from Oxford, Parry Sound–Muskoka, Hamilton East and Scarborough Centre for their comments on my speech.

I was very clear on this issue. I know exactly what I said. I still believe the members opposite don't understand the whole bill, what it's all about, and just want to take the negative part of it. It's very important to tell the people of Ontario that the province places great trust in the honesty of municipalities. This bill will be able to transform the OMB to fit with modern life.

When we talk about planning for municipalities, as the PA for the minister, the member from Scarborough Centre, said when he outlined the importance of this bill, this bill gives the ability and places trust in the honesty of city councillors to make the best, fairest judgment to plan their jurisdictions. That's what the government of Ontario, the government of Dalton McGuinty, has done. They don't leave them planning just by themselves without giving them the support and tools. This bill is very important to all municipalities in order to give them the tools to be able to plan for the future, and also to create some kind of tool for them to enhance their jurisdictions and municipalities.

I meant what I said about trust because we believe in a partnership. Without a partnership with municipalities we

cannot succeed in the future. We won't be able to plan for a better future for all the people of Ontario, especially for small municipalities, something the member from Muskoka–Parry Sound mentioned. We believe in working together and putting in a plan from east to west and south to north because, by working together, we'll have a great province.

Thank you for allowing me to comment on the speakers.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate? The member for Simcoe North.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): Thanks so much, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity this afternoon to speak to Bill 51, An Act to amend the Planning Act and the Conservation Land Act and to make related amendments to other Acts.

It's always interesting to speak about a Planning Act bill. It seems that with every government that comes into power we keep amending the Planning Act to make it better and better, and whether or not we do, I'm not sure at times.

I see some of the pages are still here, but I want to welcome the new pages to Queen's Park. It's great that you'll be here for the next few weeks. I think you'll have some very interesting times.

Also with this opportunity, I would like to just thank a wonderful group of people up in the city of Orillia that put on a fundraising event yesterday, the Zehrs Super Cities fundraising walk for MS. They raised a lot of money with fantastic participation. I'm saying that because I'm the honorary chair each year and I get to bring greetings and actually walk, I guess, about six kilometres.

Mr. Miller: You did the whole thing?

Mr. Dunlop: I did the whole thing. I did all six kilometres and it worked out well.

I've been around municipal politics since 1980. I'm always interested in the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It seems to be the one bill that the minister has to come forward with. No matter who is the minister, or of what political party, they always have to amend the Planning Act and are always going to make things better and better. But the reality is, it usually gets more and more complex and more bureaucratic as time goes on. However, there are some parts of the bill that I would like to talk about for a few moments. My comments will concentrate on section 23 of the bill. I believe it's on—I should have the page here, but I'll get it in a second.

Anyhow, it's on section 23 and it takes into account a concern I'm hearing more and more each day, and that involves the government's policy on renewable energy and on the replacing of their election promise to remove coal-fired generation. I believe the Liberal Party in 2003 made a promise to eliminate all coal-fired generation—around 6,400 megawatts of coal-fired generation—by the year 2007. Of course, we can't build nuclear reactors, new dams and that sort of thing in that period of time, but maybe we could have found some green energy, things like solar and wind power.

Just to begin on wind power: As you study wind power, it seems that the more detail you find out about it, the less inclined you are to really support it. I've got to tell you that a couple of years ago when people started talking about wind turbines etc., I really supported the idea that the more of these we could build, the better it would be. But I'm starting to get feedback from my constituents. We've got a couple of proposals in the riding of Simcoe North, one in Tiny township. We've had a couple of public meetings on it. This is where I would really like the government members, or someone in the government, to clearly indicate to me the process a company proposing a wind turbine farm—I would be very interested in hearing the exact process they have to follow in order to get approval to put up a series of wind turbines. Part of that would involve what type of objections the municipality or the constituents who perhaps would surround the wind turbine farm would be able to offer if they were opposed to having a wind turbine farm in their backyard. I hope I can get some clarification from the other side, because we haven't been able to get it from the minister's office. Perhaps someone can explain it to me today. I would really appreciate knowing this.

They tell me that section 23 of Bill 51 basically makes it almost impossible for individuals to object to the creation of a wind turbine farm. The reason I'm concerned about this is that this is, I guess you could call it, renewable energy. It's free. Wind power is free. If you put them in the right spots, they will create electricity at peak periods, although you can't rely strictly on wind power. You need to have a backup, because on those hot summer days when it's 38 or 39 degrees Celsius and there's absolutely no wind, the turbines aren't turning; they're not creating any power. So you have to have coal or oil or natural gas or nuclear or hydroelectric. You need something to replace that.

I'm told that this bill basically makes it impossible for anyone to object. I would like to know from the government side exactly the process the companies followed to get the approvals for the wind turbines that have been built to date—some of them are now actually tied into the grid—and whether or not the communities they were built in had objections from the general public. Would anyone object to the wind turbines and, if they did, were they listened to? Did they get a chance to go to the Ontario Municipal Board? Did they get a chance to go to the local council or the county council? I'm told it didn't happen. I'm told that each one to date has been under a minister's order from the Minister of Energy. I'm curious if I'm right or wrong on that, but I would really like to know that process, because it ties back to Bill 51. Do we or do we not have a process in place? The bill is called the Conservation Land Act. Are we making it easy for someone to develop a wind turbine farm but impossible for someone to object to that wind turbine farm actually being built?

1620

Here are the problems they have; I want to put them on the record. First of all, people are telling me there is a

noise factor to the wind turbines. I have seen a video just recently. I haven't been beside one, other than approximately a couple of hundred yards away, but I understand there is a noise factor to them. I understand there may be some environmental concerns on how they can affect birds. On a sunny day, with the wind turbines actually circling, there is a strobe effect to them. I understand that people in European countries are no longer as accepting of having wind turbine farms now as they were before and are in fact beginning to remove them, in some cases not allowing any more to be built. I would really be interested in hearing the minister stand up some day—either the Minister of Energy or the Minister of Municipal Affairs—and give us a clear explanation on the government's exact process on this, because if it's a mistake, we should know about that and the citizens out in the communities should know about that.

I can tell you that one of the things we're most concerned about here today is how it is affecting property values. For every other type of project that was built in the many, many years of the history of the province, whether a landfill site, a major housing development or a development for hydro transmission lines, there has always been a process in place for the citizens of the province, for their communities, to actually object. They could have written complaints or go to some kind of a tribunal. I'm saying today that it doesn't exist with wind turbine farms under this legislation. This will basically give carte blanche approval to people building wind generation farms.

What's exciting about this—I shouldn't say "exciting," because it's kind of sad, but the company that's building the wind turbine farms up in my area is very closely connected to the Liberal Party of Ontario. That's because one of the members of the board of directors is the Honourable David Peterson, the former Premier of Ontario. People are saying to me, "What's going on?" Here's a former Premier, tied into the Liberal caucus, tied into the Liberal Party, and they're actually saying that maybe there are some benefits of being on the board of directors and being a member of this company building these wind farms. I think we deserve an explanation on that from the Liberal Party.

We may want to build wind turbines and that may be the thought of the government, and certainly in some cases it will definitely put power back into the grid. But what's really important is that people who are in neighbouring municipalities, at least, who don't want to look out their farm windows or their cottage windows at huge, 400-foot towers spinning in the air—it's unfair to deny them the privilege of having a process in place where they can legitimately bring forward concerns and object to these kinds of proposals, if in fact they're coming forward.

That is why they're telling me that section 23 of the bill has become a real problem. I'm sure the minister's office and some of the staff in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing have seen some of those objections come in. I know that I received copies of many letters. I

think they were sent to another gentlemen by the name of Peterson—no relation to the other gentleman I mentioned earlier—but I believe that they were sent to his office. I'd be extremely interested in seeing exactly what that process is and how it will impact people who object to these particular proposals, if they come forward.

I want to put on the record again that in the government's own documents coming from, not Hydro One but one of the other companies that monitors hydro generation in the province of Ontario and the future of hydro generation—I know that they're telling us in these books that the reliability of wind-power is at 10%. If you have a proposal for 1,000 megawatts, that means you've only got a reliability factor of 100 megawatts. So if you're going to replace thousands of megawatts of coal-fired generation, how many hundreds and hundreds of wind turbines would you need, if they're unreliable, to actually produce 6,000 or 7,000 megawatts to replace coal-fired generation? That was my key area that I wanted to discuss.

I've got to tell you that in the comments I've been listening to from some of my municipalities and some of the people I've talked to in AMO and some of the land development people, they're sort of wanting to get this bill to committee to see exactly where the government is going with this, so we can talk to the development industry, we can talk to the people in the aggregate industry, we can talk to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, we can talk to small municipalities and, above and beyond all, we can talk to some of these groups of people who do go out on a limb and do object to certain applications such as the wind turbine farms. We want to make sure that those people have an opportunity, not only here at Queen's Park but right across our province, to come forward and voice their concerns on Bill 51. I think it will be interesting to see where we go from that.

As I said earlier, I've been around municipal politics for a lot of years. I've seen a number of changes with official plans. I think it was the member just a few minutes ago—the gentleman from Scarborough—who talked about municipalities having up-to-date official plans. Well, the reason you do an official plan is that you build a 20-year plan. There are lots of municipalities that have 10-year-old official plans. A 10-year-old official plan is in fact intact, because the plan was designed for 20 years. Every municipality doesn't go out every year and do a brand new official plan. They put their thoughts behind the bill, their thoughts behind their legislation and their zoning bylaws and their official plans, and they plan a 20-year period. And it's approved by the very minister, the minister's staff, who's bringing forth this legislation. So yes, there will be lots of official plans that may be 16 or 17 years old, but in two or three years they will be coming up for review.

There are also plans that are only five or six years old, or two or three years old, and they should still have, according to the people who put together the plan that was approved by the appropriate people, an opportunity to follow the guidelines of that plan for the next 20 years. I'm hoping those types of plans won't be amended.

That takes me to one other factor. I'm introducing a bill tomorrow called the Lake Simcoe Protection Act, and it follows a little bit in line with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act and the Greenbelt Act. It's one of the areas I'm very, very concerned about, where the government went with the greenbelt legislation. I know that if you drive down Highway 400 now, there are a couple of great big signs. On the one right in Holland Landing you'll see, "You are entering Ontario's greenbelt." And a few minutes later, you get down to, "You are entering the Oak Ridges moraine protection area," which our government brought into place. It's interesting, because I wonder what the feeling of the government is on the land north of the greenbelt area, north of the Oak Ridges moraine conservation area, because I can tell you, we are already feeling the impacts. We're feeling the impacts in Simcoe county of the leapfrogging effect of growth. When the builders can't build developments and proposals in any of the greenbelt area, they're going to go up farther north to Simcoe county and some of the areas, maybe even as far as Bruce county and even into the Muskokas, to look for places to possibly develop.

One of the things that's a huge concern there is having the resources available to help the communities actually develop in those areas. I think the saddest part of designing these plans for a greenbelt area is that as we move forward, in a lot of cases we plan on using valuable farmland as the areas to build the homes. It's a sad day in the province of Ontario when it's easier for a farmer to sell his land for foundations and for development and make a lot of money in that area as opposed to when he can earn a decent living on his farm. And that's a predicament farmers in Ontario are finding themselves in right as we speak today. They're trying to find the money this spring to plant their crops so they can carry on business. They're looking for subsidies from this level of government. They're looking for subsidies from the federal government in Ottawa. They're looking to be able to compete against our neighbouring jurisdictions and of course against European subsidies as well.

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Because farm families, the agriculture community, are having such a difficult time earning a decent living, they're turning to the fact that they have to sell the land to build houses on—this very beautiful farmland. That's what they are hoping they can do. That is a sad day in any province, in any part of the world, because not only do we use up this valuable farmland but we're also having a tremendous effect on the source water protection of the communities where they'd be built.

I don't have a lot of extra time left here but I wanted to thank the minister at least for the opportunity to come to second reading. I do hope we'll be able to have committee hearings. I would invite the minister, and the subcommittee that is setting up these hearings, to come to Simcoe county; perhaps to Orillia, Barrie, Collingwood or Alliston, one of those communities. I think there's going to be a lot of interest in Bill 51 and what it actually means as far as the Ontario Municipal Board, the changes

to that. There would be a lot of interest in section 23 of the bill. It goes right back to my concerns on the wind turbines.

We want to make sure we get these bills right and we need a lot of committee time. We need a lot of debate to make sure we can do it, and implement the bills in a proper manner to meet the society we're facing today and the changes we'll see in the near future.

I think today there is a greater sense of environmental awareness than there probably has been in many decades in this province. I think we see that with our school kids. I was at an Earth Day demonstration the other day by some kids at Marchmont Public School. It was unbelievable what those young people knew about the environment and how they were looking at the future and looking at recycling, protection of their natural heritage corridors, that type of thing. It was good to see. I think when young people are learning, we are all learning as well and it will help us all.

I look forward to seeing this bill go to committee. I thank those speakers ahead of me and I look forward to the remaining debate on Bill 51. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to address you today.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Ms. Horwath: It's my pleasure to make a few comments on the issues raised by the member from Simcoe North. It seems to me that the most important issue the member raised was that of section 23. Certainly I could tell you, from the perspective of a member who represents the city of Hamilton's industrial north end, Hamilton East, that it's a serious problem if that section is kept in this bill.

I look forward to this bill going through a committee process and through the public hearings process. Although in Hamilton East the issue isn't wind turbines and the generation of power by windmills, it's in fact sewage sludge incineration and the environmental assessment process that can be subverted: This actual bill enables companies to subvert the environmental assessment process for something like the incineration of sewage sludge.

It is the same kind of concern that we have in regard to this bill and that I have in regard to this bill: It's about the process; it's about the scrutiny; it's about the important part of the environmental assessment process that section 23 would get rid of. Why would it get rid of that? It would get rid of that simply because this government is bent on energy-producing facilities regardless of the pollution that gets produced as a result.

It's really inappropriate in my opinion, as in the member for Simcoe North's opinion—that the issue of generation of electricity does not overshadow the real issues about environmental protection that this government must maintain.

Therefore, section 23 has got to be removed from this bill. If it is not removed from this bill, the process that currently is under way with the facility called Liberty Energy in Hamilton East will be able to continue, and that is a mere peer review of the materials the company

itself is putting out there. In fact, the company itself is putting out information that says Hamilton's airshed is already at its capacity. That's why we need environmental assessments. Get rid of section 23.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge): I appreciated hearing the comments from the member for Simcoe North. I was particularly intrigued in part by his concerns about what he refers to as leap-frogging and the potential for urban development of municipalities. It drew my attention to that particular part of the bill that I think is important to municipalities, important to their constituents and important to the planning process. That's the part of the bill that removes the opportunity for the applicant to appeal an official plan amendment that's denied by the municipality, where that local governance body denies the official plan amendment, and it can't be appealed then if it involves things such as altering the boundary of the settlement area. In other words, a developer can come in and ask to have the urban boundary expanded, and if the municipality turns that down after giving it due deliberation, there's no appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board—so real control in the hands of the municipality.

Similarly, a new settlement area: Even if within the overall urban envelope there's an opportunity potentially to establish a new urban envelope of some fashion, there's no appeal process being provided to the Ontario Municipal Board for that. So a lot of authority is being provided to the municipality from the standpoint of ensuring the integrity of its boundaries, ensuring that new settlement areas aren't established. It's also providing some interesting tools when it comes to intensification. There's no provision to appeal a process whereby there's a second unit being approved by the municipality within a structure. So it really does provide not only for intensification but it protects the municipality and its opportunity to control its own future growth.

So there are a lot of very interesting elements in the body of the bill that really do support local decision-making and support the local municipality.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): It will really be difficult to determine the impact of this act, but it is certainly far-reaching, because it sets up a number of changes to the integration of the land division committee of a municipality, of the municipal council, of developers coming to a municipal council to ask for approval of a subdivision or a development. It changes as well some important elements with regard to giving the minister and cabinet an override with regard to energy projects, which were mentioned by my colleague, and I thought it most appropriate that I comment further on that.

My friend Mr. Dunlop commented about wind farms, but as you know, this government has expressed a very high desire for more nuclear energy. Way back in the late 1970s, when I was first elected, there was talk about a new nuclear plant in the area that I represented. In the middle of this talk, the Three Mile Island accident occurred in Pennsylvania and the community's opinion turned right around with regard to that whole matter.

I believe that section 23 is extremely dangerous. It will allow this provincial government to impose planning on a municipality if it wants to found a nuclear reactor in the middle of a municipality that does not want it.

So this act is going to change the whole balance of power between municipalities and the province. It's not all one way down to the province.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): It's a pleasure to comment on the statements made by the member for Simcoe North. He is correct in his assumption that section 23 is the really flawed section of this bill. If there is any section that needs to be removed from this bill, surely it is that one. I intend to speak to that when my turn comes up.

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But I do want to talk about the ministerial override and his concern about wind farms. Although he is correct in his assumptions about section 23, it seemed to me that a wind farm was the most innocuous thing that may be overridden. I think that communities may be worried about wind farms in some respects because of the noise, although I was at Exhibition Place on Friday night and the windmill was going around and around, I was underneath it and I have to tell you that I could not hear a thing.

In any event, I think what people in the communities will be more concerned about is the siting of other energy proposals close to them. Is a nuclear facility to be built on that farmland? Is an energy-from-waste plant to be built on that farmland in lieu of a dump, or a dump? Is there to be sewage sludge treatment on that land, with all the attendant odours that causes? Is there to be a toxic or nuclear dump or waste site where toxic materials are stored or kept, and the roadways leading up to it? These are things that ordinary people and municipalities want to have some say on: whether or not they are contained and whether the site is appropriate.

It can be argued that Ontario may need these sites; it may need the energy from some of these. I'm going to leave that to others to argue, but surely people who live there need to have an opportunity to have some say in it; a lot more say than they need to have on the siting of a windmill.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Simcoe North has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Dunlop: I'm pleased to thank the members from Hamilton East, Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge, Lanark–Carleton and Beaches–East York for their comments.

I'll say right off the bat that the reason I talked about section 23 and wind turbine farms is because it's a high priority for the constituents I represent. My constituents are concerned and want to know what the process is. They want to know whether there is an appeal period; they want to know what they can or cannot do. One thing they don't want, whether it's a wind turbine farm, a nuclear reactor or whatever it may be, is just a rubber stamp by some person in the Ministry of Energy or at Ontario Power Generation saying, "You can go ahead and do this project." They're not only concerned about

quality of life but about real estate values as well. That's why I talked about the one in Tiny township. It's a concern that my constituents are coming forward to discuss with me. It would probably be the same type of story if it was a nuclear reactor or a landfill. I did want to put that on the record today.

I think section 23 of the bill has to be removed. I expect that the government would listen to the ratepayers of Ontario and to the people who come forward. I hope all the stakeholders and all the people would be able to come to committee hearings here at Queen's Park and abroad in different communities across the province. This is an important bill because, if you leave 23 in there, it does take away the rights of some of our citizens in Ontario. I don't think that's what the government intended to do; however, section 23, if it remains in its current form, is bad news for the citizens of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate? The member for Beaches–East York.

Applause.

Mr. Prue: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and to all those applauding. I hope you're still applauding when I finish about an hour from now.

The history of the Ontario Municipal Board has been cited here today. People know it is an institution that goes back many years. It has a colourful and coloured history, if I can put it that way, because of all the decisions it has made over those many years; many have been controversial. In my own community, probably the most controversial decision ever made by the Ontario Municipal Board actually got a reeve fired and a new mayor elected. That, of course, was the famous case of the Bayview ghost. It's in all the annals of what the Ontario Municipal Board did, and what they did wrong, in fact. That is because the Ontario Municipal Board, in its wisdom in those days, going back to the 1950s and early 1960s, decided there was going to be an apartment building built in the Don Valley. Without getting all the approvals and crossing all the t's, the Ontario Municipal Board went ahead and started building what became the Bayview ghost. The reason it got called that is because in mid-construction it suddenly had to stop because there were appeals and court appeals by the then township of East York. The mayor was all gung-ho on following through with the Ontario Municipal Board. In fact, the person who came to challenge him, one True Davidson, was opposed. It finally ended up in the courts and then was decided by a cabinet order, something that doesn't happen anymore, which forbade the building to be completed and said that the building of an apartment building on that site was inappropriate.

Skip forward a number of years to when I was mayor of East York. There was an application. The land was eventually sold. This would have taken some 20 or 30 years. The land was sold. There it was before us, and as a municipal council we had to determine what to do with that land. Did we follow the Ontario Municipal Board? I don't think so. Did we follow the courts? We couldn't even do that. In the end, what the council had to follow

was the decision made in cabinet—the last time we believe that ever happened—overturning the decisions both of the board and of the courts and to do what the cabinet of the day said, and that was to build a limited number of homes in the Don Valley. If you drive up Bayview Avenue or the Don Valley Expressway—some like to call it the Don Valley parking lot, because of the slowness you often have to travel—you will see those homes. Those homes cost well in excess of \$1 million today. They are huge homes. Because of the limited number of homes that could be built, they were put on fairly small parcels of land, but they are some 4,000 to 5,000 or 6,000 square feet each. They're magnificent homes that are perched on top of a little promenade in the valley. That's what has happened.

So East Yorkers and the people whom I represent are hugely interested in this bill. They're interested because they understand where the Ontario Municipal Board has been in the past, but they also understand the many, many problems that need to be resolved so that incidents like the Bayview ghost don't happen again in our community or anyone else's.

It's instructive to note that there is not a British Columbia municipal board or a Saskatchewan municipal board or a Quebec municipal board. In fact, there are no other municipal boards for any other provinces or territories in Canada. We have the only one. I have often stopped to ask myself why we in Ontario are so insecure that we need to have an Ontario Municipal Board, or a municipal board under any name or guise. The reality is that every other province and territory in Canada trusts the municipal councils and the courts to do the right thing. We do not. In this province, we do not. In spite of what you hear on the other side of the House about our municipal partners, they are not really municipal partners, because this government and previous governments have not trusted the municipalities to do what is right. They have an Ontario Municipal Board with people whom they appoint to pull the strings and to make the regulations so that the Ontario Municipal Board follows what the province wants and not so much what the municipalities or the individuals who live in those municipalities want.

From its inception, the municipal board, when it was dreamed up all those 50 or 100 years ago—and it has gone through many guises over the years—was set up because it was felt at that time, given the process in Canada, that most municipalities were singularly incapable of making the really complex decisions that would often have to be made. Municipalities were small. Most of them were rural. Most of them had very little money. They had little in the way of expertise by way of lawyers or planners or people who knew about transportation systems or environmentalists, if there was an environmental problem. So it was better to leave all of that to the Ontario Municipal Board.

A great many things have happened in the last 50 to 100 years in Ontario. First of all, we are no longer a rural province. The number of people who live in municipi-

palities of under 10,000 people or in rural or northern areas is now down to 15%; 85% of all the people in this province live in municipalities of 10,000 people or more. The city of Toronto, in which this building is located, has 2.5 million people; the greater Toronto area, five million people. That's out of a total population of 12 or 12.5 million people in this province. People are concentrated in very large municipalities. In fact, the majority of people live in just 10 or 12 municipalities in this province. That's the majority. You can name them off: They're Hamilton and Ottawa, they're Mississauga and Markham, they're Toronto; they're the big ones. That's where the majority of people live. These municipalities aren't little communities. They all have lawyers and expertise, they all have environmental engineers, they all have planners, they all have people who know about traffic systems and transportation engineers. I will tell you that in each and every case they are fully capable of making their own decision, and in each and every case they do not need an Ontario Municipal Board.

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Now, it can be said, and I would admit, that there are still some small rural municipalities in this province that may have such a need. But there should be a clause here that would allow those municipalities, those big ones, to be exempt. In fact, this province should exempt them from the outset.

You know, the Ontario Municipal Board has for many years done *de novo* hearings. For those of you, especially those watching TV, who do not know the phrase, it is Latin, meaning "from the beginning" or "brand new" hearings, so that they actually start it all over again. Even though the municipality may have dealt with it in its totality, the evidence is presented brand new again. That's the reality of what they've done. There will be some tinkering around the edge with this, perhaps good, perhaps not, but I'll get to that in a moment.

In the majority of cases, the municipal interest is known, because the municipality—the council, the mayor—they sit down and they make a decision. They say yes to this development or they say no to the development. They put conditions, they do site plan approvals, they do zoning, they look at the official plan. They do everything that is necessary, that the lawyers advise them to do, that the planners say is necessary under the act, and usually the municipal interest is known. There are, though—I can think of a couple of exceptions. One is, if the developer is satisfied and has reasonable cause for bias, they can go beyond the municipality. That can be bias either by the municipality itself, or I remember the celebrated case we had once in East York where a ratepayer president told the developer that it didn't matter what he did, they were going to appeal it anyway. Well, the developer went right to the Ontario Municipal Board, even though the municipality in no way was privy to that statement, nor did we participate, nor did we believe in that statement. They were allowed to go straight to the Ontario Municipal Board because the ratepayer president had simply said

they were going to appeal the decision, no matter what it was anyway. There's a perfect example of what happens.

The more common one is where the municipality has not met the timelines. I have to tell you, this is often a very difficult thing for municipalities to do, because developers got very good over the years at putting in new applications or changing the application during the time frame, which was at one time 90 days. It has now been expanded, which is a good thing. But they got very good in renewing, renewing and renewing what had to be done and what their proposal actually was.

You know, when the minister stood up and announced that there was going to be a reform and there was going to be this new Bill 51, I held my breath for a moment, and I remembered back to those heady days leading up to the last election. You see, as a critic for the New Democratic Party, it was my job to go out and to debate with others about where we should be going around OMB reform. I remember two debates in particular: one with the now Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, where Mr. Colle bluntly and forcefully and, I think, quite heroically, called for the abolition of the Ontario Municipal Board. So I was half expecting there, if Mr. Colle held sway in cabinet, that we might have seen the abolition of the Ontario Municipal Board. But that was not to happen. I remember another debate which I had with and in the presence of the now minister of infrastructure, Mr. Caplan. Although he did not advocate the abolition of the Ontario Municipal Board, he certainly did, in very strong and eloquent terms, talk about circumscribing the power to make sure that the Ontario Municipal Board retained little if any of its authority when it came to land use planning. That's not there either.

I was hoping that the Ontario Municipal Board would lose its authority to override democratically elected councils, and that is not what I see here either. The first things I always look for in any bill related to planning or development or the Ontario Municipal Board are those telltale words which I found in this act. Those telltale words are "have regard to" the decision of the municipal council. This is the weakest possible term that can be used, and yet it is the term that this government chose to put in its first draft of the bill, the one we have before this Legislature.

I remember all of the debate, some months or years ago now—time flies here—on Bill 26, the Strong Communities (Planning Amendment) Act, 2004. So I guess it's a couple of years ago now. The government at that time chose to use the words "have regard to" the decision of the provincial policy statement. But after much debate in this House and in committee hearings, being pilloried by some aspects of the press, and having municipal councils and ratepayers' groups say that this wasn't strong enough—along with I think NDP speaker after NDP speaker—and asked that we change those words from "have regard to" to "be consistent with" provincial policy statements, it was eventually changed. I believe that this government has to do the same thing with this bill. Now, you might be taking a huge leap of faith if you

do it, because it's not "having regard to" or "being consistent with" a provincial policy statement; it's being consistent with the wishes of the democratically elected council of the municipality in which the decision is made. What you're going to have to do and what you're going to have to say, and what you're going to have to commit to paper if you say that, is that it has to be consistent with the wishes of the democratically elected council and the people in that municipality.

I believe that should be done. I think if you truly believe that these are your municipal partners, as you stand up and say in the City of Toronto Act, the new Municipal Act and in all the other acts in which municipalities have a say or a role, then you really must give them that authority. You must give them the authority to fly, and you must also give them the responsibility and the consequences if they choose to fall on their face, because really that's what ordinary people look to. They look to their elected representatives to make the right decision, and if they choose badly or if they make the wrong decision, then that's what the democratic process is all about: finding better people who can do it right. Obviously, this is going to be a bit of a thorny issue.

The reality of this bill is that it formalizes again the parent-child relationship in the process. It says that these municipalities are creatures of the province, and that this bill, the Ontario Municipal Board, this Parliament and this government can override their concerns. Some municipal councils might like that. Some municipal councils might approach you and say that this is a good thing, because there are some councillors and some mayors who prefer not to make those difficult decisions, who are more than content to do whatever they have to do at stage 1 and send it off to the Ontario Municipal Board and say, "It's not up to us. It's up to them. The bad decisions don't have to be made by us."

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I think where this often happens is in terms of public housing, where municipal councils do not want to have to make those difficult decisions of putting public housing into the municipality, into neighbourhoods where people are upset about it, where there is the NIMBY factor, where all the other things happen in political life that get local politicians upset and fearful of their own demise. So very often they will vote no, knowing full well that the project is correct, that it meets all the standards and that it meets the official plan, the zoning. They vote no and send it off to the Ontario Municipal Board, fully confident in their own minds that in a matter of weeks or months or however long it takes, it will be reversed. That is not the way to deal with those types of developments. The way to deal with those developments is to make sure the municipalities have the final say. They need to know they have the authority and they need to have the guts to make the decision in the first place.

We also know that some municipal councils do this because it's simply easier not to upset their developer friends on occasion and vote for those people who are generally kind of generous when it comes to electoral funds once every three years—now every four.

I'd like to talk about the OMB and citizens' groups. This is the whole aspect of the bill that says, "New information cannot be presented at the hearing, except by the ministry or government agencies." It will still be possible for ministries or government agencies to put in information right up until the time of the hearing. This may be very useful in terms of environmental impacts if it has taken a long time for them to come about, or if some new information was not present at the hearing and the ministry was unaware of the hearing or needed time to accommodate it. It's in there.

It's not in there so much for municipalities and it's certainly not in there for citizens. This is not a provision that is going to be harmful to developers. I will tell you that most developers, the overwhelming majority of them, even though they take a long time to finalize a proposal, are very good at putting everything together, whether it be the report, the studies, the legal briefs, the requirements under the Planning Act, the zoning or whatever. All of that invariably is done, and done well, prior to the time of the public hearing. The fact that they can't change it after is a good thing. The fact that most of them don't need to change it at all is the reality.

But often you cannot say the same thing for citizens. They will be severely limited under the proposals of this bill in a way they have never been limited before. They will be rendered largely irrelevant, should this bill pass, and I'll tell you why. They're already disadvantaged. You know they're disadvantaged. You know they don't have the money of the big developers. You know they don't have the lawyers or the expertise. You know they don't have the planners. Oftentimes what they have is a sense of their community and their neighbourhood that they want to preserve.

Just to give a little indication about this, I remember specifically the Leaside Property Owners' Association, which still exists, although in a very much smaller and somewhat diminished form. This is Canada's first, largest, most successful and most powerful local ratepayers' group. Without a doubt, people who knew about this group knew how successful it was. They had an executive. People ran for the executive and almost every position was contested. That's how much interest there was in the community. When they would hold the annual election, there would always be a couple of people running for president, vice-president and treasurer. They'd always be running. It was a real privilege to go there and hear the debate about the community. Whether or not they were looking for stop signs or road closures, whether they were looking for new development, they were there.

But that group fell upon very hard times because of the Ontario Municipal Board and because of development aspects in Leaside. They fell into hard times not because it happened once, but because it happened repeatedly. It happened when an old industrial site at Brentcliffe and Eglinton was about to be shut down and sold. I think you all remember that a group called Bramalea Development Corp. wanted to come in and put up

nine or 10 apartment condominium towers on the site, and it caused considerable angst in the community, huge angst in the community. The Leaside property owners went about trying to fight that. They raised funds, they got a lawyer, they came to council, they went to the OMB. In the end, Bramalea went bankrupt; it ceased. But they had expended a great deal of time and money in the process up until when the Bramalea group went into bankruptcy.

Subsequently, the land was purchased and sold and developed by an alternate group that came in and wanted to build much the same thing, and the whole thing went through the Ontario Municipal Board again, with the expenses of the lawyers and the planners. All of the money had to be raised locally. They unfortunately expended far more than they had, hoping they would be able to get money from the community to keep it going. But when they lost at the Ontario Municipal Board, as unfortunately they did, the money dried up. They found themselves close to bankruptcy because they had tens of thousands of dollars in expenditures that they had authorized to fight this proposal and no money to pay it. Eventually, though, they did get the money back and did get it back together, only to find that the developer had changed his mind on what was to be built on this site and came in with a third proposal, the one we see at Brentcliffe and Eglinton today, which is hundreds of rental townhomes, one of very few rental properties built in the city of Toronto in the last number of years.

It's there, but the reality is that the Leaside Property Owners' Association has never recouped those financial losses. Although it continues to exist, it has been very difficult—near impossible—for them to mount any of the same kind of OMB actions they did in the past.

Often for community groups, the OMB is the first place they proffer or put forward their expertise, and that's logical because if a group is going before its local council, they have no way of knowing how the council is going to react to a proposal. I don't blame them for not wanting to spend great deals of money leading up to a council meeting, because what they have known in the past is that the council meeting is there but there's always the OMB after if you don't want to spend the money. It makes more sense to hold on to it and see what the council is going to do and then plan your strategy from there. So oftentimes these groups do not want to bring the expertise, do not want to pay for the expertise and simply don't have it. They trust their municipal councils to do the right thing. If the municipal council does the right thing, they walk away, sometimes feeling very happy. If the municipal council doesn't do the right thing and sides with the developers against the community interests, it is at that point that they decide and pass resolutions to raise the monies and find the expertise. This is the way it happens.

How many community groups, given this bill, are going to go out and hire a planner, a transportation engineer, an environmental engineer, a lawyer and anyone else they need in anticipation that the municipal

council might not vote the way they want? If they don't do all of this in the beginning, under your bill, they are constrained and it is made impossible in law for them to present that new evidence at the hearing before the Ontario Municipal Board. Can you see what you have done in the bill? You have made it imperative that each and every one of these small community organizations across Ontario spend whatever little resources they have in advance to make the case before the municipality, even when the municipality might be on their side, because failure to do so will mean that they cannot bring that evidence forward at a subsequent OMB hearing.

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I hope the members in the government have thought about what this is going to do with those groups in your particular ridings. We know that it will be very difficult for them, if not impossible unless they have deep pockets, to raise the money in advance, figuring that there may be an appeal down the road. We know that in the end they will be handicapped when it comes before the Ontario Municipal Board. I am asking the members to look very carefully at this. I believe that citizens should be exempted, the same way that ministries are, from presenting evidence at the OMB hearing that was not presented at the hearing before the municipal councils or the committees of adjustment.

I'm asking you as well to look at intervenor funding. There's nothing in this bill dealing with intervenor funding. Look at the groups that are opposing some of the bigger developments in Ontario today. If a gravel pit is to be located in suburban, rural or northern Ontario, or if a building is being built in an urban place, contravening the official plans, invariably these will end up going to the Ontario Municipal Board. As I've said before, these are long-drawn-out affairs. They could involve a great many areas of expertise, including heritage buildings and ground locations of ecological significance. In terms of my own municipality, I think about the Brickworks on Bayview Avenue, which were ultimately saved, again, not by the municipal council or even by the OMB, which were both bound and determined to build houses, apartments and condominiums on the flood plain of the Don River—I have to laugh when I talk about it, even to this day—but by a very courageous decision made in cabinet by the then-minister, Lily Munro.

Ms. Horwath: She was from Hamilton.

Mr. Prue: She was the Liberal member from Hamilton, who made a courageous decision, and so did the government of the day, to turn the Brickworks from being a housing development into an ecological site which today I invite any of you to come to, to see how magnificent that old quarry has become and how it is drawing people, not only from all over Toronto but from all over Ontario and Canada and around the world to see how that could be redeveloped. But I digress a little.

The reality is that this is very costly without intervenor funding. I've already talked about the Leaside Property Owners' Association, but you can revisit that in every single municipality and riding in this province. It is costly.

In researching this, I found a very good quote that I would like to read into the record; it is a few lines long. The quote is by a Ms. Monique Atherton of Vinemount, Ontario. This was a quote taken when Ontarians were consulting on OMB reform back in 2004. I quote her in full from her argument:

“Interpretation, selection and presentation of data by an expert can vary widely, depending on the position the expert is supporting. A peer review and/or consultation with independent experts early in the process may reassure citizens, making a hearing unnecessary, or it may facilitate a settlement or help to refine outstanding issues. If the board considers expert testimony to be the best evidence, as it seems to be the basis for OMB decisions, then all parties should be able to provide this best evidence on issues where the board is considering the public good. Funding for experts and lawyers could be made available for parties determined to be acting in the public interest who do not financially benefit from the investment in the services of these professionals. Without this best evidence from all parties, the board is only determining what position can afford to purchase the best evidence—a determination which hardly requires a public hearing of issues.”

She was absolutely right when she said that, and it remains as true today as it was in 2004.

I looked at the bill and thought, “How do we resolve Ms. Atherton's concern?” Well, quite frankly, this bill does not, because there is nothing in here that allows for intervenor funding. It has been totally and completely ignored within the body of this bill.

Municipalities stand to make some savings if this bill goes through, but they also stand to lose some monies where they are required to pay and are not now. But there is no such relief for citizens. In the case of citizens, they lose and they lose and they lose. In fact, should this bill pass, they're saying that what they have to say, what they can bring to bear before the Ontario Municipal Board will virtually be non-existent.

I'm thinking about a couple of groups that are out there now who are struggling against tremendous odds and who probably could use some financial assistance but don't have any. One is the Save the Rouge group, who are working very, very hard to try to undo some of the mistakes being made in north Leslie. There is another group, called the Concerned Citizens Coalition of Caledon, fighting the James Dick Construction quarry in that neighbourhood. That's the CCCC. I think they came up with quite an alliteration there: Concerned Citizens Coalition of Caledon. They too are in some degree of financial stress over having to take this, or potentially having to take this, before the Ontario Municipal Board.

We believe that all citizens should have an opportunity to express themselves before the courts or before quasi-judicial bodies of this province. It's simply not there, and we think that's a mistake.

I finally get to what I consider to be the single most perplexing problem of this bill, and that is section 23. Section 23 is wrong. Section 23, if enacted, will take

away citizens' rights to an extent that they have never been taken away before in the province of Ontario. I don't want to sound too alarmist, but I am afraid I must, because what this section does is allow private energy development to be virtually exempt from the planning process. It means that anyone who wants to build any facility that has more than two megawatts of power produced from it is exempt from the planning process, from the Ontario Municipal Board, from municipal concern. It simply exempts these people.

I know that this province is in a bit of an energy crunch. I can listen to the blame game here every single day, if I want to come in here, about what your government did or that government did or what three governments down the road did or did not do. I can hear it every single day. But the reality is that we need to have some local control. If you believe that the municipalities are our partners, if you believe that the citizens must be listened to and their will adhered to, then you have to give them the authority to have input to the planning process of large, publicly or privately owned facilities that will impact upon their lives.

My community, in the last few months, has gone up and down a roller coaster ride over the Portlands. The Portlands is a very large energy project which virtually no one in my community or the greater Toronto area wants to see built. There are some who fear that a loss of electricity is more important than the planning, and they wouldn't care if it was built anywhere, provided it's not built in their backyard, as long as the electricity continues. But for the majority of people who have looked at this development, they know that this is the harbinger of things to come. They know that if section 23 in this bill passes, it will literally be impossible for them to have any say as to where energy sites are located.

This one is 500 megawatts. It's a large facility. It's going to be built in the port lands. The people who oppose it are the mayor, the council, Robert Fung, the czar of the port lands—that's the title they gave him. I'm not sure what his official title is, but he is the man who is responsible for developing all those lands into what we hope will be the jewel of waterfronts of all the municipalities on the face of the earth.

1720

We've seen what other municipalities have been able to do with smaller parcels of land and more decrepit pieces of land. We've seen Canary Wharf. Our staff and I personally have been to Barcelona to see what that decrepit waterfront was turned into. We know that people around the world are taking their waterfronts and turning them into vibrant, alive community places where people can live and visit and where there are wonderful parks and playgrounds. Yet we in this province can think of nothing better to do with the port lands, we can think of nothing better to do with that site, which is located right on the water in full view of the downtown, than put a mega gas-fired electricity generating plant on it.

The community is opposed, the neighbours are opposed, the municipal councillors of the area are opposed,

the local politicians are all opposed, but this is what is being put there. And it is being put there over everyone's issues, because it has been said that the land has had very small consultation in terms of whether or not it is environmentally proper. The public certainly was not involved in the process, and the process was so truncated that it did not even include soil tests. We don't know what is underneath whatever is built, whether the soil is contaminated and whether it's going to be removed or how it's going to be removed. It's not even part of the process.

This is the future for every municipality and every group if someone determines they are going to site an energy project larger than two megawatts. To put it into perspective, that's just about anything you could possibly build. Two megawatts is not a huge amount of electricity. It will make it literally impossible to question whether it is an appropriate site for a new nuclear plant, should someone come along and want to build it. It will make it virtually impossible, should someone decide they want to do energy from waste—I've seen some discussion of that in the newspaper, just east of Toronto. If someone wants to cart in waste and burn it, it will be literally impossible for the people who live in close proximity or the town council to have any say over it.

It will make it impossible for other mega gas plants; it will make it impossible should this government or any government decide that they want to start burning sewage sludge, as they do in Hamilton and as they did in Toronto until quite recently, with all the problems that caused to the people of Riverdale and the Beach, with asthma in the children, with the high levels of lead and concentrations of dioxins. It will be impossible, because there is no opportunity for the municipality to say whether that is an appropriate location or whether it's being built in conjunction with the city's official plan. I put it to you that if we pass this bill and the Liberals lose the next election to the Conservatives, it would even make it possible, using the existing law you are going to put in place, for the Conservatives to re-fire the coal plants or build new ones, and there's nothing the municipalities could say about it. There's nothing the municipalities will be able to say about it.

Section 23 is a horrendous piece of legislation. I'm asking you to think very carefully about what you're doing and the consequences of those actions. It will give unfettered access to every piece of land that any energy developer wants to build on, without the safeguards of the community, the Ontario Municipal Board, the municipal council or anyone else, provided it's bigger than two megawatts. If it was the reverse and it was smaller than two megawatts, I might be able to understand that. I might be able to understand how a farmer might want to make methane from cow dung. I can understand that. I might be able to understand a windmill operation. I might be able to understand biogas. I might be able to understand an ethanol plant. I might be able to understand a whole bunch of things in a farm community that would benefit the farmers generally.

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): They don't want your septage any more, by the way.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Prue: I know that, you know that, but here's your bill that is going to force it all. I have to tell you I don't know why you put this in here and I hope you'll take it out.

I was not aware that this was in the bill until a couple of weeks ago. I would like to publicly thank my friend, a woman I haven't seen for a long time, Bonnie Lindsay. She was the parks and recreation director in the former borough of East York. She worked with us for a number of years and was quite a dynamic individual. She moved out to Georgian Bay. She did alert me to this, which I thought was preposterous, that it could not possibly be true, until we did a little bit of research to find out that section 23 did in fact exist. Her town council was justifiably upset about some of the siting plans for the windmills. As I said, I consider that to be the least obtrusive of any of the energy plans, but I can still understand that the town council likes the idea of windmills but not on the particular site that has been chosen. They believe there is an alternative and better site and wanted to participate and to pass the zoning and planning that would permit for the use of windmills, albeit a few hundred metres or a kilometre down the road. They're not going to get that opportunity.

We believe in local control. We believe that cities and municipalities, properly instructed and in good faith, can make the decisions. We don't believe in the Ontario Municipal Board. But at the same time, if this government is convinced that the Ontario Municipal Board is going to stay, we think citizens have to have the same rights as developers. We think there needs to be an opportunity for intervenor funding. There needs to be an opportunity to present evidence by citizens after the fact. There needs to be an opportunity for people of goodwill to be involved in the shaping of their communities and of their neighbourhoods. We also believe that section 23 is wrong in law. We think that it needs to be deleted.

I would like to close by talking just a little bit—again from the same woman. The same Monique Atherton of Vinemount, Ontario, concluded in her speech before the ministry's consultations on OMB reform, again from her submission, because she said it so brilliantly and so well: "Instead of looking for better ways to encourage more individuals to participate and speak to the board, a more productive approach would be to look for better ways for the board to listen. If the public sees that the OMB is responsive and that its decisions appropriately reflect their concerns regarding land use planning, then this will provide incentive for individuals to participate. The cosmetic reforms currently being considered will not be sufficient to create a process in which the public can participate in an effective and meaningful way."

To conclude, and I think she has concluded it best for me, I would simply ask that this government, in sending this bill to committee, be prepared to remove section 23, be prepared to spend the necessary funds to empower

citizens, be prepared to let citizens have an equal say with developers before the OMB if it is to continue, and you should be prepared to make those changes before this bill is brought back for third reading.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre): I'm delighted to rise and speak on Bill 51. This is such a big step forward for us in land use planning. My background includes my work in the development business. I know how development works, I know the challenges and I know the responsibilities. I'm also a demographer, so I understand the population pressures that we're going to be facing in the coming decades. So I know how important it is that we have good, sustainable growth. This bill sets the framework for that kind of growth.

1730

What I want to talk about today is the provision in this bill that allows municipalities to establish architectural design guidelines. In my riding of London North Centre, we have an absolutely beautiful old centre of the city, which for the most part remains a very pleasing streetscape. There are, however, challenges to maintaining that pleasing streetscape in times of growth. What this legislation will do is allow the city to set the guidelines so that new development will be compatible with the existing buildings. That's critically important in my own neighbourhood in the centre part of the city where houses were built over a hundred years ago. There has been new construction in that neighbourhood that has really soured the streetscape. I'm delighted that in the future that won't have to happen because of the provisions within this legislation.

Let me just say this is good legislation. It will have a direct impact in my neighbourhood, in my riding.

Ms. Horwath: I'm actually going to make some comments on the remarks by the member for Beaches—East York. I think he gave a very salient review of the bill. Since this is the questions and comments portion, I think it's appropriate for people to acknowledge that the comments made by the member are from his experience, as great and deep as it has been, when he was the mayor of the city of East York.

He went to great lengths to describe the practicalities of the current regime as well as how this bill will affect that current regime. In so doing, of course, he raised issues about the Bayview ghost. I didn't know about that story, but I do now.

He raised issues of concern about the number of people living in municipalities, the number of people living in denser urban areas as opposed to more rural areas.

He talked about the fact that the language in the bill is not strong enough because it only speaks to having "regard to" the decisions of municipal councils instead of being more firm and more strong in its reference to municipal council decisions. The government could have chosen words or language like "to be consistent with the decisions of municipal councils."

Notwithstanding some of the comments from some of the government members about the partnership that this

bill is supposed to be reflective of, it certainly doesn't sound like the great respect is there for the decisions of municipal councils because of the very weak language that is in here referring to municipal council decisions.

Also, very important issues around section 23 and the process changes that are going to allow for siting of facilities without proper environmental assessment processes are very big concerns, as well as the issues of the ability of people and communities to comment on the process, which unfortunately this government doesn't seem to be interested in.

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound): It gives me pleasure to speak for a couple of minutes on this bill that is quite complex. It's a piece of legislation, again, that we aren't going to know what's in it until we get the regulations. This is a problem I find with all governments, even our own. We get some real complex bills and then we're expected here—I guess, as opposition, we can always be against it. Sometimes it would be nice to be in favour of a bill, but it seems to be hard to do that on any bill if you don't know what the regulations are going to be.

This is one of those bills that is so complex that a lot of the bill can mean a lot of different things until we actually see what the regulations are. Then it's too late for politicians. For people in the market or the builders or whatever, it's too late then. Somehow we need to come up with ways that regulations can be brought forward and brought out when we discuss bills of this intent.

I don't mind that we look at the OMB. When you're a municipal politician, you always have trouble with the OMB. I can remember many times, when I was a reeve and councillor of my municipality, we'd say, "Oh, boy, here we go to the OMB again. They never listen to us." So I can understand that we need to do something with the OMB, but with this bill, I don't know, it may have gone too far. Listening to the speaker, I know he has concerns. I have to go along with the last speaker, that there are a lot of concerns with this bill.

Mr. Ramal: I was listening carefully to the member from Beaches–East York when he was talking about the bill. I know he raised a lot of concerns. I respect his opinion. Especially because he had been the mayor for his community for a while, he understands the complexity of the issue. But I also hope he accepts the need for change of the OMB in order to give the municipalities some respect when they plan, especially when they want to make some kinds of changes to their communities.

He knows—he probably faced those issues—when the OMB decided against his wishes and his will as the mayor of his community, you see the frustration. I think this bill would give the municipality some kind of flexibility for their decisions, their planning, to be respected, because every municipality across the province has distinctive needs, has different needs. I think the mayor and the municipal councillors know exactly what they want, whether they want to reform their area, whether they want to establish something to benefit their community, or for instance in the Toronto area, enhanc-

ing the lakeshore to make it attractive for many tourists to come and visit the city of Toronto, or Beaches–East York, Windsor or London, Ontario.

When we give municipalities more say in many different things, as elected officials representing the local municipalities or communities, I think they know exactly what they need. That's the intent of the bill: to reform the relationship between the OMB and municipalities with great protection, with great support from the province of Ontario because we believe, as a province—I was listening to the member from Bruce talking a few minutes ago about his frustration when as a municipal councillor he used to go to the OMB. That's why there's a need, badly, for this bill, in order to put all the pieces together and help the municipalities across Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Beaches–East York, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Prue: I would like to thank the members from London North Centre, Hamilton East, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and London–Fanshawe for their comments. It's difficult for me to deal with the members from London North Centre and Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound because they really did not say anything that I had spoken about for 45 minutes. So I welcome what they had to say but it wasn't about my speech.

Member from Hamilton East, thank you very much for your kind words. You did obviously pay attention because you were using all the same words: "consistent with," Ontario Municipal Board, "ratepayers" and "funding."

But I'd like to deal with the member from London–Fanshawe most because he believes that this bill is going to empower municipalities, and in part it may. It may. I'm not going to say that it does not. What I'm trying to say to you is that it empowers municipalities not in the ways you would want to empower them. It certainly gives them no power, in section 23, over any large energy development within the municipal boundary. That is huge. Any municipality will want to have a say on a nuclear facility, on gas-fired generation, on coal-fired generation, on any kind of waste or waste development. They will want to have it; they're no longer going to have it.

At the same time, where the power is being lost is with the ordinary citizen. It's all right to empower the municipality, but if you take the power away from the ordinary citizen to go before the Ontario Municipal Board, either through lack of funding or because they are no longer allowed to file documents, as I said in my speech, then you are going to do a real disservice to the process in this country and in this province. Whether you assist the municipality or not, if you are harming the individuals who elect their officials from that municipality, in the end, you're not doing the right thing.

1740

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Ms. Matthews: I appreciate the opportunity to speak at more length on this bill. I think the important thing I want to say off the bat is that this government has a

vision for what our communities are going to be. We are committed to building healthier, stronger, more livable communities. It's important that we leave as our legacy communities that are in fact healthy and well planned, and this legislation is just one in a long list of things we've already done in the short time we've been in government to make our future cities something that we can take pride in.

I think some of the steps we've already taken speak to that vision and speak to our commitment to building strong and healthy communities. Above all, what we've done with the greenbelt plan is something that I know I will take great pride in; I already do. All of us in this House will be able to show our grandchildren the greenbelt that would not otherwise have been there had we not had the courage, the determination and the vision to make that happen. Our Places to Grow Act and our proposed growth plan for the whole greater Golden Horseshoe are critically important initiatives that this government has taken. Our provincial policy statement on land use planning, our proposed clean water legislation—all of these things will make for a better future in the environment in which we live. I think when you look at the 2006 budget and see the absolutely tremendous investment that we're prepared to make in public transit, again, that speaks to our commitment to building strong communities here in Ontario.

I'm one of these people who thinks that we have to find a balance between what the private sector can do and what the government should do. Leaving development to the private sector the way the previous government did, when they took a hands-off approach and said, "Let the market decide," is an approach that I don't think produces great communities. I think government has a critically important role in setting out the parameters of what's okay and what's not okay. It's our job to look after the public interest.

I spent part of my weekend by the Thames River in London planting trees, and I saw the result of the vision that people decades ago had. In London, we're blessed: We have the Thames River running through our city, with the north branch, the south branch and the main branch. That is one seamless pathway system along the river now, where people can run, cycle, rollerblade, push strollers, push wheelchairs and enjoy the nature. That is a result of a public and private partnership that many decades ago—and I'm proud to say that it was led by my dad, Don Matthews, a good Brantford boy. He was part of the team that had the vision to build what is a legacy for future generations. So I'm a believer that the government must take a very strong role in the creation of our communities.

Before I go back to what this legislation will mean for my community, I want to talk about what this bill is really all about. First of all, it recognizes that our land use planning system plays a key role in shaping the way our province grows and develops. It's important that we're active players on this file. Before we were elected, we made a commitment to reform the Ontario Municipal

Board. What this legislation does is keep that promise, one more promise kept.

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): Amongst many that we keep.

Ms. Matthews: Amongst many. Every day, we're moving forward on the agenda that we were elected on.

Some of the highlights of this bill: This bill gives more tools to support intensification and sustainable, well-designed communities. It's critically important that intensification happen, because urban sprawl is a thing of the past. We must have more intensified neighbourhoods.

I mentioned a little earlier that I live in an old neighbourhood in the centre of the city. We're blessed with having lots of students living in the neighbourhood, but we also have more and more young families moving downtown, so there's more demand for housing, which is exactly what any disciple of Jane Jacobs would say you need to keep a city centre vibrant. We need intensification, and this bill will allow that intensification to happen in a sustainable, well-managed way.

The second thing this bill does is create clear rules and a more effective planning process. Many of my constituents who had to try to fight at the OMB found the rules pretty mind-boggling; they spent enormous amounts of money on lawyers. This lays out a much clearer guideline so people know what they're up against and what they have to do. It's a much more transparent process.

I think the fact that we will require people to lay all the information before city council before it goes to the OMB is a really good move. The proposals will be complete, and new information will be referred back to city council for their comment. That's a critically important change in the way the OMB will function.

This actually restores the OMB to its original purpose. It's a place to resolve disputes; it is not a land use planning body. So we're going back to disputes. That is the function of the OMB; it should be the function of the OMB. I think this legislation is actually a giant step forward. But I'm not the only person who thinks this legislation is a big step forward. I might just quote a couple of people who are on the record. This is supported by many people from diverse backgrounds. I'm just going to comment on a couple.

We all know David Crombie, a man we all admire. Regardless of political stripe, I think David Crombie is a man we all have tremendous respect for. He was a Conservative back before they took "Progressive" out.

Mr. Leal: He was a visionary.

Ms. Matthews: He was a visionary. He saw. He was the champion of urban planning long before others in this country. Here is what David Crombie said: "With these latest reforms, the government continues to move forward in redeveloping brownfields, promoting good urban design and building more sustainable communities." This comes from David Crombie, who, as we know, is a former Conservative member.

Mr. Leal: A great mayor of Toronto too.

Ms. Matthews: And, of course, mayor of Toronto.

Lisa Bate, of the Ontario Association of Architects, says, "Ontario's architects are encouraged that the government's planning reform initiative would provide greater opportunities to produce a high standard of design in our communities, and help to focus planning decisions at the local level." That's what we want. We want these decisions made at the local level. These are the people who know their communities. Lisa says, "Taken together, these can improve the quality of our cities and towns and promote environmentally sustainable development. This is definitely a step in the right direction and we look forward to working with government to lead the implementation of these new ideas."

I could go on and on. William J. Phillips, of the Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods of Ontario: "We are pleased that the new proposed legislation would strengthen planning at the municipal level, improve citizen participation in the planning process, provide for more environmentally friendly development and reduce the influence of the Ontario Municipal Board." For neighbourhood groups in my riding, this is a very welcome reform of the Ontario Municipal Board.

1750

I want to talk a little bit about how this will impact my riding. It's important, I think, that I stand here and reflect on how this legislation impacts the people who live in my riding. Most people, when they come to London—if I say I'm from London, they say, "That's such a pretty city." I always hear about what a pretty city London is. It's a pretty city for two reasons. It's a pretty city because the centre was built at a time when the architecture was very, very pleasing to the eye; and of course, the natural environment, the trees, although we have to work harder to plant more trees to replace the old trees that are reaching the end of their lifespan. London is a lovely, lovely city, and I'm very proud to represent part of a city that is so pleasing.

I've been approached by architects in my riding who say that they feel impeded in their ability to maintain the flavour of the architecture in London because the previous legislation didn't permit that. This will actually allow the new buildings to complement the existing structures, and that's critically important for the future of our community.

We make decisions now and sometimes we fail to remember how important they will be long after we are no longer here.

Mr. Leal: You'll be the member from London for a long time.

Ms. Matthews: I'd like to be the member for London North Centre for a long time, but I'll be long gone, and this legislation—

Interjection: Say it isn't so.

Ms. Matthews: Yes. This legislation will have an impact long after, dare I say it, all of us are gone, because it will allow better development.

I want to talk about intensification. The proposed changes will include tools that will allow intensification. One of the things that municipalities will be given is the

flexibility to regulate the minimum and maximum density and the height of the development, to build more compact communities that make use of lands and services more effectively. We know that when we have sprawl, we have to build the road in front of the house. Whether it's a compact unit or whether it's a big, old ranch house, there's going to be a road in front of it. We can get way more housing built with less infrastructure when we build a more compact development.

Municipalities will be able to set conditions when approving zoning applications. It will strengthen the municipalities' powers. I have to tell you, I've had many people come and talk to me in my office about the challenges of the planning process that they wrestle with now. It's very, very frustrating for people who convince their local councillors of the wisdom of a decision—the local councillors know the site, they know the neighbourhood, they know the challenges, they know the opportunities, they understand the local nuances of a development—and then it's carted off to the OMB and a decision is made by someone who simply does not have the full extent of the information that they need to make the law. So putting the power back in the hands of the local decision-makers is a major, major, major step in the right direction.

I think the opportunity to set neighbourhood guidelines so that municipalities would have the opportunity to establish guidelines in a given neighbourhood will pay dividends for many, many years to come; for decades to come. I know that I value the decisions that were made by the planners more than 100 years ago, and I think it's important that we carry on that legacy. We can't just let development happen. It has to happen within a very controlled and managed environment.

We need to be fair to the development community. I don't think anybody in this House would argue that the government controls everything. That would be counter-productive and silly, frankly. We don't want a central planning agency.

Mr. Leal: No. Not like the politburo.

Ms. Matthews: Not like the politburo. What we want is to set the guidelines. We want to let municipal councils set the guidelines and then have them carried out and enforced by the Ontario Municipal Board.

In my riding, we have several neighbourhood groups. We've got the Woodfield Community Association that I happen to live in, we've got the Bishop Hellmuth neighbourhood association, where neighbourhood groups have come together and said, "There's something really special about this neighbourhood, about the scale of architecture in this community." A family that lives in the Woodfield Community Association would be familiar to this House: Clarence and Marie Peterson live in the heart of Woodfield. I tell you, there would be no finer spokespeople for the importance of that neighbourhood than the Petersons, who might even be watching as we speak. They are real champions for downtown living in London, Ontario—

Mr. Leal: Leading citizens of London.

Ms. Matthews: Leading citizens of Ontario; indeed, leading citizens of Canada, I would say. These are remarkable people, who live within a neighbourhood that works for them.

What this legislation will do is protect the neighbourhood. It will allow for intensification, allow more people to live there, bring more people into the downtown area, but it will also maintain the very neighbourly feel of the neighbourhood of the Woodfield neighbourhood association.

I think the power of the community is enormous and I think that when people in the neighbourhood band together and fight to improve their neighbourhood or fight against initiatives that will harm their neighbourhood, that should be respected. There should be clear rules, and we should have an environment where those neighbourhood groups are strong and can fight the fight, and fight the fight fairly. I can't imagine having my riding without those strong neighbourhood groups, who care so passionately for their neighbourhoods.

In some neighbourhoods, the second residential unit—a basement apartment, for example. This legislation will allow municipalities to designate areas where second residential units are permitted, and there would be no right to appeal that to the OMB. That's an improvement.

I have a lot of students in my riding. I have tens of thousands of students living in my riding. If we can have affordable housing for those students—legal affordable housing for those students—that's a good thing. That is a step in the right direction.

I think the other thing that's very important as we look to the future—and that's what this legislation does—is that we talk about sustainable design so we can build neighbourhoods that are more environmentally friendly and responsible. When I talk to young people, the number one issue for young people always is the environment. They say, "What are you doing to protect our environment?" I think this legislation is another plank in our platform to build more environmentally strong communities. This legislation, again, allows the municipalities, if they see fit, to make those demands on new development.

This legislation is a very positive step in the right direction. I'm very proud that this government has moved forward with it.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to standing order 9, it is now 6 of the clock. This House is adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1801.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (L) Speaker / Président	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Beaches-East York / Beaches-York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy government House leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement t	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London West / London-Ouest	Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
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	Nepean-Carleton	MacLeod, Lisa (PC)
Guelph-Wellington	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara Falls	Craitor, Kim (L)

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	St. Paul's	Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L) Attorney General / procureur général
Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)	Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)
Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Thunder Bay–Superior	Gravelle, Michael (L)
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	North / Thunder Bay–Superior- Nord	
Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L) Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé	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–Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa–Vanier	Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	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
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Toronto–Danforth	Tabuns, Peter (ND)
Parkdale–High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Trinity–Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Parry Sound–Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Vaughan–King–Aurora	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Perth–Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	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
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Whitby–Ajax	Elliott, Christine (PC)
Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
Prince Edward–Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L) Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de l'Éducation, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	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
Sarnia–Lambton	Di Cocco, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (L) Minister of Culture / ministre de la Culture	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
Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	York North / York-Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	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
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	York West / York-Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
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		

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

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

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