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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 13 June 2006

Mardi 13 juin 2006

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 13 June 2006

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 13 juin 2006

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): I rise in the House regarding the decision this morning on expanding capacity in energy generation in this province. I'm here to represent the interests and views of the Darlington generating station in my riding of Durham.

Newspaper reports have said recently that five Canadian firms representing Team Candu have promised a price guarantee to ensure that any new reactor will be built on time and on budget. Finally today we have an announcement from the provincial government: the integrated power system plan.

I have every confidence that the world-class skills of Durham riding and Durham region residents will be in play. We are leaders in the energy sector in my riding. The Darlington site offers the location, the infrastructure, the skilled workforce and a partnership with the Durham Strategic Energy Alliance. As well, the University of Ontario Institute of Technology is the first Canadian university in Canada offering a degree in nuclear engineering.

We know that Ontario must replace nearly 25,000 megawatts of generating capacity by the year 2020. Valuable time has already been lost by the McGuinty government's lack of a plan and lack of ability in leadership. As well, the policy on coal-powered generation is still a mystery to the McGuinty government.

I would urge this government to work with our partners—the federal government, the region of Durham, the municipality of Clarington—as well as the people of Ontario and members of my riding, and build new generating capacity at Darlington. We're ready, we're willing and we're able. Now get on with the job.

MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): This past weekend I met with constituents of mine who are of Pakistani Muslim descent.

The events of the past two weeks—the arrest of 17 Canadian Muslims suspected of involvement in terrorist plans, and the backlash the local Muslim community has been experiencing—all weighed heavily on their minds. It dominated the discussion we had.

The community expressed the need for leaders in this province to lead right now by condemning all acts of violence towards all communities, just as they condemn all attacks on their fellow Canadians; to send the message that vilifying and attacking the Muslim faith punishes the innocent; to be very conscious that we do not repeat some of the mistakes in Canadian history that led to mistreatment of minorities; and to work with the community as it examines what factors led to the arrests on June 3 and takes action to prevent Canadians from turning to extremism in the first place.

Canadian Muslims have already made constructive suggestions in this regard. For example, the Canadian Arab Federation proposed a domestic terrorism summit where we could learn and share experience from all over the world as to how to prevent and push back extremism.

While the idea of this summit was not accepted when proposed by my colleague from Hamilton East last week, I urge this government to revisit the proposal and to sponsor such a summit.

ONTARIO TRAILS

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): I rise today to talk about an important part of Ontario life: our trails. Last Saturday, I had the privilege of speaking at the Ontario Trails Council banquet held in Brantford, on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, Jim Bradley, and the Minister of Health Promotion, Jim Watson.

Trails are important because they allow people to enjoy our province's natural beauty and take a break from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. They remind us that there is an entire world outside of our well-paved lives. They literally bring communities together by connecting cities, towns and boroughs through trails like the Bruce Trail and the Oak Ridges moraine trail.

In my own riding, we have some amazing bike and walking trails along the Grand River, including the Gordon Glaves Memorial Pathway, which goes right through Brantford, the S.C. Johnson Paris to Brantford trail, and the Brantford to Hamilton rail trail. Thanks to the Brant Waterways Foundation, the city of Brantford, the county of Brant, the private sector and the army of volunteers who make these trails possible for our welfare.

Ontario has more than 64,000 kilometres of trails. Ontarians and tourists alike are seeking active experiences such as hiking and cycling. Our Ontario trails provide those experiences for all—young and old. Our trails also provide the opportunity for us to all live healthier lifestyles. Being active helps us become and stay physically

fit, which in turn keeps us healthy, active and productive citizens.

I hope we will be able to take advantage of the many opportunities trails afford us and enjoy the natural beauty of this great province. Trails really are ours to discover.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton): I rise today to implore government members to take preventive action—action that could prevent them from injuring their arms and backs, action that would surely evoke pride from the Minister of Health Promotion.

Government members, please refrain from patting yourselves on the back when contemplating Ontario's economy. Why? An article in today's *Globe and Mail* has indicated that, where business bankruptcies in Canada are falling some 10%, Ontario is the only jurisdiction where business bankruptcies are actually increasing. It should come as no surprise to the members opposite that this increase is a direct result of this government's tax-and-spend policies.

Dalton McGuinty's Ontario is slipping when compared to other Canadian provinces. Once a leader in such areas as corporate income tax, fiscal prudence and corporate capital tax, Ontario now finds itself behind Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland in some of these areas.

As a result, the manufacturing sector is crumbling under this government's watch. The lack of competitive investment policy in this province continues to chip away at an industry that is the backbone of Ontario's economy. According to StatsCan, Ontario lost another 13,000 manufacturing jobs last month, bringing the total of manufacturing jobs lost to over 77,000 since the beginning of 2005. And, contrary to government opinion, low-paying retail and service sector jobs are not a suitable replacement for good, high-paying manufacturing jobs. To think otherwise is unacceptable.

1340

So please, members of the government side, stop patting yourselves on the back and acknowledge that your tax-and-spend policies are bankrupting Ontario's manufacturing—

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

RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): Recently, I was pleased to attend the sixth annual Relay for Life at the Stratford Education and Recreation Centre on June 2 and the inaugural Relay for Life at the Listowel Agricultural Society fairgrounds on June 9, both in my riding.

The Canadian Cancer Society Relay for Life is a celebration of survival and a tribute to the lives of loved ones who have been touched by cancer. I was pleased to bring greetings from this Legislature and celebrate the recent proclamation of the Smoke-free Ontario Act.

Cancer survivors are invited to walk the first lap of the relay to acknowledge and celebrate their courage and their struggle with the disease. It is truly inspirational. Staying up all night, teens then take turns walking, running or strolling around a track in a non-competitive relay to raise money for cancer research and programs. This year's relays also involved the very moving luminary ceremony, which involves participants lighting candles to honour a cancer survivor or someone who has lost their battle with cancer.

I note that this year's Stratford event drew 100 teams, with more than 1,200 participants raising \$217,000. The inaugural Listowel event was also impressive, drawing 52 teams, with more than 590 participants raising \$124,000 and surpassing their fundraising goal by over \$90,000.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Huron-Perth chapter of the Canadian Cancer Society and all the participants and volunteers who contributed to the successful relays in Stratford and Listowel. Their efforts are helping to lead the fight against cancer and adding years to the lives of others.

I'd like to particularly welcome a good friend of mine in the gallery, Mrs. Barb Cousins of Toronto, recently of St. Marys. Welcome, Barb, and her son, Kim.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): Sadly, today marks day 106 of the ongoing crisis in Caledonia. What a sad, disheartening lesson it has become for what happens when a leadership vacuum is created: Chaos ensues. What a sad, disheartening lesson it has been for what happens when the rule of law is effectively suspended: Thuggery and hooliganism fill that void. It appears that Premier Dalton McGuinty believes that when a storm is brewing in Ontario, he can duck behind his desk and hope it all blows on by.

What is most disturbing is the conclusion that people in Caledonia, Binbrook, Hamilton and Niagara have been forced to make—if not explicitly, then implicitly: The Dalton McGuinty government has sent a signal to the Ontario Provincial Police not to enforce the law when it comes to the crisis in Caledonia. The only conclusion that local residents can reach—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Stop the clock. Order. Minister of Health. The member for Niagara Centre.

Member for Erie–Lincoln.

Mr. Hudak: That is the only conclusion local residents can—

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: The standing orders book, in section 4 of the rules of debate, says that a member shall be brought to order when he makes allegations against another member. There is an allegation that the Premier made direction to the OPP, and that's not acceptable.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Member for Erie–Lincoln.

Mr. Hudak: We have a Solicitor General who effectively has condoned a no-go zone for the Ontario Provincial Police in this province. We have a Solicitor General who refused to express concern about the OPP being ordered not to wear protective gear. We have a Premier who said that this has largely been without incident. They're turning the OPP—

The Speaker: Thank you.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Tony C. Wong (Markham): I rise in the House today to share the great news that the McGuinty government is investing \$74 million in Markham and York region's publicly funded schools.

This is part of our government's \$600-million package to boost student performance and achieve results. In three consecutive years, we have continued to demonstrate our support to ensure that primary class sizes keep shrinking; reading, writing and math achievement keep improving; and more high school students continue to graduate in my riding of Markham and across York region.

I'm very pleased to announce that through this investment the York Region District School Board will receive more than \$880 million in 2006-07. That's over \$44 million more than in 2005-06. The York Catholic District School Board will receive more than \$440 million in 2006-07, which is an additional \$29 million more than in 2005-06. For students and their families living in my riding of Markham and across York region, these funding figures mean that grants for student needs have climbed by almost 30% for both York Region District School Board and York Catholic District School Board.

We are committed to Markham and Ontario families who want the best public education for their children. I'm proud that we're reaching out to York region parents and everyone involved in education through our continued commitment. Our \$2-billion investment since coming to office—

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

CONSTITUENCY OFFICE ASSISTANTS

Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): It is with great pleasure that I rise in the House today to welcome guests in the gallery from my riding of Northumberland. Colleagues, please welcome Karen Harding, a constituency assistant in my Cobourg office; Mr. Peter Cleary, an outstanding young man who not only volunteers in my office but is also the vice-chair of the Northumberland Youth Advisory Council; and co-op teacher Mr. Phil McDonnell is joined by four of my co-op students: Hailey Anderson, Jenna Missen, Ian Alexander and Catherine Marr.

I want to say thank you to all the co-operative education teachers in my riding of Northumberland, and especially Mr. McDonnell, for providing top-notch stu-

dents who have chosen to work with me. You can all be proud of your accomplishments; you have been of tremendous assistance to my staff. Today I ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming you to the Legislature and thanking you for all your hard work.

LABOUR MOBILITY

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell): On June 2, I had the pleasure of joining Premier McGuinty and the Minister of Labour, Steve Peters, in Ottawa at the signing of the labour mobility agreement. This agreement allows Ontario contractors and their construction workers the opportunity to work in Quebec. They will have greater access to contracts and jobs in Quebec, including Quebec crown corporations and Hydro-Québec contracts. In exchange, Quebec contractors will have access to publicly funded contracts in Ontario. Also, Ontario construction workers who are qualified but not certified will now have the opportunity to qualify for trade activity cards from Ontario. These cards will be recognized by Quebec, and workers will be able to work anywhere in Quebec.

This is great news for the Ontario economy, our workers and our businesses, especially in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, which runs along the Ontario-Quebec border. Workers from my riding will now have more access to construction jobs and will see more opportunity for investment. Previously, only 200 to 400 Ontario construction workers were allowed to work in Quebec. Today the whole—

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

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I'd like members to assist me today in welcoming Alan Pope, the former member for Cochrane South in the 31st through 34th Parliaments, and his son, David.

Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to announce that Mitchell Minor, the page from Erie–Lincoln, has his mother, Stephanie Minor, and grandparents Margaret Minor and Gwen and Len Eldridge of Burlington here in the Legislature today. He assisted with leading your processional today, and I think he did an outstanding job.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham–Kent Essex): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on finance and economic affairs and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 117, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide for an Ontario home electricity payment / *Projet de loi 117, Loi modifiant la Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu pour prévoir un paiement au titre des factures d'électricité résidentielle de l'Ontario.*

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

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

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)—sorry, I thought I had time to do it before the member for Niagara Centre got over to his seat to oppose it.

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 Tuesday, June 13, 2006, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 167. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those 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 1351 to 1356.

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Arthurs, Wayne	Hudak, Tim	Racco, Mario G.
Balkissoon, Bas	Jackson, Cameron	Ramal, Khalil
Barrett, Toby	Jeffrey, Linda	Rinaldi, Lou
Bartolucci, Rick	Kular, Kuldip	Runciman, Robert W.
Bentley, Christopher	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Bountrogianni, Marie	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Bradley, James J.	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Brownell, Jim	MacLeod, Lisa	Smitherman, George
Cansfield, Donna H.	Marsales, Judy	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Chudleigh, Ted	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sterling, Norman W.
Colle, Mike	Matthews, Deborah	Tascona, Joseph N.
Craitor, Kim	Mauro, Bill	Tory, John
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Van Bommel, Maria
Delaney, Bob	Meilleur, Madeleine	Watson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	Miller, Norm	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	Mitchell, Carol	Witmer, Elizabeth
Duncan, Dwight	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wong, Tony C.
Elliott, Christine	O'Toole, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Yakabuski, John
Fonseca, Peter	Parsons, Ernie	Zimmer, David
Gravelle, Michael	Peters, Steve	
Hardeman, Ernie	Peterson, Tim	

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
Kormos, Peter	Martel, Shelley	Tabuns, Peter

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 67; the nays are 6.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

YEAR OF THE WAR BRIDE

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): We are joined today in the gallery by a very special group of women and one man who have contributed much to this province and who have served as a model of courage and determination. I speak of Ontario's war brides, more than 100 of whom are with us today to commemorate the 60th anniversary—

Applause.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: The war brides can see how much affection there is for them among all members of the Legislature, and how happy we are to have them here today. I'm speaking of more than 100 who are with us today to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the war brides' arrival in Canada.

As members may be aware, approximately 48,000 women married Canadian soldiers overseas during the Second World War. The story of their subsequent immigration to Canada during and following the war has become part of the Canadian fabric. They arrived from the United Kingdom and many other countries on the European continent. They left their homes, families and friends and set out to start a new life many thousands of miles across the ocean.

We can only imagine what a young woman of 19 or 20 must have thought as she made that crossing, often with a child, a young child, wondering what kind of life, what kind of future she would find here. Nor can we imagine the enormous adjustments these remarkable women had to make on their arrival—adjustment to a new marriage and family, to a new culture and unfamiliar surroundings and in some cases to a new language, but in all cases to a place very different from the one they had left behind.

Yet these women prevailed, and they went on to contribute to every facet of Ontario life. Many were volunteers. Many played a vital role in our communities. Many made their mark in business, the professions and public service. Equally important, these women left a legacy carried on by families in every part of the province for whom the story of the war brides has become

their own story. They did it all and they did it well, and they did it with grace and courage.

It is my privilege to declare 2006 the Year of the War Bride in Ontario. We acknowledge with gratitude the spirit and courage of the remarkable women who are with us today and the many thousands of others who have contributed so much to our families, our communities and our way of life. Thank you.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

ACCESSIBILITÉ POUR LES PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs): Today, I wish to recognize the first anniversary of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and I would like to recognize and thank Minister Bountrogianni for introducing this very important piece of legislation.

As honourable members are aware, the act lays out a road map to make Ontario accessible to all people by 2025. New mandatory accessibility standards will bring down barriers that many people with disabilities face in their daily lives. The standards will apply to businesses and organizations across Ontario, as well as government, and will address the full range of disabilities, including physical, sensory, mental health, developmental and learning.

En octobre 2005, nous avons annoncé que les deux premières propositions de normes que nous élaborerions concerneraient les domaines des transports et du service à la clientèle. Les comités ont travaillé fort, et nous avons hâte que les propositions de normes de ces deux premiers domaines soient prêtes pour un examen public cet automne.

Today I am pleased to announce our plan to develop the next three accessibility standards, which will cover the areas of information and communications, employment and the built environment.

À l'heure actuelle, selon Statistique Canada, environ 1,5 million personnes de notre province ont un handicap, soit plus de 13 % de la population de l'Ontario. Avec le vieillissement de notre génération du baby-boom, le nombre de personnes qui ont un handicap lié au vieillissement augmente aussi.

L'accessibilité est une question importante, un élément de notre société que nous ne pouvons tout simplement pas négliger.

In 2005, our government took a strong stand for accessibility when we made the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act the law in this province. We have done some great work and made some positive headway in this area in the past year. We set up the Accessibility Standards Advisory Council, a dedicated group that has been helping us to move forward with the development of meaningful and enforceable standards. We launched seven new partnership projects that team

the provincial government up with various private sector and not-for-profit organizations to improve accessibility in innovative ways. We are investing nearly \$11 million in new funding for interpreter and intervenor services for people who are deaf or deaf-blind.

As for the Ministry of Transportation, there has been a host of improvements for accessible parking, including a new traveller's permit for people with disabilities that they can use at Ontario airports. Just two weeks ago, the minister of Training, Colleges and Universities announced \$28.2 million for universities and colleges to provide services for students with disabilities.

We've made some good progress in the years since we passed this legislation, but we still have a long way to go and much more to do. Today's announcement is moving us in the right direction and bringing us one step closer to our goal of having an accessible Ontario by the year 2025, an Ontario where everyone has the opportunity to meet their full potential.

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

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): It is a pleasure to stand in this House on behalf of John Tory and the Progressive Conservative caucus to maintain awareness that we must continue focusing on enhancing the opportunities of persons with disabilities to participate in Ontario's economic, social and cultural life. We are all enriched as every individual in our province is enabled to fulfill their full potential and contribute to building a better society.

I am pleased to hear the progress report one year after Bill 118 received royal assent. I'll even forgive the McGuinty government for trying to claim all the credit, even though 80% of the content of this legislation came from legislation passed by the Progressive Conservative government to prevent barriers stopping Ontarians from fully participating in the life of our province, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001.

Our act was a major step forward to aid the physically challenged in our province. This first anniversary of the legislation you enacted also unfortunately marks a delay in progress. At the time you repealed the original act, many municipalities had set up accessibility committees with individuals living with physical challenges. Many of these committees had already researched and recommended plans that had been approved by their city councils. Bill 118 unnecessarily held up the implementation of these well-thought-out plans.

Today's anniversary of the new disabilities act is also the anniversary of another broken promise by Dalton McGuinty. In 2003, Dalton McGuinty promised a new disabilities act with effective enforcement. After the election, you rejected the disability community requests to establish a new independent agency to enforce the new disabilities act. The government told them a new agency wasn't necessary, since people with disabilities can file complaints with the Ontario Human Rights Commission to enforce their rights.

Now we all know that you've reneged on just another promise. The McGuinty government has broken faith

with two million Ontarians with disabilities by both gutting the human rights system with Bill 107, and refusing to include the effective enforcement measures you promised them.

Rather than a minister's self-congratulatory statement, I am certain a tremendous number of Ontarians whose interests are represented by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance would prefer you mark this anniversary by living up to your promise.

1410

YEAR OF THE WAR BRIDE

Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington): On behalf of my leader, John Tory, and our caucus, I want to join all members in recognizing this, the Year of the War Bride.

I can attest, as I've said on many occasions, as the son of a veteran in a family who sent seven members of their family overseas, and one of my uncles came back with a war bride. She happened to be from Germany, so he actually married a German war bride. When I was very young, we had a very distinct appreciation. On a personal note, I'm sort of glad, because I'm very fond of my mother, that my dad didn't come home with a war bride and went on—

Interjections.

Mr. Jackson: She would have been my mother, I know, but I doubt we were going to find someone overseas willing to bring 11 children into the family, which is my mother's legacy.

I also want to mention to members that there is a gravesite at Mount Hope airport, and that gravesite has the grave markers of about a dozen or so British airmen who came to Canada, who trained here and taught Canadian airmen. I want to remember a George Cross medal winner from Burlington, Les Preston, who married a Canadian girl. She convinced him to leave England and come here after the war. So there was a certain reciprocity there that also contributed to the rich fabric of our nation.

I remember my Scout master, who served in the later stages of the First World War and the early stages of the Second World War, brought his war bride back from Holland. For the life of me, I could never understand her when she was speaking to us, but we loved her nonetheless.

Finally, I just want to say thank you for the contribution you made. These incredible women understood the devastation that was going on in England and the horrors of occupation, and yet they never forgot with love and affection those men who came to liberate them and save their lives. We're glad they came.

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I want to speak in response to the government House leader and to thank him for proclaiming this, the Year of the War Bride. I want him to know that if he hadn't done that today, I had the private member's bill all ready to go.

I want to respond also for another reason. My grandmother was a war bride of the first war. I'm not sure the

experience was the same, but my grandfather was in the Canadian army. At the end of the first war, there was no provision made for war brides to come to Canada. My grandfather came home and worked for three years to get enough money to pay for my grandmother to come from England. When she arrived in Montreal, she took the train to Regina, Saskatchewan. When she got off the train on December 2, it was 30 degrees below zero. She said that was the one time she really wondered if she was doing the right thing.

There is so much wonderful history, and that is why I think it's so important to recognize this, the Year of the War Bride. We need to remember that war brides did not come home with their husbands. Their husbands came home as part of the military on troop transports. Wives and their children came separately. I've talked with many war brides from my own communities, who say that not knowing where you're going, not knowing who's going to be there to meet you, not knowing how many are going to be there to meet you, is really quite an experience, and the experience of stopping at a train station somewhere in rural Ontario or rural Nova Scotia where you get off the train in the middle of the night, not knowing where you are and knowing very little about what's happening is, again, quite an experience.

The fact is that young women from England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Holland, Belgium, France, Italy and Germany all had that experience. As the House leader said, coming to Canada, not speaking the language and not knowing much about the traditions or anything like that, must have been an incredible experience at the time.

I know from my experience in my own riding that when you go into a Royal Canadian Legion in most communities across Ontario, what you will often see as the heart and soul of the Legion will be war brides, who continue to work in the auxiliary or continue to work in the Legion to maintain something that is so important for our communities but also so important in terms of the lives and the contributions that these women have made.

I want to thank the government House leader for the announcement. But I also want to say to all of those women who are here today, on behalf of Ontarians, thank you for your courage. Thank you for what you did under what must have been very exceptional circumstances. Thank you.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): In response to Madame Meilleur, here's how committed the Liberals are to making Ontario accessible: They're not going to make Ontario accessible to people with disabilities in five years, not 10 years, not 15 years, but 20. That's a long road to walk and that's a long road map that people with disabilities are going to have to follow. I've attacked this government for not dealing with this in an appropriate and timely manner.

David Lepofsky, in attacking Bill 107, speaks to this commitment to people with disabilities. He says:

“Bill 107 takes away important rights the Human Rights Code has guaranteed for decades, like the right to public investigation of human rights cases, the right to public prosecution where evidence warrants, the right to fair procedures at the Human Rights Tribunal, the right to an appeal to court from the tribunal, and freedom from tribunal user fees....

“We are frankly staggered that the government has turned such a cold shoulder on the major players in the disability community that it partnered with so well when it developed its new disability act....

“A small group, mainly some lawyers, has had the inside track with the government over the past months, well before this government plan was announced. We’ve only gotten lip service.”

That is a shame to people with disabilities.

DEFERRED VOTES

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2006

LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À LA GESTION DES SITUATIONS D'URGENCE

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

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): We have a deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 56. Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1418 to 1423.

The Speaker: Mr. Kwinter has moved third reading of Bill 56, An Act to amend the Emergency Management Act, the Employment Standards Act, 2000 and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Fonseca, Peter	Parsons, Ernie
Arthurs, Wayne	Gerretsen, John	Patten, Richard
Balkissoon, Bas	Gravelle, Michael	Peters, Steve
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Peterson, Tim
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Bentley, Christopher	Hudak, Tim	Racco, Mario G.
Bountrogianni, Marie	Jackson, Cameron	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramsay, David
Broten, Laurel C.	Kular, Kuldip	Rinaldi, Lou
Brownell, Jim	Kwinter, Monte	Runciman, Robert W.
Bryant, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Cansfield, Donna H.	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Caplan, David	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	MacLeod, Lisa	Smitherman, George
Chudleigh, Ted	Marsales, Judy	Sorbara, Gregory S.

Colle, Mike	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sterling, Norman W.
Cordiano, Joseph	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Craitor, Kim	Mauro, Bill	Tascona, Joseph N.
Crozier, Bruce	McGuinty, Dalton	Tory, John
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Van Bommel, Maria
Di Cocco, Caroline	McNeely, Phil	Watson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Duncan, Dwight	Mitchell, Carol	Wong, Tony C.
Dunlop, Garfield	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Elliott, Christine	O'Toole, John	Yakubuski, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Hampton, Howard	Kormos, Peter	Martel, Shelley
Horwath, Andrea	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 81; the nays are 6.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

VISITORS

Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I rise to recognize the mother of page Meagan Blandizzi. Her mum, Anna Blandizzi, is in the east gallery, and she is from the wonderful riding of Scarborough East. Welcome.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. One of the most important promises you made during the course of the 2000 election campaign—important in the context of its fundamental role in the secure supply of electricity for Ontario—was the promise to close all the coal-fired generating plants by 2007. Could you share with us what analysis you requested and what analysis was presented to you when you made that promise? It had no asterisk, no qualification at all; it was just to close the plants by 2007. What analysis was shared with you at that time before you made that important promise that had so much to do with electricity supply and our economy?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I am very proud that earlier today our Minister of Energy, Dwight Duncan, announced our balanced, responsible plan, which will ensure that Ontario's electricity needs will be met right through to 2025. Again I say, it is both balanced and responsible. It takes into account our immediate needs and our longer-term needs. It takes us beyond the 2007

election, beyond the 2011 election. It takes us far beyond that to ensure we are in fact making decisions today that will enable us to bring sufficient capacity online to meet our needs on an ongoing basis right through until 2025.

Mr. Tory: What's really unfortunate is that the Premier did not think about having a balanced and responsible approach to this issue when he was campaigning in 2003 and made at that time a promise he knew was irresponsible then. It's a promise that has been broken. It has been re-broken, and now, of course, it has been absolutely shattered. You promised in 2003 that the coal plants would be shut down by 2007, come hell or high water. When we asked you over and over again, you kept promising that those plants would be shut down. You denied that the promise was irresponsible and politically motivated, and you ridiculed anyone who suggested otherwise. Your Minister of Energy became very fond of suggesting to anyone who said we might need the coal plants for a while that they were cavemen. Now we know on which side of the House Barney Rubble and Fred Flintstone really sit.

Since you didn't answer it the first time, can you tell us: Did you do any analysis at all before you made the promise, or did you just decide you were going to try and bamboozle the voters by having them believe you would close them down—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The question—order. Premier.

1430

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I offer my kudos to the Leader of the Opposition's writers. Well done.

I can tell you we remain very sincere in our determination to replace coal-fired generation at the earliest possible opportunity. To give you some sense of how difficult it is to assess these kinds of things, the Independent Electricity System Operator, which is a panel of experts well-qualified in these matters, recently revised their estimates with respect to ongoing demand and capacity. We of course took that into consideration.

I made it clear from the outset that we will not do anything at any time that in any way, shape or form would compromise reliability. We have the plan now in place. It may not be the plan we originally sought out to put in place but we are convinced that it is responsible, it is balanced and it will get the job done, incorporating all those values that Ontarians would like us to bring into their plan.

Mr. Tory: I'm sure that sincerity we're bringing here today is the same sincerity you meant to apply to your promise in 2003 to close the plants by 2007. And the fact that you would come in here today and essentially hang these IESO people out to dry when they and you just figured out that hot weather happens in the summer to me is absolutely incredible.

The truth is that this promise of yours has been broken and re-broken, and now you've extended it at least five years from the 2007 date that you picked and that you promised to the people of Ontario in the election campaign. When we asked you to change your promise, you

ridiculed us. When we asked you to talk about installing scrubbers, you ridiculed that.

As the leader of the NDP said yesterday, when trust in politicians is already at a low ebb, it's at a low ebb because of the cynical promise-breaking you engaged in. Will you now get up and at least have the decency to apologize to the people of Ontario for bamboozling them in this way in the 2003 election, misleading them and making promises you knew—

The Speaker: Premier?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I want to tell Ontarians, because I know they would be very interested in this plan—so they get a better sense of what in fact we are doing by way of this plan.

First of all, with respect to gas and cogeneration, at present there are 5,000 megawatts of capacity: We are going to virtually double that. With respect to our renewables, there are about 7,800 megawatts now: We're going to double that by 2025. With respect to conservation, presently we have 675 megawatts: We're going to increase that to 6,300 megawatts. It's also important to note that when it comes to electricity derived from our nuclear generators, we're in fact going to hold the line at the existing 14,000 megawatt capacity.

We believe we've brought forward a balanced, responsible plan that takes into account the values of the people of Ontario; in particular their desire to have more energy for renewables, their desire to conserve more and to make sure that we have a sufficient supply of new capacity in place.

The Speaker: New question, the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Tory: It is to the Premier. After promising to come forward with something that even resembled a plan, 60 days after you got the OPA report, you've now had 186 days to come forward with what you call this plan today. So let's talk about one of the things you just mentioned.

You're the man who's been talking about brownouts and blackouts, and what we really have from you today is a commitment with no details on conservation. We have a commitment that is not certain on nuclear, and we won't even see any of the nuclear power for 10 or 12 years.

You've talked about taking conservation from 600 megawatts to 6,000 megawatts. Provide us, if you would, with the details as to how that's going to happen. Give us the details.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy): Already this government has brought on \$1.5 billion in new conservation investment. Already this government has brought onto line 1,300 megawatts of new, non-hydro renewable power. We provided the answer to the leader's colleague Mr. Yakabuski in written form. That party did nothing on renewables—nothing. That party, in spite of a 8% increase in demand for electricity, saw installed capacity decrease. That is not an acceptable way to do business in this province.

We are bringing on a supply of new, cleaner, greener electricity that will ensure affordability and reliability going into the future so that Ontario will remain competitive and so that our economy can continue to grow at the record pace it's been growing under the McGuinty government in the last two to three years.

Mr. Tory: I'm sure the members will note: not a single detail on conservation. A big claim from the Premier: We're going from 600 to 6,000 megawatts on conservation. Not one detail could you just offer now as to how you're going to do that. Do you know why? Because you don't have any. You don't have any details whatsoever.

You and the Premier have repeatedly ridiculed those who suggested you look at technology that could help clean up the air coming out of the coal plants because you said there wasn't any such technology. Today you suggested that the OPA, in another one of your PR smokescreen manoeuvres, should examine—you've asked them to examine that technology and give you the pros and cons. I'd like to know whether you've changed your mind and now there actually is technology for them to examine; and if that's so, then admit you were wrong before; or, why have you wasted two and a half years asking them to examine that technology when people could have been breathing easier by now if you'd done this two and a half years ago, when you should have?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: Let me tell you what the member opposite said on April 25. The member opposite said that the elimination of coal-fired plants is a good idea. The next day he said, "I don't know how you could rule coal in or out."

Let me give you some facts and figures. Under Mr. Tory's party, under the Tory party, emissions related to coal-fired generation: SO₂ increased 51%. Under the Liberals, it has decreased by 28%. Under Mr. Tory and the Tory party, NO_x emissions, the NOs, up 25%; under the Liberals, down 34%. That party is opposed to Kyoto; we support Kyoto. Under the Tories, a 56% increase in CO₂ emissions; under the Liberals, a 15% decrease.

We remain committed to eliminating coal-fired generation in a practical fashion from our mix, and we will achieve that goal in a timely fashion—

The Speaker: Thank you. Sit down.
Final supplementary?

Mr. Tory: The fact is, they won't be around to achieve whatever is achieved. That's because, on taxes—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. We'll just wait. The Minister of Education.

Mr. Tory: My question, again, to the Premier: There was one other important detail, I believe, that was missing from your announcement today. Will the Premier confirm that, two and a half years later and \$30 million worth of expenditure later, you in fact have decided to cancel the conversion of the Thunder Bay generating station from coal to gas? My question is, why would you not have shared that detail with the public today? And who's going to pick up the tab? I'm assuming it's going

to be the hard-pressed hydro ratepayers who will pick up the tab for the \$30 million expended to date on that project which you've cancelled and not told the people about.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: It's very clear: We've referred the coal shutdown plan to the Ontario Power Authority for review and recommendation. One other thing I can tell the member opposite is that the amount of electricity created by coal-fired generation in this province is down 17% since this government took office. What I can tell you is that we are doubling renewable capacity in Ontario as we move forward, something that member and his party opposed and have voted against.

This is a balanced, responsible plan to achieve cleaner, greener, more secure, more cost-effective, affordable power going forward in Ontario. This plan will serve the residents of this province well today and into the future, and we stand behind it.

1440

The Speaker: New question. The leader of the third party.

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): Speaker, a question for the Premier. Today will go down as the day that Dalton McGuinty hit the nuclear button: \$40 billion for expensive, unreliable and environmentally risky nuclear plants; \$4 out of every \$5 of your electricity scheme for nuclear plants, not counting cost overruns.

My question is this: Why throw another \$40 billion into your nuclear mega scheme without even trying energy efficiency and energy conservation?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: It cannot be that the leader of the NDP paid any attention to the actual contents of the plan we released today, because that bears no passing resemblance to the plan we released earlier today. The plan, in fact, has a very aggressive conservation component; it has a very aggressive renewables target. Beyond that—and this is where there's a real separation in terms between our perspective on this and the leader of the NDP's—we still feel we're going to have to build more new generation in Ontario. He feels that we can get away without building any new generation whatsoever between now and 2025. So people clearly understand we're talking about—

Interjection.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Yes, there's going to be more new nuclear, but in fact we're simply holding the line. There are 14,000 megawatts at present capacity. We're talking about ensuring that by 2025 there is also 14,000 megawatts of capacity. We're holding the line on nuclear in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Hampton: Premier, you're now almost through your third year of government, and people across Ontario still don't see a conservation plan or an energy efficiency plan from your government. What they do see when they read what you released today is that you're going to sink \$4 out of every \$5 into more nuclear. But nuclear has an expensive history in Ontario: cost overrun after cost overrun after cost overrun has racked up billions of dollars of debt on the hydro bill. You give vague

promises about doing something about that, but the fact of the matter is that people pay for that hydro debt every day.

How do you justify another \$40 billion for expensive, unreliable and environmentally risky nuclear plants when working families in Ontario are still paying on their hydro bills for the debt of the first generation of nuclear plants?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: Let me begin by reminding the member that the plan today will see Ontario's nuclear capacity decrease from 40% to 30%. That's a 25% decrease. Let me remind the member that in terms of power produced, it will decrease from 50% to 40%. That's a 20% reduction. Let me remind the member opposite that there's one government in the history of Ontario that has brought a nuclear project in on time and on budget. That was the Dalton McGuinty Liberal government. And there's one government that has actually paid down the nuclear stranded debt. That's the Dalton McGuinty Liberal government. The member opposite will remember we paid down \$1.1 billion of that debt last year: the first time that has happened.

This is a balanced, responsible plan that will ensure clean, green, affordable, secure, safe power for this province now and well into the future.

Mr. Hampton: Well, it could only be for Dalton McGuinty that when \$4 out of every \$5 is going for nuclear, he would call that balanced and he would call that green. Here's what people are saying about Dalton McGuinty's nuclear mega scheme: "Nukes are anything but solid"—Tom Adams, Energy Probe; "A huge betrayal"—Jack Gibbons, the Ontario Clean Air Alliance; "Nuclear power has far too many costs to justify investing our future in it.... The cheapest, most effective way to start building our system is to invest in maximizing energy efficiency"—Dr. David Suzuki.

Premier, you're fond of inviting Mr. Suzuki to your photo ops. Why don't you listen to David Suzuki and say no to nukes and say yes to positive, practical plans for renewables, energy efficiency and conservation? Why don't you listen to Dr. Suzuki rather than simply—

The Speaker: The question has been asked.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: Let me quote to the leader of the NDP what Patrick Moore, the co-founder of Greenpeace, said today, "Nuclear energy is clean, safe, cost-effective and reliable—non-greenhouse-gas-emitting power source that can effectively replace fossil fuels while helping to alleviate the massive shortfall of 24,000 megawatts in Ontario's energy supply expected by 2025."

The member opposite is in wonderland. His numbers are just picked right out of the air. He said, "What did we do on conservation?" Let me remind him. We have now given directives worth \$1.5 billion. Those programs are coming on stream. Deep lake water cooling is expanding in Ontario—25 innovative programs.

What did he do? Let's go through it. R2000 homes, homes built to federal R2000 energy efficiency standards: project cancelled. Power saver month under the

old Ontario Hydro: project cancelled. There's a list of 10 more I'd be happy to go over with him in the supplementary.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister. New question.

Mr. Hampton: To the Premier: It's interesting how far the government will go to try to find somebody to endorse their nuclear plan. But what is really disappointing here, as I said earlier, is it's three years into the McGuinty government and there still is no real plan for energy efficiency and conservation. California invests 30 times what the McGuinty government invests in energy conservation. Manitoba invests 33 times what the McGuinty government invests in energy efficiency and conservation. What we saw today was the McGuinty government picking more numbers out of the air for energy conservation and efficiency. The last time Dalton McGuinty did that, it was something called the coal promise, which he broke again and again.

My question to the Premier is this: Why should hydro consumers in Ontario trust your numbers and promises today when you so easily and repeatedly broke your coal promise?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The minister.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: Let me just review the record on conservation with the member opposite. Power saver month, which encouraged customers to purchase energy-efficient products at local retailers with reduced prices: project cancelled. The refrigerator cashback program, which encouraged consumers to purchase new, energy-efficient refrigerators with a \$50 rebate: project cancelled. Street lighting, to encourage the upgrading of 300,000 inefficient Ontario street lights with cash rebates covering 25% of total conservation project costs: project cancelled.

This plan doubles what the OPA recommended on conservation. It doubles renewables. But most importantly, it ensures that the lights will stay on in Ontario. This government's plan will work. This government's plan is already working. I will stack this government's record up against yours on any of these issues any time. Our first priority—

The Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: More promises from the McGuinty government, and I'm reminded of that coal promise. Premier, you broke your coal promise, not once but twice. Now, when I read the fine print today, you've washed your hands completely of the coal promise. You're now saying it's the Ontario Power Authority's responsibility to keep your promise, not yours. Environmentalists like Jack Gibbons say that makes you no better than Ernie Eves. Premier, how can you justify down-loading responsibility for keeping your coal promise, when you said you were the one who was going to close coal plants, come hell or high water?

1450

Hon. Mr. Duncan: I just happen to have with me publicpower: Practical Solutions for Ontario, and let me read from that document, page 29: "Howard Hampton and the NDP have long demanded the closure of

Ontario's dirty coal-burning generating stations. But converting them to cleaner gas by our target date of 2007 is only part of the solution."

What did he say a year later? "I was asked this question during the campaign. I said, you can't do it in three years." So he said one thing then, another thing again.

He was up north not long ago and said, "Keep the coal plants open," and then came down south and said, "Close the coal plants."

There's one party that's committed to reducing the pollution, to reducing the emissions related to coal-fired generation. There's one party that has a record of achievement in that. It's the Liberal Party in this Legislature under the leadership of Premier McGuinty.

Emissions are down. We will continue to move towards the elimination of coal-fired generation in Ontario in a practical, responsible fashion.

Mr. Hampton: I say again that today we've seen Premier McGuinty break the coal promise not once, but twice, and now it's not even his responsibility. It has been handed off to another organization. Today is also the day that we actually see the fusion of the Liberal and Conservative energy policies. Dalton McGuinty has now come together, united in favour of expensive, unreliable, and environmentally risky nuclear power, and he's okay with coal, too. Premier, can you tell us this: When exactly did you adopt the Conservative electricity policy for your government?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: The one thing I can suggest is that neither opposition party has a plan for electricity, and we do. Let me remind the member opposite that coal—

The Speaker: I am having great difficulty hearing the Minister of Energy respond.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: Under his watch, pollution with coal went up; under ours, it went down. Under his watch, conservation was eliminated; under our watch, it's being increased by 10 times. Under his watch, Conawapa was cancelled, new renewables were not done, no wind power was brought on; under our watch, wind power is up, hydroelectric is up, new power is up, supply is more secure. Under his watch, prices went up and up and up, and under his lack of plan, he wants to quadruple prices yet again.

This is a responsible plan. It will double conservation, double renewables, reduce our reliance on nuclear and ensure greater security moving forward. It's a good plan for the future of Ontario.

The Speaker: New question, the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Tory: Mr. Speaker, I don't suppose I'm able to ask you a question as to which one is Fred and which one is Barney, but never mind. That's beside the point.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): I have a question for the Premier, and it concerns Caledonia. Premier, during the 105 days of the standoff in Caledonia, could you tell us how often or with what frequency you,

your ministers and members of your staff have been briefed by senior officials of the Ontario Provincial Police?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I want to take this opportunity to update the House with respect to some of the statements I made yesterday and the ensuing developments.

First of all, I want to acknowledge the work of the Six Nations leadership to remove barricades. I'm pleased to report that the Highway 6 bypass barricade is down. The MTO is assessing the road together with the OPP, and I understand that it will be open as soon as possible. I also understand that the railway blockade is in the process of being removed.

I think we've taken some major steps forward. It will go a long way to allow the communities to get their social and economic life back to normal. Given this progress, I see no reason right now why talks will not continue this Thursday as scheduled.

Mr. Tory: That was absolutely unresponsive to the question I asked, and I would note, since the Premier decided to give us an update, that it took them one year to do anything about this and it took 105 days for him to come out of his office and finally speak up on this matter at all.

Yesterday, the Premier assured this House that no one in his government had given any instruction to anyone in the OPP at Caledonia. I want to just make absolutely sure about this and make sure that you are too, and I'm assuming that, in answering yesterday and today, you will have made all reasonable inquiries in that regard. Will you assure the House that no one in the government—no elected official, no minister, no elected member of Parliament, no staff member in your office, no public servant—has at any time advised the OPP as to what they should do or what they should not do at Caledonia with respect to their handling of any aspect of that matter? Can you confirm that?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: To confirm, we believe on this side of the House that the police are independent, and we have and will continue to respect that.

Let me say as well that we have also been advised that the Six Nations police and the OPP are co-operating in the investigation of Friday's incidents. Beyond that, given that that co-operation exists, given that these barricades are coming down, given that talks will in fact be proceeding should nothing untoward happen between now and Thursday, what we're now saying beyond that as well is that we're going to proceed as quickly as we can to deal with the issue of fair compensation for the developers. We think that this is a matter over which they had no influence. We'll work as hard as we can to resolve the issue of compensation for the developers, and we'll do that as quickly as we can.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth): My question is for the Premier. Premier, during the last election

campaign, New Democrats raised questions about your plans for nuclear power. In response, your staff e-mailed the following to me and other environmentalists: “NDP research lied when they sent out an e-mail on the weekend stating that Dalton McGuinty has announced that his government will build more nuclear power plants in Ontario....

“A new nuclear plant is not in our plan.”

Today, with the benefit of hindsight, do you still believe that people who claimed you planned to build nuclear power plants were lying?

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy): I will remind the member opposite that in Ontario today, we have 14,000 megawatts of installed nuclear capacity. In 2025, we will have 14,000 megawatts of installed nuclear capacity. What we announced today is that we will likely have to build two new reactors—reactors, Mr. Speaker—on an existing site. What we also did today, unlike that member and the members opposite in the NDP, we’re ensuring that we have a reliable, safe, secure, cleaner, greener supply of energy today and into the future. We’re making the decisions that previous governments refused to make in order to protect this great province and ensure that we’ll have enough electricity to power our homes, businesses and farms well into the future.

Mr. Tabuns: Three years ago, when the Premier asked the people of Ontario to make him Premier, he said he had a plan for the province. He said he could increase spending without increasing taxes. He said coal plants would be gone by 2007, “come hell or high water.” And when people suspected that you planned to build new nuclear plants, they were called liars. How can you expect to have any credibility on the energy issue or any other issue when you come forward with the kind of plan you’ve come forward with today?

1500

Hon. Mr. Duncan: The lights will stay on. We have a cleaner, greener balance of power. We will double renewables. We will double conservation. Unlike that member and his party, we won’t cancel conservation programs.

Interjections.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: Plus ça change, plus ça change. Here’s what the NDP energy minister said about nuclear power—it’s kind of the Howie in wonderland story we’re hearing today. Here’s what she said: “I would not, however, rule out absolutely the possibility of building new nuclear stations, although we do hope that will not be necessary.” That party sat in office when Darlington came online in spite of the fact they said it would close down. We have a responsible plan for a balanced supply mix that sees no increase in our reliance on nuclear power and in fact decreases the amount of installed nuclear capacity and decreases the amount of nuclear power we need moving forward.

FAIR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONS

Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh): My question is to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Constituents of mine have watched and responded positively to your ministry’s plan to break down barriers for skilled newcomers. On June 2, along with the Honourable Gerry Phillips, you announced that the McGuinty government will be creating an internship program for skilled newcomers through the Ontario public service, and the following day you announced a loans program that will go a long way toward helping individuals defray the costs associated with exams and applications. Most significant, however, was last week’s introduction of Bill 124, the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, which, if passed, will be the first legislation of its kind in Ontario and in Canada. Minister, in addition to the internship and loans program, how will this groundbreaking legislation help to break down barriers for internationally trained professionals?

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I want to thank the member for Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh, whose idea it was to bring the war brides here. I thought that was a very inspirational initiative. Thank you for doing that.

Bill 124, as the member said, is the first attempt by any government in Canada to regulate not one or two but all 34 regulatory bodies in this province. Whether it is the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the architects or the engineers, they are all now going to have to comply for the first time, not voluntarily but by legislation, if the bill is passed. Their rules are going to have to be fair, transparent and timely. There will be supervision and there will be oversight by a fairness commissioner that will ensure that these bodies are fair in their application processes so that we don’t have delays where 13,000 people aren’t allowed to practise in this province.

Mr. Brownell: This is truly innovative legislation, and I hope that all members of the Legislature understand the importance of this bill.

Minister, as you know, thousands of newcomers come to Ontario every year, and many choose to settle in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh. Some of my constituents who have global expertise have advised me that the application process can be a daunting experience, to say the least. What does this legislation propose to do to help internationally trained professionals navigate the system?

Hon. Mr. Colle: Right now the 13,000 highly trained individuals who come to the province every year have nowhere to go to in terms of how to get help to navigate the system. This bill, if passed, establishes an access centre in the government that will help them navigate the complexity of these 34 regulated professions. They’re going to have help, they’re going to have clear rules for the first time and they’re going to have removal of delays. They’re also going to have a fairness commissioner to ensure compliance. Thirty-four regulatory bodies will now have to adhere to these rules that give

these trained individuals a fair chance. This is aggressive legislation, but it's long overdue and it's about time that we made these changes to improve not only the plight of foreign-trained individuals; this is good for all Ontarians. Our economy needs them; our society needs them. Let's support this bill to give them a fair chance.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, earlier today you refused to answer or even acknowledge the question of the Leader of the Opposition when it came to the cancellation of the contracts involved in converting the Thunder Bay thermal station to natural gas from coal. The people of Ontario and the people of Thunder Bay have a right to know. You people change policy as quickly as the weather forecast changes in Ontario.

Minister, what are your plans for the generating station at Thunder Bay? Come clean with us, please.

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy): As indicated this morning in the press releases, in the background documents and in my statement, the plants will stay open until the power authority reports back for a closure plan.

I will also remind the member that we have invested in the last provincial budget; we're creating an energy research station in Atikokan. The member opposite may not be aware of this, but there is a lot of room for expansion there.

With respect to Thunder Bay and the conversion to gas, once we have a report back from the OPA, those final determinations will be made.

Mr. Yakabuski: Again, you're not even confirming that you've cancelled the contracts. How can you expect people in this province to have any confidence when you sign contracts and you cancel them? Your credibility on this issue went tumbling down just like the four sisters yesterday. You have no credibility on this issue.

I'll ask you one more time. The people of Thunder Bay, to whom you said you were converting that coal plant to natural gas, have a right to know what the future is for them. There are hundreds of jobs involved here, and peripheral jobs surrounding the power plant as well. Power is required. What is your plan for the generating station in Thunder Bay, Minister? Please tell us. There are people up north who are very worried because your plans on this issue seem to change from day to day.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: First of all, there are about 90 full-time jobs at that plant. The plant will stay open. It will fire on coal until such time as the power authority reports back to us on the most practical way of removing the emissions from that.

I'll remind the member opposite that we expect the power authority to report back, probably by January 2007.

NUCLEAR WASTE

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): My question is to the Premier. Premier, with your announcement you're making today of expanding the nuclear capacity of Ontario, we already know that we have about 30,000 tonnes of nuclear waste that we're trying to find a disposal place for. And now we know, with new production coming on line, we're going to have even more nuclear waste. So my question to you is a very simple one. People of northern Ontario don't want any nuclear waste buried in their backyard. Are you prepared today in this House to commit that that nuclear waste will not be disposed of in northern Ontario in some deep abandoned mine?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): Speaker, to the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy): I remind the member opposite that the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act required the Nuclear Waste Management Organization to examine three options or methods for the long-term management of used nuclear fuel waste: deep geological disposal, storage at nuclear reactor sites, and centralized storage either above or below ground. It's my understanding that each option was found to have distinct advantages but none perfectly met all the objectives citizens said were important. This led the Nuclear Waste Management Organization to develop a fourth approach, an adaptive phased management that builds on the strengths of the others. The NWMO recommendation has been formulated after extensive public consultations and input from Canadians across the country, including First Nations, Metis and Inuit.

The decision on the NWMO's recommendation lies with the federal government. I remind the member of that. The federal government is expected to announce its decision in July 2006.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): The question is to the Premier. Yesterday, your Minister of the Environment refused to guarantee that Hamilton will be protected from Toronto's sewage sludge. What about high-level radioactive waste?

Today, you absolutely—

Interjections.

The Speaker: All right.

Ms. Horwath: What about high-level radioactive waste? That is the question. Today, will you absolutely guarantee that the Hamilton and Niagara regions won't be forced to accept Ontario's radioactive nuclear waste?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: Let me repeat to the member opposite that her supplementary has nothing to do with the original question. Let me re-emphasize. The Nuclear Waste Management Organization, which is a federal body making determinations based on four available options, will report back in July 2006.

1510

I thought the Minister of the Environment gave an excellent response to that question yesterday—outstanding. Instead of bluster and nonsense and Howie in wonderland about fictitious issues, the Minister of the Environment has a plan. This government's environmental record is second to none. This government's energy record is second to none. We're going to ensure the lights stay on, the environment gets greener, and we're committed to making sure the people of Ontario have a reliable, safe, secure supply of electricity well into the future.

TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph–Wellington): My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, investment in our students and schools is extremely important to the academic development of our children. Under the previous government, funding for after-school activities was cut, class sizes were increased and teachers were not given sufficient funds for necessary classroom aids and teaching tools, which had a significant negative impact on students' learning experience. One of the keys to ensuring that students are getting the best possible education is to provide teachers with time during the school year to upgrade their skills. The previous government, unfortunately, did not seem to understand this.

Minister, can you tell me what our government is doing to ensure that our students are being taught by teachers who have the chance to continually improve themselves?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues): I'm very pleased to say that these last couple of weeks have been tremendous weeks for education. Everyone will recognize yesterday's announcement of \$600 million invested in our system for our kids, and we are thrilled.

Last week was a great week for education because what we recognized is that the key for our kids is professional development. Last Monday, we announced a \$23-million investment in professional development for our teachers that we'll be rolling out through summer institutes, which worked extremely well these last two summers, and we are very excited about that. Last week as well, we announced special professional development focused on special education, another key area for this government. Indeed, these last two weeks have probably been some of the best in education in a long time.

Mrs. Sandals: I know from my experience how important it is to deliver summer institutes and professional development in special education. Thank you very much.

I know your ministry has been working very hard to reverse the damage done by the previous government, which took away valuable learning and development time from teachers during the school year, ultimately taking away from our students. To further enrich the learning experience of our students and to ensure the continued

professional development of our teachers, it is necessary to provide teachers with opportunities to learn new techniques, develop relationships with veteran teachers and gain greater confidence in their abilities.

Minister, what are you doing to provide access to these things for our teachers in order to contribute to the continued success of our students?

Hon. Ms. Pupatello: I'm very pleased to say that the teachers are indeed developing, and they are doing so in a number of areas that will benefit children in the classroom. In the area of literacy and numeracy, I've talked repeatedly about what I call the rock star of education, and that is Avis Glaze, who is travelling far and wide across the province teaching those kinds of skills directly to people who are in the classroom.

During our professional development there is definitely a focus on literacy and numeracy. There's a huge focus on differentiated instruction, which means customization and individualization of teaching in the classrooms so every single student is getting what he or she needs. Because that is something that isn't new but it is definitely a focus, we know that our kids are, in fact, doing better. In fact, our test scores are showing that, so we're very impressed by the commitment that our teachers are making to their profession and we are pleased to support them with significant investment.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): I have a question for the Premier. Yesterday, and I'm quoting from Hansard with respect to the Caledonia situation, you said, "We are no longer prepared to continue negotiations until two important conditions are met: First ... the barricades"—plural—"must come down, and they must stay down; and secondly, we are asking the leadership to co-operate ... with the OPP so that they might apprehend the individuals involved."

Premier, we know that all the barricades are not down. Two, apparently, have been removed. We know that we're not getting co-operation from the leadership of the occupiers, and I would indicate that you stood in this House yesterday and laid down two very clear conditions. Today, you're backing away from them. What kind of signal does that send if you're prepared to throw them out the window the very next day?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I think it's really important that we bring the appropriate tone and demeanour and sense of civility in dealing with this issue.

First of all, I should let the honourable member opposite know that my office was informed today by the OPP that they are in fact receiving co-operation from the First Nation police service with respect to the apprehension of the individuals involved. I'm not going to second-guess that. I think that satisfies clearly from my perspective the condition that I imposed yesterday.

Secondly, the barricades are, if not down, certainly coming down. Again, the Highway 6 bypass, I've just

been advised, is now open to traffic. I understand that the railway blockade is in the process of being removed. I think there has been a demonstration of good faith on the part of the First Nation leadership. I think it's time for us to get back to the table and finish this job.

Mr. Runciman: The Premier didn't qualify his conditions yesterday. Today, he's qualifying his conditions.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Order. The member for Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Runciman: Premier, a press release from the Six Nations Confederacy, supported by Chief Allen MacNaughton today in a radio broadcast, indicates they are now hiding the people named in the OPP's seven arrest warrants. The release also indicates that these charges, through treaty rights, do not fall under crown jurisdiction. In other words, the OPP has no authority to arrest. They're kicking sand in your face. Premier, can you indicate how your government plans to react to this in-your-face effort to obstruct justice and how it will impact future negotiations?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Again, I think it's really important, as we engage in these kinds of difficult, potentially explosive situations, that we bring a certain element of calm as we deal with these things. The members opposite seem to be very unhappy with the recent turn of events. Barricades are coming down. We received word from the OPP that they are receiving co-operation from the First Nations police, but the member opposite is obviously not satisfied with that. I don't know what he's looking for, but what we are looking for is to continue the successful conclusion of these negotiations so that everybody connected with this can get on with their lives in as peaceful a manner as possible.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–Baie James): Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé, s'il pouvait prendre l'écouteur.

Monsieur le ministre, vous savez que depuis les dernières années, votre ministère est en train de préparer les communautés pour être capables de s'organiser quand ça vient à la pandémie de la grippe aviaire. Vous savez que les unités sanitaires ont beaucoup de responsabilités pour s'assurer que les municipalités, les agences provinciales, les conseils scolaires et les autres sont organisés pour être capables de répondre à ce qui pourrait être une situation très sérieuse.

Là, on voit que les unités sanitaires n'ont pas eu les documents en français pour que les autres soient capables de travailler avec leurs partenaires dans les communautés. Par exemple, dans ma communauté la Porcupine Health Unit, qui a besoin de travailler avec des conseils scolaires et avec les municipalités qui sont des organisations françaises où eux autres travaillent en français, on ne peut pas avoir du ministère de la Santé l'infor-

mation en français. Ce qui est pire est que les unités sanitaires refusent de faire la traduction, de donner l'information en français pour ces agences. Allez-vous faire quelque chose pour être capable d'assurer que les agences des communautés francophones sont capables d'avoir ces services en français?

1520

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I appreciate the question from the honourable member. I will seek to work with him to determine which documents he's referring to. I do know that, in some cases, the documents that have been prepared by the emergency management unit of the ministry have been translated into 24 languages for broadly spread dissemination amongst a wide variety of populations. I'd need to know better from the honourable member which documents he's specifically referring to that have not so far been translated into French, and to work with him to ensure that all documents are provided to health units that are working alongside our francophone population. So I undertake to work with the honourable member to provide those in a timely way.

M. Bisson: Ça adonne bien, monsieur le ministre, parce qu'on a avec nous aujourd'hui Denis Bélanger, le président du Conseil scolaire catholique de district des Grandes Rivières de langue française de notre région. Lui représente l'une des organisations responsables de travailler avec l'unité sanitaire pour assurer que son conseil est capable, s'il y avait une pandémie, de répondre et pour que notre staff sache quoi faire et soit organisé selon les normes provinciales.

On vous demande encore si vous êtes capable de nous rencontrer pour une couple de minutes après la période des questions et on va vous donner ces informations et s'assurer que les unités sanitaires vont donner ces matériaux en français aux organisations qui en ont besoin.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: I appreciate the offer of a meeting today, but it's my estimates day. That's not going to be possible today. I'm happy to ensure that you provide us with that. Obviously, pandemic kits, which we've sent to 15,000 different health care providers in the province, most certainly have been provided in both of Ontario's official languages, as I've mentioned earlier, because we obviously think it's necessary that we equip everyone with the best possible information on how to respond in circumstances that might arise, that we do work to provide those not just in English and French but, indeed, in a broader array of languages. As I mentioned, so far some documents have been translated and made available on our website in 24 different languages, and we're going to continue on that path.

In keeping with that principle, I believe I can tell the honourable member that we will work with him to ensure that all the documents that he's referring to are provided in French in a timely way. We'll make sure that someone is available to meet with the individual to find out which ones to date have not been provided in that fashion. I appreciate it.

ONTARIO SPCA

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce): My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Ensuring that adequate measures are in place to protect our animals has become an increasingly relevant issue. The OSPCA is the organization that is responsible for enforcement of the OSPCA Act and regulations. In order for this organization to remain an effective and practical body, it is necessary to ensure that proper funding and government support are in place.

Minister, there have been a number of Ontarians who have expressed concerns about the future viability of this organization. How will you help to ensure the effectiveness and the long-term viability of the OSPCA?

Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services): I thank the member from Huron–Bruce for her question. The OSPCA is an independent charitable organization. They have responsibility for enforcing the provisions under the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. We provide them, as other governments have, with \$119,000 a year to train their officers in that particular enforcement.

A year ago last October, they came to me to say that they were having some difficulties because they had a mismatch in their bequests and their charitable organizations and they had financial pressures. They wanted to know whether we could help them out. After much deliberation and discussion, we provided them with \$1.8 million in one-time funding, and we also funded an audit of their organization, done by Grant Thornton LLP. That was a great breakthrough, because the previous government hadn't given them more than a third of that over the last five years.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you, Minister. The welfare of the animals was certainly not a priority under the previous Tory government, and funding for their protection was limited. It seems that the importance of the OSPCA has become more clearly defined under the current Liberal government due to the amount of funding and support we have provided.

Minister, we have read reports about the OSPCA board members resigning. Can you comment on the governance structure of the OSPCA? How is the government involved, if at all, with the governing of the OSPCA?

Hon. Mr. Kwinter: Because the organization is an independent charitable organization, we have no ability to interfere with their internal governance, but what we have done—not only did we provide the funding for their audit; we've also agreed that we will provide funding to the same organization that did the audit, Grant Thornton LLP, to take a look at their governance. One of the issues they have is that the central society has a bunch of affiliates—these are humane societies around the province—and there is a great deal of conflict at times between those various organizations. In order to get this organization on a proper basis, we have to take a look at

the governance. We've agreed to fund and finance that particular study, which is under way as we speak.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): To the Premier: Barricades have been up at the occupied site since February 28, and as of noon today those barricades are still up. Yesterday, you set two clear conditions for renewed talks: Deliver the suspects and take down the barricades. Premier, when will the barricades at Douglas Creek Estates be coming down?

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

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): I know that the member knows that what we have been talking about all along was to get the transportation barricades down, because that will bring the community back to normal. In our long-term table, the first item up is to talk about Douglas Creek. That is obviously their first order of business. That is scheduled for Thursday. Those discussions are going to proceed and Douglas Creek will be the first item of issue there.

Mr. Barrett: The news release refers to “all barricades.” Minister, nothing has changed in that subdivision next to the occupied site. Nothing has changed since February 28. People are stressed out. Fires, floodlights, noisy ATVs—people fear for their safety. They're concerned about the fights and the bloodshed they witness right in their neighbourhood. I get e-mails. “We no longer feel safe to sit in our backyard. Our children's lives are at risk.” Another one: “Masked men wearing camouflage.”

Minister, the barricades are still up at the occupied site. Your condition for renewed talks has not been met. Again, when will the barricades at Douglas Creek Estates be coming down? Or do we see a flip-flop here where talks will commence anyway on Thursday even though the barricades remain up?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: It was very clear yesterday. The agreement we've been trying to reach with Six Nations community officials has been that we need to return the community to normalcy. That means to have all the transportation corridors freely moving. That means the two highways—6a and 6—and we have that. We have the train officials now on the track making the final inspection for that, so the trains can start to move. We are discussing also the access to the hydro lines. So this is what we're concentrating on right now. We look forward to a resumption of talks on Thursday so that we can address the issue of Douglas Creek Estates.

LOBBYISTS

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): A lot of high-ranking Liberal insiders had their ship come in today with your government's announcement to build new nuclear reactors. The first one was Bob Lopinski.

Bob Lopinski, you will remember, was Dalton McGuinty's former director of issues management and legislative affairs. He took a job with Hill and Knowlton, lobbying on behalf of Bruce Power. The second one in 2005 was lured away by Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. They hired David MacNaughton, who was your former principal secretary and number 2 in command at the Premier's office until he went to Atomic Energy of Canada. My question is very simple: Will you join with us in calling for Liberal nuclear lobbyists to come forward with their billable hours, amount and level of contact with your government?

1530

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy): My understanding is that there's a lobbyist registration process in Ontario. Former staff members—I know that some of them are partners with people like Robyn Sears and Leslie Noble. That process, as I understand, has been seen. Also, my understanding is that when government staffers leave the employ of ministers or the public service, they have to go through certain processes as well. I believe those processes are fulsome and were voted on by this Legislature and agreed to by all parties concerned.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I'd just remind members that it's much easier—and as a matter of fact, it's the rule—to identify who it is we're asking a question to at the top. Thank you.

PETITIONS

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): It's my pleasure to present a petition on behalf of constituents in the riding of Durham, and it reads as follows:

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

"Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain"—

Interjections.

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

Member for Durham, we've just stopped the clock. We need to get a little quiet in here so I can hear you.

The member for Durham is trying to present a petition. I'm listening carefully and I'm having difficulty hearing him. Perhaps we could take the conversations outside.

Member for Durham.

Mr. O'Toole: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for that indulgence. I'll start again.

"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;

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

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

I'm pleased to support this on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham and present it to Juliet.

CHILD CUSTODY

Mr. Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls): My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the people of the province of Ontario deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and their grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relationships between the children and their grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and their grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child.

"Subsection 24(2.2) requires that a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant's willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child."

Whereas we support Bill 8 as introduced by MPP Kim Craiton;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents."

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

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton): I'm here to present a petition today to the Ontario Legislature from the Yitzhak Rabin High School in my community.

"Whereas the Ontario government already fully funds 93% of faith-based schools in Ontario, but the remaining 7% receive no funding, solely because they are not Catholic;

"Whereas the United Nations Human Rights Committee ruled in 1999 and again in 2005 that this arrangement is discriminatory and violates basic international human rights law that Ontario formally agreed to uphold;

"Whereas all three parties represented in the Legislature support Catholic separate school funding, as guaranteed by the Constitution of Canada, so that the only fair and viable solution to the discrimination"—

Interjections.

Ms. MacLeod: I can't believe they're heckling a high school in my riding—unbelievable.

"Whereas all three parties represented in the Legislature support Catholic separate school funding, as guaranteed by the Constitution of Canada, so that the only fair and viable solution to the discrimination is to extend funding to the small religious minorities that are currently excluded;

"Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that Ontario has the constitutional power to provide funding to non-Catholic faith-based schools;

"Whereas Ontario is the only Western democracy that fully funds faith-based schools of one religion to the total exclusion of all other religions, while all other provinces except the Atlantic provinces fund faith-based schools and have thriving public school systems;

"Whereas the cultural survival of the affected minority groups is at stake;

"Whereas faith-based schools produce responsible and productive citizens; and

"Whereas the Multi-Faith Coalition for Equal Funding of Religious Schools in December 2004 submitted to the Minister of Education a detailed proposal for the funding of non-Catholic faith-based schools in a manner that is fair and accountable and protects and enhances the public interest;

"We call on the Ontario Legislature to pass legislation to provide equitable funding in respect of all faith-based schools in Ontario, without religious discrimination and without any reduction in funding for public education, with accountability requirements and standards in place to ensure that the public interest is safeguarded."

Since the young students of Yitzhak Rabin High School took the time to do this, I'd like to affix my signature and present it to page Daniel.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): On behalf of my minister, the Honourable Laurel Broten, I have a

petition from her riding from the Labdara Lithuanian Nursing Home calling for an increase in long-term care.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): From my own riding, I have a petition in regard to increases in money for funding for section 8 drugs.

I give those to page Anni.

ONTARIO SPCA

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): This follows up just wonderfully on the question presented to the minister earlier today.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario SPCA, Lennox and Addington branch, is being forced due to budget constraints to close its doors; and

"Whereas the services provided by the Ontario SPCA, Lennox and Addington branch, to our community include animal cruelty investigations; 24-hour emergency rescue of injured animals; acceptance of abandoned animals; acceptance of owned animals where people can no longer care for their pets; adoption of animals; family violence assistance program, allowing women entering a shelter to temporarily house their pets with the Ontario SPCA; humane education to local schools and community groups; and

"Whereas none of these services are provided by any other agency in the county and the municipal dog pound is small and not able to take cats or other small animals; and

"Whereas investigation services will fall to the Ontario Provincial Police and they do not have the resources or training to fulfill this role and they are already overworked; and

"Whereas the Northumberland and Quinte humane societies are already facing financial challenges and will not be able to accept the additional animals;

"Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario act now to help prevent the closure of this facility and others across Ontario by ensuring that the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services immediately implements the recommendations made in the February 2005 report of Grant Thornton, which called for interim funding to facilitate the operations of the Ontario SPCA until a long-term strategy is developed for animal welfare in Ontario."

As part of tens of thousands of signatures, I'd like to add my name to this as well.

CREDIT UNIONS AND
CAISSES POPULAIRES

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is an urgent need to amend the Credit Union and Caisses Populaires Act, 1994; and

“Whereas the 2004 budget acknowledged that Ontario’s laws need to ensure an environment that enables credit unions to take advantage of strategies to strengthen their national presence and to take account of changes made by other jurisdictions; and

“Whereas the government committed in the 2004 budget to review the Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Act, 1994, with an intent to introduce amendments to this act and others as necessary by the end of fiscal 2005-06 or earlier, if needed; and

“Whereas Ontario’s credit union and caisses populaires system provides essential financial services and advice to approximately 1.6 million people in the province and operate in about 40 communities where they are the only financial institution; and

“Whereas insurance professionals are competing directly with credit unions and caisses populaires on wealth management and personal loans;

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

“That the government of Ontario immediately fulfill its budget commitment and amend the Credit Union and Caisses Populaires Act, 1994, to provide credit unions with:

(a) “A level playing field with other Canadian jurisdictions, such as British Columbia and Quebec, by allowing Ontario credit unions to enter into the business of selling insurance;

(b) “A level playing field with federally regulated financial institutions to allow credit unions and caisses populaires to own part or all of an insurance brokerage as a subsidiary;

(c) “A level playing field with the insurance industry by allowing fully licensed and accredited insurance retail professionals who are separate and distinct from other credit union staff to retail insurance on behalf of a credit union;” and

(d) “An amended act that provides the necessary flexibility and provides the credit union and caisses populaires system with the necessary tools to compete in the constantly changing financial services marketplace.”

I do so without editorial and hand it to Hartford, and these are from my constituency.

1540

ONTARIO SPCA

Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby–Ajax): A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the services provided by the Ontario SPCA, Lennox and Addington branch, is being forced due to budget constraints to close its doors; and

“Whereas the services provided by the Ontario SPCA, Lennox and Addington branch, to our community include animal cruelty investigations; 24-hour emergency rescue of injured animals; acceptance of abandoned animals; acceptance of owned animals, where people can no longer care for their pets; adoption of animals; family violence assistance program, allowing women entering a

shelter to temporarily house their pets with the Ontario SPCA; humane education to local schools and community groups; and

“Whereas none of these services are provided by any other agency in the county and the municipal dog pound is small and not able to accept cats or other small animals; and

“Whereas investigation services will fall to the Ontario Provincial Police and they do not have the resources or training to fulfill this role and they are already overworked; and

“Whereas the Northumberland and Quinte humane societies are also facing financial challenges and will not be able to accept the additional animals;

“Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario act now to help prevent the closure of this facility and others across Ontario by ensuring that the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services immediately implement the recommendations made in the February 2005 report of Grant Thornton, which called for interim funding to facilitate the operations of the Ontario SPCA until a long-term strategy is developed for animal welfare in Ontario.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature in support of this petition.

FAIR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONS

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the McGuinty government is committed to establishing measures that will ensure a fair and inclusive Ontario for newcomers; and

“Whereas these measures will ensure that the 34 regulatory professions in Ontario have admissions and application practices that are fair, transparent and clear; and

“Whereas these measures will include the establishment of a fairness commissioner, and an access centre for internationally trained individuals; and

“Whereas through providing a fair and equitable system, newcomers will be able to apply their global experience, which will not only be beneficial to their long-term career goals, but also to the Ontario economy as a whole;

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

“That all members of the House support the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, and work to ensure its prompt passage in the Ontario Legislature.”

A very worthwhile petition. I fully support it and I affix my signature, and I’ll ask page Nolan to carry it for me.

CAFETERIA FOOD GUIDELINES

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have a petition from the students and teachers of Bracebridge

and Muskoka Lakes Secondary School in support of a private member's bill proposed by Nupur Dogra. It reads,

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas childhood obesity rates have tripled over the past two decades in Canada; and

"Whereas the annual amount of money the health care system uses to mend preventable obesity-related illnesses is \$1.6 billion; and

"Whereas the Ontario food premises regulation only provides safety policies that must be followed by the Ontario school boards' cafeterias, but no defined regulations regarding the nutrition standard of the food being served at the cafeterias; and

"Whereas there is a need to encourage nutritious standards in high school cafeterias that support Canada's Guidelines for Healthy Eating; and

"Whereas the private member's bill proposed by Nupur Dogra under Making the Grade and her fellow students at Iroquois Ridge High School will require all Ontario school boards' cafeterias to adopt and abide [by] healthier eating standards (similar to Canada's Guidelines for Healthy Eating) that will govern the food choices;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the private member's bill that will amend the Ontario school boards' cafeteria food guidelines to follow healthier food standards in all Ontario high school cafeterias."

I support this petition.

FAIR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONS

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): It has to do with internationally trained professionals. It's addressed to the Parliament of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government recognizes the need to match internationally trained persons with professional work experience in their related fields; and

"Whereas the Ontario government is dedicated to making sure new Ontarians achieve long-term success in developing and sustaining their career goals; and

"Whereas the creation of 24 new bridge programs, bringing the total amount to 60 over the next three years, will help to make these goals a reality; and

"Whereas this funding of \$14 million over the next three years will assist more than 3,000 internationally trained" professionals "to increase their language skills, training and exam preparation;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That" the government of Ontario "support the new funding for further bridge training programs in order to create a more inclusive and successful environment for newcomers to the province."

Since I agree with this petition, I am delighted to sign it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MANDATORY BLOOD TESTING ACT, 2006

LOI DE 2006 SUR LE DÉPISTAGE OBLIGATOIRE PAR TEST SANGUIN

Mr. Kwinter moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 28, An Act to require the taking and analysing of blood samples to protect victims of crime, emergency service workers, good Samaritans and other persons and to make consequential amendments to the Health Care Consent Act, 1996 and the Health Protection and Promotion Act / Projet de loi 28, Loi exigeant le prélèvement et l'analyse d'échantillons de sang afin de protéger les victimes d'actes criminels, le personnel des services d'urgence, les bons samaritains et d'autres personnes et apportant des modifications corrélatives à la Loi de 1996 sur le consentement aux soins de santé et à la Loi sur la protection et la promotion de la santé.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I will turn to the minister for his leadoff speech.

Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services): Last November, I introduced Bill 28, the Mandatory Blood Testing Act. I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this Legislation—

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): We're going to do a quorum call.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: The minister has the floor. I would ask all members of the House to listen to his presentation.

Interjection.

Hon. Mr. Kwinter: I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this legislation again on second reading. I'll be sharing my time today with my parliamentary assistant for community safety, the member from Scarborough—Rouge River.

Bill 28 is about securing the health and safety and the peace of mind of those we rely on for our own protection. The McGuinty government is committed to safeguarding community safety personnel by ensuring they are protected while they protect the citizens of Ontario. Every effort must be made to support those who protect us as they go about their challenging tasks in communities all across Ontario.

The McGuinty government is on the side of families concerned about crime and safety. That concern is particularly pressing for the families of those whose job it is to provide our protection, for those who simply act as good Samaritans and for those who are victims of crime.

Every day across Ontario, thousands of men and women in a variety of occupations—police, paramedics, firefighters, for example—work to keep our communities safe. In the process, they face the risk of infection with

specific diseases—HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B or hepatitis C—through contact with members of the public.

Bill 28, the Mandatory Blood Testing Act, would help make Ontarians safer and provide greater peace of mind for those who may be exposed to the risk of infection through their work. This proposed legislation would give exposed individuals and their doctors more timely information to help them decide on the best way to reduce the risk of illness. If passed, this bill will help to protect our community safety workers as they put themselves at risk to help the people of Ontario. This bill would also apply to victims of crime.

1550

The current provisions for mandatory blood sampling date from 2003, when a private member's bill, Bill 105, came into effect. It amended the Health Protection and Promotion Act to help victims of crime and first-aid responders who may have been exposed to HIV/AIDS or hepatitis B or hepatitis C. Ontario was the first province to adopt such legislation.

Several other provinces have since introduced similar legislation. Nova Scotia's legislation, though not yet proclaimed, received royal assent on October 18, 2004. Saskatchewan proclaimed its legislation on October 17, 2005, and in Alberta, the legislation received royal assent on May 24, 2006.

So the need to create a mechanism for the mandatory testing of blood in the specific circumstances contemplated by this proposed legislation is now well established in Ontario as well as in other jurisdictions. It's an important community safety issue, and I'm sure all members of the House will appreciate it.

The issue, then, is how best to ensure that we respond to the need to reassure emergency workers and victims of crime about their risk of infection in a timely and efficient way while protecting the privacy of respondents. Bill 105 amended the Health Protection and Promotion Act to require the taking of blood samples to protect victims of crime, emergency service workers, good Samaritans and others. The amendment, section 22.1 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, allows the local medical officer of health to order a blood sample from someone who accidentally or deliberately exposes a front-line emergency services worker or a victim of crime to his or her bodily substances. The blood sample would be tested for HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B and hepatitis C. The Mandatory Blood Testing Act, 2006, would, if passed, replace section 22.1 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act with new community safety legislation for mandatory blood sampling.

The government views this proposed legislation as an important community safety issue. The mental stress and lifestyle changes experienced by a person who may have been exposed to infection while protecting us, or as a victim of crime, should not be underestimated. That person is often placed in a cruel limbo caused by the uncertainty of not knowing whether they have or may become infected. That limbo often means submitting to a

potent precautionary regimen with serious side effects to reduce the risk and severity of infection.

Mandatory blood testing is a means to reduce this anxiety and provide a measure of certainty and peace of mind for emergency service personnel and for victims of crime. It is no wonder, then, that the legislation has had the benefit of extensive input from stakeholders most likely to be affected by its provisions. Essentially, the existing legislative provisions prescribe that if a person who is the source of a possible infection does not voluntarily provide a blood sample, a medical officer of health can order the required sampling and testing.

After two years of experience with that legislation, we have heard from our partners about the challenges faced by those involved in the process. We've heard the concerns of the medical community, the policing community and the public safety community about the ways in which the existing legislation can remain more responsive to the needs of the stakeholders.

Medical officers of health have expressed serious reservations about having the responsibility to order persons to provide blood samples. They believe that this adjudicative function is inconsistent with their role as physicians. They believe that it would be better to move responsibility for ordering a person to provide a blood sample from the health system to an independent body.

We have responded. Decisions on whether to grant an application for mandatory blood sampling would, if the proposed legislation were passed, be made by the Consent and Capacity Board. Medical officers of health would continue to be responsible for screening applications, seeking voluntary samples and supervising the process after an order is issued, but they would be removed from the responsibility to act as adjudicators for the applications.

Stakeholders in the policing community have also presented their reaction to the existing legislation. They are concerned at the length of time it takes at present to complete the process of mandatory blood testing. The police also want to see the categories of persons who can apply for mandatory blood samples broadened to specifically include police officers and persons in certain high-risk occupations and environments. We've heard the concerns of the policing community that the process be simplified, that timelines be shortened, and that police be specifically designated in the eligibility criteria. The legislation I'm proposing would authorize the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to make regulations specifying eligible occupations.

We've also heard from community safety workers that they want, among other things, faster resolution of applications. If passed, the Mandatory Blood Testing Act would streamline the process and achieve faster decisions. The period for voluntary compliance would be reduced from seven days to two days. The current process has taken up to 69 days to complete. Should the proposed legislation be passed, this process will be reduced considerably. This means significant reductions in the time for processing these applications and a significant reduc-

tion in anxiety for our public safety workers. By streamlining the process for applications, as proposed in this bill, we would ensure applications are dealt with in an efficient, effective and timely manner for all concerned.

We are also keenly aware of the privacy issues for those responding to an order for a blood sample. To that end, the Mandatory Blood Testing Act, if passed, would restrict the use of any blood samples taken to the purposes set out in the legislation and its regulations. It would be an offence to use the samples for any other purpose. This proposed approach resolves many of the issues that concern our community safety workers, while at the same time respecting the interests of the applicant, respondent and health care workers.

The proposed Mandatory Blood Testing Act captures the intent and the spirit of the original legislation and seeks to respond to the concerns raised by our partners in community safety.

I'd like to take this opportunity to commend those individuals and groups—the Police Association of Ontario, the medical community, and the Information and Privacy Commissioner, among others—who have made us aware of their concerns and have made suggestions for improvement. Their input has been valuable in helping us craft this bill, and I'm pleased to recognize these efforts. This bill is the outcome of the productive working relationship between the McGuinty government and many stakeholders. It addresses the need of our emergency services personnel and victims of crime to find out quickly whether they risk infection from a blood-borne virus. At the same time, by strictly controlling the way in which blood samples can be used and handled, it would, if passed, provide protection for the privacy of the individuals' medical information.

This bill reflects our government's plan to strengthen our province by strengthening our most important competitive advantage: our people. If passed, the Mandatory Blood Testing Act, 2006, would resolve many of the issues that concern our community safety workers and give them the peace of mind to go about their work with greater confidence, and that means greater safety and security for all Ontarians.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon (Scarborough–Rouge River): I'm pleased to speak in support of Bill 28, the Mandatory Blood Testing Act, 2006. If passed, the bill will repeal the existing provisions on mandatory blood sampling in section 22.1 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act and replace them with stand-alone legislation that better meets the needs of our emergency workers.

I want to emphasize that the aims and objectives of Bill 28 are exactly the same as those of the legislation it proposes to replace. It differs from the existing legislation only in relation to the processes employed to achieve the same results. These process improvements arise out of the government's consideration of the reasonable concerns and recommendations of the stakeholders most affected by or involved with the application of the provisions of the bill.

They also reflect this government's concern for victims of crime and our support for our police partners

and other community safety workers. Their safety is a priority for us.

1600

The current legislation provides that a local medical officer of health may issue an order for a blood sample upon application by an individual who has come into contact with the bodily substance of another individual as a result of being a victim of a crime, or while providing emergency services or first aid, or while performing a function set out in regulation. The blood sample would be tested for HIV/AIDS and/or hepatitis B or hepatitis C.

The current process has taken anywhere from five days to 69 days, depending on a variety of factors. During this period, affected persons would undergo the stress of not knowing whether they had been infected with a serious disease and in many cases may be advised to undergo precautionary treatment, with its attendant side effects. In addition, personal lifestyle changes might be advisable until the results are known.

The present legislation came into effect in September 2003, before the McGuinty government took office. Since then, we've heard from the stakeholders about their concerns and their recommendations for improving the process. Police and emergency personnel have expressed concerns about lengthy delays in the application and hearing process. They are also concerned that the breadth of the circumstances in which they may come into contact with bodily substances is not captured by the wording of the current legislation, which refers to "victim of crime" or "emergency health care." The policing community felt that exposure from an accident or during the lawful performance of their duties may not be adequately dealt with. They urged that police officers be specifically designated in the legislation.

Medical officers of health have told us that they are uncomfortable with their quasi-judicial role as adjudicators under the existing scheme, a role, they contend, that is inconsistent with their role as physicians. Many stakeholders expressed the need to move responsibility for obtaining an order from the health system to an independent body.

Bill 28 aims to address these stakeholder concerns. It streamlines the process to achieve quicker resolution of applications. It ensures that applications are dealt with in an efficient, effective and timely manner for all concerned. It balances the interest of the applicant, respondent and those involved in administering the process by transferring the responsibility for deciding on applications from the medical officers of health to the Consent and Capacity Board.

The proposed changes include time frames that would shorten the process from application to order. In particular, the period of voluntary compliance would be shortened to two days from the current seven days, and shorter time frames for the hearing process would be set out in the legislation.

If passed, Bill 28 would provide that a person who came into contact with a bodily substance of another person while providing emergency first aid, as a victim

of crime or in other prescribed circumstances may apply to a medical officer of health to have the blood of the other person analyzed for HIV/AIDS and/or hepatitis B or hepatitis C. If, within two days, the medical officer of health fails to get the other person to voluntarily provide a blood sample, the medical officer of health would refer the application to the Consent and Capacity Board. The Consent and Capacity Board would be required to hold and conclude a hearing into the application within seven days after the application is referred to it, and it would be empowered to order the person to provide a blood sample for analysis. The board would have to give its decision one day after concluding a hearing.

Bill 28 proposes that the Consent and Capacity Board have responsibility for determining applications for mandatory blood samples. The board is an independent provincial tribunal that has been in existence since 1968. Its mission is to ensure the fair and accessible adjudication of consent and capacity issues, balancing the rights of vulnerable individuals with public safety. The board's key areas of activity are the adjudication of matters of capacity, consent, civil committal and substitute decision-making. It conducts hearings under the Mental Health Act, the Personal Health Information Protection Act and the Substitute Decisions Act. The board has a strong education and outreach program designed to bring about shorter, more focused hearings. It is accustomed to dealing with hearings with a short turn-around time.

If passed, Bill 28 would also respond to the concerns raised by police and others about the uncertainty in the present legislation as to the circumstances that could permit an application for a mandatory blood sample. In addition to the current classes of victims of crime and persons providing emergency health care services or emergency first aid, the bill would make eligible to apply a person who "came into contact with a bodily substance of the other person...."

"In the course of his or her duties, if the person belongs to a prescribed class," and/or

"While being involved in a prescribed circumstance or while carrying out a prescribed activity."

Under the proposed bill, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services would be authorized to make regulations defined in the prescribed classes and the circumstances and activities that could give rise to an application for an order. By having a provision to spell out these definitions and regulations, the legislation would retain the flexibility to respond to changing situations. Through a process of consultation and consensus-building with stakeholders and the public, we can ensure that the regulations remain up to date, practical and practicable while respecting the objectives of the proposed legislation.

In closing, let me summarize the benefits of this proposed legislation. The Mandatory Blood Testing Act, if passed, would speed up the application and hearing process for obtaining a blood sample. It would also transfer the power to make an order from a medical officer of health to the Consent and Capacity Board. If passed, the

bill would protect our community safety workers and provide the peace of mind to allow them to do their work with greater confidence as they put themselves at risk to help the people of Ontario. We have to do all we can to support those who protect us as they go about their challenging task in communities across Ontario. If passed, Bill 28 would be an important step in achieving that objective. I thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton): I am very proud to stand here today as a Progressive Conservative MPP to support the quick passage of this legislation. Obviously, on this side we're very proud of one Garfield Dunlop, the MPP for Simcoe North. I applaud him for introducing this as a private member during the previous Progressive Conservative government. This is a man who obviously has been a strident defender of the policing community. On this side, we believe the police, first aid responders and victims of crime deserve certainty as soon as possible when they are exposed to potential blood infections. When my colleagues from the Progressive Conservative Party initiated Bill 105, the Health Protection and Promotion Amendment Act, 2001, he really recognized the need. So we support streamlining this bill and this piece of legislation through Bill 28.

We understand that the Police Association of Ontario has actively advocated for streamlining the process so that public safety workers have less time to wait for results. We understand that other public safety workers are also supportive.

We are supportive of enabling police officers and other public safety workers and victims of crime to find out more quickly if they have been exposed to infection from blood-borne viruses such as HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B or Hepatitis C. This is a compassion issue. This is an issue where we have good people, good Samaritans, people who are willing to put their lives on the line. They deserve our support in making sure that their lives can be much easier through the passage of this piece of legislation. But before I close, again, I want to commend my colleague, a good man, a man who believes in our policing community, Garfield Dunlop, the MPP for Simcoe North.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): I rise to comment on the statements made by the Minister of Community Safety and the member from Scarborough–Rouge River. This is a bill which is simple, yet it is also a bill that is very necessary. In this province, we have very long and extensive rules and regulations and laws relating to public health and safety, so that if someone goes into an office building they know they cannot be put into a workplace where injury may occur. They need not work around chemical fumes, carcinogens, radioactive material, toxins or neuro-toxins. They need not work in ergonomically unsafe places. They need not do repetitive movements of their hands or feet that cause repetitive strain injury.

1610

All of those are protected and well known in law. The people who have not been protected to quite the same

extent are the people employed in the public sector who deal with ordinary citizens. We all know that from time to time some of those ordinary citizens will do violence. Some of them may bite or scratch, and some of them may have bloody wounds that need to be cleaned up. What this does is protect our public employees in the same way as we protect all of our other employees. It gives them certain rights to make sure that they are safe from those diseases which we now know are transferred not only from blood but from other body fluids, or if they feel they may be contaminated, to get the earliest possible medical procedures.

I don't see anything wrong with the bill. I'm hoping that it does get quick passage and that we can protect our public employees, particularly our firefighters, police and ambulance workers who are on the front lines and are most likely to need the provisions of this bill.

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe): It's a privilege and honour to stand up and speak in support of Bill 28. Before I start, I want to commend the minister and his parliamentary assistant for explaining the importance of the bill and why, if this bill is passed, it's going to help many Ontarians, especially in the medical, policing and paramedic fields, and many different elements of our communities.

I was listening to the member from Beaches–East York, and I support him and want to echo what he said. In many different elements in our society, if you work in certain locations, you are protected under a safety act. If you work in construction, you have to wear certain boots and you have to behave in a certain way. If you drive a car you have to put on your seat belt, and if you drive a motorcycle you have to wear a leather belt. There are many different issues. All employees across Ontario are protected to a certain degree, but the people who work in the medical field as nurses, doctors, health care providers or police have no protection, especially when they are always in contact with a lot of injured people. Those injured people may carry some kind of transferable disease, but we have no mechanism to enforce it. I think passing this bill will create another element of safety for the people who serve this province and our communities very well.

I also support transferring authority from the medical officer to the capacity board, because the board has more ability to enforce and to test the people. Also, the bill is important because it protects the safety and privacy of the test, which means the test can apply only to certain issues and certain elements and is not going to be applied again.

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): It's my pleasure to add my comments to those of the Minister of Community Safety and the member from Scarborough–Rouge River, who were talking to Bill 28, which is the Mandatory Blood Testing Act, An Act to require the taking and analysing of blood samples to protect victims of crime, emergency service workers, good Samaritans and other persons and to make consequential amendments to the Health Care Consent Act, 1996 and the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

We in the PC caucus support this bill. As was pointed out earlier by one of the comments, this bill originated in 2001 when Garfield Dunlop, the member for Simcoe North, brought in a private member's bill, Bill 105. This bill will streamline the process by which blood samples can be taken so that instead of taking up to 70 days to complete and analyze blood samples, that process will be sped up to protect our firefighters, our police, our emergency workers, good Samaritans and victims of crime.

I would say that the member from Simcoe North is an ardent supporter of the police in this province. It is always his first priority, and on many occasions he's always thinking about what he can do to improve the safety of police and to further support police. I know he'll be speaking next. He has the leadoff on this bill. I know he has concerns with the situation in Caledonia that we're hearing a lot about here in the Legislature these days and the position that the Ontario Provincial Police have been in since this standoff has been going on now, some 105 days, since February 28, when it started. We'll be hearing more from the member from Simcoe North in the next hour.

The Acting Speaker: That concludes the time available for questions and comments. I'm return to the member for Scarborough–Rouge River, who has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Balkissoon: I would like to thank the member from Nepean–Carleton, the member from Beaches–East York, the member from London–Fanshawe and the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for their comments on the bill. As was previously said, the existing legislation was as a result of a private member's bill from the member from Simcoe North. That bill was adopted in 2003. The government has had the opportunity of two years of this bill being enacted. Having the experience of the previous two years, the government has been very progressive in responding to the stakeholders.

The police have told us clearly that we need to identify the police as one of the interest groups in this particular piece of legislation. They have told us clearly that it takes too long. We've reacted to that by reducing the period from seven days to two days for the sampling. Sometimes the process can currently take up to 69 days. We're improving that. The medical officers of health have complained that they do not wish to be the adjudicator on getting blood samples. We've made changes in this particular legislation and we've moved that process to the Consent and Capacity Board to be able to issue those orders. So we are responding to the stakeholders and we're actually improving the process.

I'm glad to hear that the members from the opposition party and the third party will be supporting the bill, because really, we are responding to our emergency workers' concerns. We would like to make sure that our emergency workers are safe. They do provide a job for us out there in protecting our community, and this piece of legislation just makes their lives a whole lot better. I think it puts their families at ease that the government is responding to the work that they do on our behalf.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I'm very pleased to be able to rise today and take our leadoff on Bill 28, An Act to require the taking and analysing of blood samples to protect victims of crime, emergency service workers, good Samaritans and other persons and to make consequential amendments to the Health Care Consent Act, 1996 and the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

I'd also like to put on the record right now, if I may, the explanatory note. I believe it has been partially done by the minister and the parliamentary assistant. But I would like to mention that, under the explanatory note of the bill, "The bill repeals and replaces section 22.1 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

"Under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, a person who came into contact with a bodily substance of another person in certain situations set out in or prescribed under the act may apply to a medical officer of health to have the blood of the other person analysed for viruses that cause certain communicable diseases. Under the current regulations under the act, the medical officer of health may take seven days attempting to get a blood sample or other evidence of seropositivity voluntarily from the person. If the medical officer of health fails to obtain a blood sample voluntarily, he or she may order that person to provide a blood sample for analysis, with or without first holding a hearing, and without notice to the person who will be subject to the order. The medical officer of health's decision may be appealed to the Chief Medical Officer of Health or the Health Services Appeal and Review Board.

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"The bill shortens the length of time the process takes from application to order and it transfers the power to make an order from a medical officer of health to the Consent and Capacity Board. Under the bill, a person will still apply to a medical officer of health to have the blood of another person analysed for viruses, as in the current Health Protection and Promotion Act. The medical officer of health is empowered to request a blood sample for analysis or other evidence of seropositivity. If the person is requested to provide a blood sample or other evidence and does not provide it voluntarily within two days after the request is made, the medical officer of health must refer the application to the Consent and Capacity Board.

"The Consent and Capacity Board is required to hold and conclude a hearing into the application within seven days after the application is referred to it and is empowered to order the person to provide a blood sample for analysis. The board must give its decision within one day after concluding a hearing. There is no appeal from the board's decision."

First of all, I want to say to the minister and the government that I thank them for basically updating a bill or repairing a bill that possibly had some flaws in it. I thank the members, including the minister and any of the folks here today, who mentioned the fact that this bill came

from Bill 105, a private member's bill that I was very fortunate to have passed in this House in 2001. I think at that time the vote was 82 to 2, so we basically had all-party support. A couple of people had a few objections to it at that time.

I wanted to give people in the House a little bit of an update of what happened, how we got to the bill in the first place and how we're following through even today to try to improve on it.

Obviously, every year the government or the Legislative Assembly, the members of provincial Parliament, are all lobbied on an ongoing basis on different issues that affect stakeholder groups within the province. Groups like the Police Association of Ontario and the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, those organizations, had sensed a real problem with their members who had come into contact with people at the scene of an accident or at the scene of a crime. Quite often, what had happened was that when these incidents occurred, whether it was through an attack or by accident, the officers who were affected often didn't know whether or not they may have come into contact with some type of a communicable disease.

This goes back a long time with professional fire-fighters. I can tell you that in my early days on council, I can remember that the volunteer fire department was getting more and more calls out to people who had heart attacks and first aid response types of calls. They were no longer fighting fires, but were involved in many types of accidents that involved health care. Our firefighters were doing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and all these sorts of things, and then they started saying, "Maybe there are problems here. Maybe people have diseases and that sort of thing. We certainly don't want any of our firemen to come into contact with anybody like that."

That's sort of when I first heard about this, and in my career in municipal politics it got to be that the government of the day and the municipalities put more and more laws into effect. They provided firemen and police officers with more and better equipment, but nonetheless the problem was still there: People did not know and had no way of finding out whether the people they had come into contact with may or may not have had any type of communicable disease.

So we drafted the bill in 2001, and actually did what I would consider to be a fairly comprehensive tour during the summer of 2001 to find out from all these different stakeholder groups just what types of problems they were encountering. We had some meetings here at Queen's Park, we visited the firemen and police officers over in Niagara region, we were down to London, we were in Windsor, we were in Sudbury and we were in Ottawa. We did what I would say was fairly comprehensive dealing with a lot of professional firemen as well as a number of police officers.

On top of that, we also had a number of cases of people who came forward who had concerns, either as victims of crime or as good Samaritans. You've heard of this a number of times in car accidents, where someone

will have a very severe accident and the car is basically covered in blood, and someone goes in to try to save someone's life. That's the thing we do as Canadians and as human beings; we try to help people out. But sometimes people who are being good Samaritans come into contact with the blood or other bodily fluids of someone else. It's a case where they just don't know what could go wrong, and they want to make sure they are okay. We had a number of people like that who put the flag up and said, "This happened to me, and I was safe" or "I wasn't safe." They did come forward and say this was an issue, so we had that to deal with as well.

I can tell you some incredible examples I've seen—things that I hadn't even heard about. Again, a lot of them involved firemen. I'll give you a couple of examples. At one of the hearings, a gentleman came forward who, when searching for a key to get into a house—apparently there was an emergency in the house and they didn't want to break the door down. People had put needles above the doorway or under a vanity. What happened was that people would run their finger into a needle and start bleeding, and they didn't know where the needle had come from; they had been planted there deliberately. In some cases, these were crack houses with people selling drugs and that type of thing. The firemen would come home—in a number of cases, it was firemen or a police officer—and they'd say, "I've just been pricked with this needle and it actually caused me to bleed. What's on that needle? Who used that needle?" Those were the types of cases we heard.

We heard of police officers going to the scene of a crime and someone attacking them. In one case, a young female police officer out in Peel region was following a stolen car back to the car dealership when she got an emergency call to go to a house. She was alone, went to the house and was attacked by someone. The lady she was attacked by was a known long-time prostitute in the area. She bit the police officer through the clothing a number of times and drew blood. This young female police officer did not know whether the person she had come in contact with had any diseases.

When we had these types of people at our round table discussions or pre-introduction hearings on Bill 105, they were in tears because—and right to this day, in some cases—they didn't know whether they had picked up any kind of disease. So we made sure that the bill applied to emergency service workers—as the minister has with Bill 28—good Samaritans and other persons. The idea, of course, was to try to find out as quickly as possible what type of diseases the people they came into contact with actually had. That's why the blood sample was the best chance of finding out.

We had some trouble with the bill at times, in that some people were concerned about civil liberties, because you're actually asking to take blood from another human being. That was one of the causes. But there was no question that when we were looking at people across our country, across our province, who were trying to protect our families, trying to save lives, trying to protect

our province—police, firemen, emergency service workers and even good Samaritans—they had a really good cause.

1630

Even since Bill 105 was passed, I've had people come forward to me—paramedics. I can tell you, a lot of people underestimate paramedics. They think paramedics only pick up people who are severely injured, load them in the ambulance and try to save their lives while they get to the hospital. In many cases, though—and I've talked to a number of paramedics about this—they come into contact with people who become violent, who claw away at them, who punch and kick and bite. Quite often, paramedics are under the same difficult situations that police and firemen are under when coming into contact with people like that.

So you can see why there was a need for the bill, why the emergency service workers came forward as the key people, the key stakeholders actually, promoting some type of legislation.

What we found, though, after we passed the bill, was that the implementation period, the regulations, were very slow. It almost appeared like some people at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care did not want the bill to pass, did not want the bill implemented, did not want the bill to actually proceed and be effective. We started receiving a number of complaints from people who had tried to find out about the regulations, who tried to work with some of the folks at the ministry, and it appeared that it wasn't going to be a success. That was very unfortunate, because the one thing we wanted more than anything in this piece of legislation was for the bill to be effective as quickly as possible. So when the bill eventually was passed and proclaimed in 2003—I think it was September 2003—we started finding out very quickly from the stakeholders that there was a time delay problem with the bill and that it would need more work.

The problem and the challenge we have now is moving it over to the Consent and Capacity Board, and how effective it will be. The one thing we want to make sure of is that the bill is very effective. Timing is of the essence.

Put yourself in the place of some of these people who have come into contact with people with a communicable disease and they have to go home to their own families, cases where they couldn't have relations with their spouse, where they couldn't hug their kids, where they were afraid what cups and saucers to use, to make sure they kept themselves completely isolated. In a lot of cases, the people who felt they might have been infected were almost dead within their own home, because they couldn't have any type of a family life and were concerned even with their colleagues at work. Some of the people told me on the tour we had that it was just a terrible feeling, waiting to find out whether or not someone actually had a disease.

It could happen to any one of us at any given time. We could go out today on the side of that road and have an accident, or come across an accident and try to save

somebody. You can't let someone die. You might be the person on the scene who would stop and allow them to continue to live. You want to do whatever you can as a human being to help someone else out. So as a good Samaritan or as an emergency service worker, the challenge is there for all of us to know that if anything like that does happen, there's legislation there to try to protect us so that we can get the appropriate medical treatment as quickly as possible; not waiting 70 days, not waiting 150 days. Even two or three days can be very sensitive in a lot of areas for families and for people who have to go through that.

When the minister brings forth this legislation, I applaud the government. I know that the Police Association of Ontario lobbied for the last year or so for this. I was very pleased even this spring, when I went to their lobby day, and the police association thanked me for bringing forth the bill and mentioned that the minister would bring in new legislation that would improve the bill even more.

I hope it works. That's the question mark here. We can pass this legislation, and I do know that there are amendments to be made to the bill, that there are still amendments that some people would like to see made to the legislation. That's why I believe the government has agreed to do some committee hearings, to hear some of those comments back. I hope that happens, possibly over the summer or in the fall, whenever we get back to getting the amendments put together. But I can tell you that after that, speedy passage and implementation are of the essence, as far as I'm concerned, because we need to be able to protect our people who put their lives on the line.

I could give a number of examples on this of people who had come into contact with people who may or may not have had some of these diseases. But they're basically all the same as you go through the list: It's people, whether they're paramedics, whether they're correctional service workers, whether they're firemen, police officers, good Samaritans or just people who are in the wrong place at the right time, who need to know that the government and legislation do protect them.

It's been a while coming, but today we're more open to this type of legislation than we've probably been at any time in the past. It's important that we do make the bill right. Hopefully, the government will make sure that the bill is right as well in the implementation period. I believe that the Consent and Capacity Board may be a good idea. However, time will tell when it comes to seeing whether the period will actually work or become more complex. If it becomes more complex, I'm not sure what we'll do. We've gone from the medical officer of health scenario to the Consent and Capacity Board scenario in this bill. It's a matter of making sure that the board can be called together quickly and that we can help save lives with it.

We talk about public safety. In this House today we passed Bill 56, the emergency management act, and we had almost all support of the House for that bill. But there's so much we can do in this House around com-

munity safety to help protect, in a lot of cases, the people who protect us. I've got to tell you, though, that this scenario that we're seeing in Caledonia is getting to be a little bit of a nightmare. We're talking about people coming into contact with police officers. Some of the things that have happened—Caledonia may or may not be an example of why legislation like this Bill 28 may need to be passed.

I'd like to put on the record an e-mail that I received today. I'm not going to read where it's from, because I wouldn't want to see anything happen to this person. This is the type of thing that people are telling us, the politicians at Queen's Park, about what's happening out at Caledonia. I think a number of members of this Legislative Assembly may have got this. It goes right back to protecting police officers, good Samaritans, you name it. This comes from someone who I would say isn't a very violent type of person, but they're just outlining what has happened. After, I want to tie this into how Bill 28 may in fact help even police officers at Caledonia.

"Dear Sir/Madam,

"I'm writing to you about a town that Mr. McGuinty continues to urge to remain calm while he does nothing. For the past 104 days the town of Caledonia has been subjected to the following:

"—tire fires set;

"—a van set on fire and pushed off an overpass;

"—barns burned to the ground;

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"—bridge set on fire;

"—CN train tracks damaged;

"—nine employees of a Hamilton railway company have been laid off as they are unable to use the train tracks;

"—highways illegally blocked;

"—rocks thrown off overpasses at vehicles;

"—militants walking around with weapons (crowbars, two-by-fours with nails in the them, and axes);

"—roads dug up and destroyed;

"—hydro transformers blown by trucks set on fire—throwing Caledonia and neighbouring communities into two days of blackout;

"—a security guard for Hydro One forced from his vehicle, chased by men with bats, his car set on fire;

"—two OPP officers held hostage and subsequently 'charged' with trespassing;

"—neighbourhoods terrorized by all-night drumming, music blaring, floodlights aimed at their houses, natives taking pictures of them, their family, and property;

"—natives taking pictures of cars and licence plates at Caledonia businesses;

"—schoolchildren terrorized as native militants hang their warrior flags on the fences, yelling and screaming;

"—schoolchildren terrorized as native militants hop a schoolyard fence during recess;

"—schoolchildren terrorized as they are ushered inside to eat their lunches under their desks;

"—life-threatening accidents on the 'alternate routes' which are little more than country lanes;

“—farmers’ fields (their livelihood) ruined by ATVs;

“—symbol of the Six Nations carved into farmers’ fields;

“—cars and people are subjected to illegal search and seizure of property;

“—an army reservist was held hostage, handcuffed, received death threats and was forced to apologize to the natives in front of the media;

“—a reporter from the *Kitchener Record* was held by the throat as natives searched his car for his camera—the pictures were then deleted—all in front of the OPP;

“—two elderly people had their car surrounded in the Canadian Tire parking lot by the natives. The natives had proceeded to jump on the car—OPP within 10 feet;

“—two reporters taping this incident were attacked by natives. Their video camera and tape were stolen from them, one cameraman required staples to close the wound in his head—again OPP stood by and did nothing;

“—US border patrol officers and OPP officers pulled from their vehicle; the stolen vehicle was then used to ensure another OPP officer in a blatant attempt to murder him;

“—people receiving death threats if they speak out against these home-grown terrorists.

“These are what I remember from the past 104 days, the days which Mr. McGuinty claimed were without incident. What will happen in the future? Nightly, people hear construction going at the Douglas Creek Estates and yet see nothing in the daytime. What are the natives building? Warriors are coming up from the States. What kind of weapons are they bringing with them? So far the only politician who has really spoken up is Toby Barrett. I ask that you all speak as well, as this situation could very easily be happening in your town or city next.”

It’s sincerely signed by a lady—I wouldn’t want to put her name on the record in the House.

What I’m saying is that this is an example, a case, at Caledonia where there have been a number of OPP officers injured. There’s an opportunity here, or there could be, when people come into contact with other people—whether it’s been cuts or scrapes—where blood could be exchanged just because of a natural, unexpected incident that could happen or fighting that could occur. This is a case where probably there’s been no example like that used. But what I’m trying to say is that we have this incident brewing over here in Caledonia.

This is the type of incident that could force a reason for Bill 28 to come into effect. The chances may be remote or they may be very high, but I think it’s an example. What we’re seeing at Caledonia is not something that we see in Ontario on a day-to-day basis. This is a very unexpected incident that we hope would seldom occur, and we hope when we do get Caledonia resolved, that we won’t see any more of these incidents in the future.

What I was trying to point out was that you’re getting tempers flaring, you’re getting massive numbers of OPP officers and you’re getting massive numbers of people on each side of this incident complaining about the blockades. Both sides think they’re right on the issue. Of

course, incidents break out and bloodshed takes place, whether it’s a small amount or whether it’s very serious concerns or crimes. There would be a perfect example.

I also wanted to tell you about an example of a paramedic. I didn’t quite get to this when I was talking about the paramedics earlier, but one of the things I wanted to mention was that when we were dealing with paramedics, one paramedic came up and mentioned to me, when we were trying to get Bill 105—we were trying to get a test on the person this paramedic had made contact with. What had happened was that someone in an ambulance, the person who was injured, had actually spit all over the paramedic, spit in his face. Some of the spit went down his throat, that type of thing, and he felt he may have come into contact with someone who had a very serious disease. That’s another example.

I know I’m giving kind of crazy examples here, but the reality is, I wanted to put these sorts of things on the record because that’s why we need the legislation. You don’t think of these things when you’re safe at home or you’re comfortable driving down the road. It’s when something comes up, whether you’re a police officer, a fireman, a paramedic, a correctional worker at a jail or a good Samaritan—it could be you or I on the way home this evening. These are cases where we need to make sure there’s protection in place for all citizens of our province. As I said earlier, the challenge will be making sure we can make that protection actually work in this legislation. It will, of course, be up to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to prove it works.

If we get this bill passed this fall, with everything that’s already in place, or all the protocol that’s been put in place before that, I would hope that this bill would be proclaimed by January or February of next winter, so that we could say once and for all that if this type of situation comes up, these people will in fact be protected.

I also want to put on the record today that I have to say to the members of the government that, although I’m the critic for community safety and correctional services, there are not many people on that side of the House I admire more than Minister Kwinter. He’s a person I talk to quite a bit. I have to criticize him quite often because I am the opposition critic, and I do find fault at times with some of the things he does. However, I know he does his very best to be a good minister in that position, just as we’ve had a number of good ministers in this House in that position, including my colleague Bob Runciman, who did an outstanding job in that position.

I was really curious today, while we’re on this bill—this part of my comments has nothing to do with Bill 28, but with the ministry—I was very interested to hear a question coming from the member from Huron—Bruce to the minister on the OSPCA. I’m assuming it followed on the fact that just yesterday I put in—is the clock okay? Can I ask you if the clock—

The Acting Speaker: The clock’s okay.

Mr. Dunlop: The clock’s okay. It’s an older clock and it needs to be oiled once in a while. I’m sorry. I noticed this. I didn’t know what it meant.

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): Start over.

Mr. Dunlop: I have to start over again. Thank you, Dave.

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): Are you going right through?

Mr. Dunlop: Yes, I'm going to be here a while.

Mr. Yakabuski: Good.

Mr. Dunlop: No, I can use you still.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for that delay.

I wanted to talk a little bit about community safety and Caledonia, and what happened today in the House was a question on the OSPCA. I think it was a direct result of about 8,000 names on petitions I introduced yesterday from the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, calling on the government to follow the recommendations of the Grant Thornton report. That's why I brought it in there. I've had a number of meetings with the OSPCA, and I was interested to note that that question came up today, because what we're asking for is long-term stable funding. That's what the OSPCA is really after. They acknowledged everything else the minister said in his response. It's just that the Grant Thornton report did call for long-term stable funding. I wanted to put that on the record, because I didn't have a chance to be part of that question.

That takes me to—I'm getting down on time here.

1650

Mr. Bruce Crozier (Essex): Not quickly enough.

Mr. Dunlop: Thank you very much. As I said earlier, I appreciated what Mr. Miller and Ms. MacLeod had said about Bill 105, but really I think what we're all trying to do in this House is to say to the people who put their lives on the line every day that the government and the citizens of the Legislature care about their jobs and they care about what they do after their jobs are done at night. I can tell you that by far the biggest reason why we want to pass Bill 28 is that these police officers, emergency service workers, firefighters—these are all people who have lives outside of their jobs and, certainly when they come into contact with somebody they suspect may have a communicable disease of some kind, whether it's AIDS, hepatitis C, HIV—whatever it may be—they want to know that the government will be there to help them. I think that's the bottom line. They don't need to feel like they're left alone in this world because they can't come into contact with their family members or their colleagues. They're concerned that they may in fact carry some kind of a communicable disease after the incident that they would pass on to someone else. That is by far the main reason.

I just want to say in hindsight, as we look back on the bill, I want to thank Bruce Miller and Bob Baltin from the PAO and Freddy LeBlanc from the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters. They were two of the key people who set up meetings across the province. I think they were very worthwhile meetings; I think they were meetings that made a lot of sense as far as getting the general public and the media involved in what some of these

folks put up with when they go on the job day in and day out. It's not simply a matter of standing at a fire hydrant, attaching the hose and shooting water on a flame, or—the same with a police officer—pulling someone over for a ticket. There are so many other incidents they face on a day-to-day basis that most of us have no idea about and they need to know that we know they're valued and that we value their time outside of their jobs as well.

With that, I'm going to—

Mr. Kormos: Garfield, no. There's more to be said.

Mr. Yakabuski: I missed the first part. Could you repeat it?

Mr. Dunlop: As you know, this is a one-hour leadoff here today.

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): Can we hear it again? There must be some nuggets in there.

Mr. Dunlop: No, there's—sorry, I almost spilled my water. I did spill some of it.

I really have nothing more to say on the bill. What's very important right now, what's very important to the emergency service workers, is that when this legislation is passed and finalized and any of these applications go to the Consent and Capacity Board, we actually have very quick movement through that process, so that people can find out very quickly whether or not they've come into contact with someone with a communicable disease. That's what it's all about: whether it's an emergency service worker, a good Samaritan or just anybody who comes into contact, we know that the government would stand behind them and help them out of these incidents. With that, I appreciate this opportunity to say a few words and look forward to further debate on the bill.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Kormos: This is but a two-minute response to the member, and then I'm going to have a chance in around eight minutes' time to speak to this for an hour, because that's all the time that's allowed me, unfortunately. Those are the kinds of rules that this government imports into this House. It's supposed to be a place of debate, it's supposed to be a place of dialogue, but no. Inevitably, if they don't use the standing orders to short-circuit dialogue, they'll bring in time allocation motions. It's the kind of guys that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals, with their democratic renewal, tend to be.

I'm pleased to have listened to Garfield Dunlop, the member for Simcoe North, speak to this bill, because he, of course, was the author and advocate for the root bill that's being amended, that is, the initial proposition. I remember being pleased to support him in that endeavour.

One of the things I'm going to be expressing concern about when I'm given the opportunity to do my lead speech on this in around eight minutes' time: This bill was introduced on November 15, 2005. It's been sitting on the order paper, lingering, gathering dust for seven months now. This is a government that considers itself in any way akin to functional? It's a nine-page bill. They can't even get this bill through second reading so it can go to committee where it belongs? In the interim, those front-line emergency workers, firefighters, police officers

and paramedics, amongst others, are being put at risk. I say to this government that their ability to process legislation is about as fouled up and negligent as their ability to manage our electricity supply, about as fouled up and negligent as their ability to respond to kids over age six with autism. Shame on you.

Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph–Wellington): I was just going to comment that I thought that this was one of the times when members from the three parties in the House were actually going to be able to work together, but after the comments from the member for Niagara Centre, I'm not so sure about that. At any rate, let me at least carry on with what I was going to say.

Clearly this is a bill that was brought in by the member from Simcoe North as a private member's bill in a very well-intentioned attempt to make sure that when there is an exchange of blood products with emergency workers and health workers, there is a way in which we can get the blood test to make sure they have not been exposed to a very severe disease like HIV or hepatitis. Unfortunately, the way it was originally formatted, the process was a bit cumbersome. We wanted to carry on with that protection for our emergency workers, and we revised the bill so that we could get a more streamlined process to get those blood tests.

For example, you wonder how you exchange blood products; what does that mean? I was in the hospital a number of years ago, and a nurse was trying to give me an injection and managed to put the needle through both her finger and my hand—an exchange of blood products. It was nothing violent or anything; the nurse just sort of missed with the needle that day and there was an exchange of blood products. Obviously, I consented for blood tests to put her mind at ease, but that doesn't always happen when we're dealing with criminals. When you're dealing with criminals and there are police, fire, emergency workers or correctional officers, they don't always consent. This bill will allow that process to speed up.

Mr. Yakabuski: I too listened closely and carefully to the member for Simcoe North as he spoke about Bill 28 and also a little bit about the history of his bill, Bill 105, which was proclaimed. This bill is designed to actually make the system a little more workable. We do commend the government for bringing this forward and responding to the member for Simcoe North.

Mr. Kormos: Why? It remains to be seen.

Mr. Yakabuski: Yes, of course, it does remain to be seen whether it can work or not, but they think that this may be the solution.

It is certainly a bill that we support, because there's no question that people in those vital areas of emergency work, such as police, firefighters and paramedics, have to have this protection to ensure that if they come in contact with someone who is infected when they're doing their job, they can in fact determine that and take the necessary steps.

A question that I have—and I must say the member from Niagara Centre raised it—is, what has the govern-

ment been doing since November 15, 2005? This is an important piece of legislation to offer and afford that kind of protection to our emergency workers. Why have they taken so long to get it here? It will be eight months on Thursday. This kind of delay is absolutely and totally unnecessary. This is the kind of bill that I think we as a Legislature want to see brought forward so that we can get it passed and get the necessary changes enacted.

Again, I thank the member for Simcoe North for bringing this whole issue forward and for his great work, not only on this issue but so many others when it comes to the protection of emergency workers and law enforcement people in Ontario.

1700

Mr. Prue: I was downstairs in my office watching this on television. I always like to see how members of the House look on television because you actually see the front of their faces—I ran up the stairs—as opposed to the backs of their heads, which we see here in the Legislature.

I listened to what the member had to say, and I remember quite well his private member's bill. What I want to talk to the House about is really more about the private member's bill process, because oftentimes when we put these private members' bills forward, debate them here in the Legislature and get the approval of our colleagues, they literally go nowhere. It's kind of sad; it's kind of a shame. You think, why did you spend all that time and all that effort trying to put forward a good idea which in the end doesn't seem to go anywhere?

This is an example of an idea that has been seized by the government, an idea the government sees has merit, and even though in the process it did not seem to go anywhere in terms of the last government or this, the member is to be commended for having brought forward the idea and the government is to be commended, I might say as well, for having taken that idea and run with it in terms of legislation. It's one of the very good examples—I'm getting too old to run up the stairs—of how this place can work better. We need to commit ourselves to do more private members' bills. We need to commit ourselves to bring in these kinds of fresh ideas so that things can be looked at.

On this particular bill, there seems to be unanimity among members of the House so far. I'm waiting for my colleague from Niagara Centre, but it should be acted upon with some rapidity.

The Acting Speaker: That concludes the time available for questions and comments, and I'll return to the member for Simcoe North. He has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Dunlop: I'd like to thank the members from Niagara Centre, Guelph–Wellington, Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and Beaches–East York for their nice words and their comments on my leadoff comments.

I want to say again that we need to make sure that under the Consent and Capacity Board, the bill will work. I support the minister bringing it forward. I support the efforts of the Police Association of Ontario and the OPFFA. I support everyone in trying to make this better.

I'm just hoping that when we go to the Consent and Capacity Board, we don't find a bunch of delay tactics or reasons why people can't find out whether or not they've come into contact with somebody who has an infectious or a communicable disease. That's what my concern is here today. It was always our concern, what the delay process would be, from the actual point of contact of the incident that took place until the person found out about the blood sample.

I also appreciate some of the comments made about private members' time. I think we've been fairly fortunate here. One of the fine things about the provincial Legislature is private members' time, when we get to come in and debate all types of issues and legislation. When it eventually is passed, it's always good to see a private member's bill get through. So I appreciate the fact that Bill 105 was passed and proclaimed and was the foundation for Bill 28. Let's hope that Bill 28 is very effective in its use.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Kormos: I'm pleased to speak to this bill. I'm just finishing a note in response to library researcher Rick Sage, who just sent me some material. So if one of the pages will come up here and take this to the library—probably Mr. Sage would be the best person—he is going to send you back with some material that will be germane, I hope, to our discussion of this bill.

As I say, I recall the efforts around Bill 105, the private member's bill introduced by Garfield Dunlop—gosh, that was back five or six years ago now—and the enthusiastic support that firefighters, police officers and paramedics had for it.

The thrust of the bill was simply this: If I'm downstairs in my basement—and for the life of me I don't know why I bought the radial arm saw, because it's the more dangerous of the two when it comes to table saws or radial arms—and I take off a left hand on the radial arm saw and I've got paramedics and firefighters down there collecting the fingers and digits, and I'm bleeding all over them, surely it's only the decent and proper thing to do to give those paramedics the level of comfort they need—knowing whether I've got AIDS, whether I've got hep C, whether I've got any number of infectious diseases which their exposure could cause them to contract—so they could take the appropriate measures.

There was a whole issue around privacy; that this compels disclosure of personal health information. Nobody who supported Dunlop's bill disputed the need for there to be privacy around health information. But, my goodness, it seems to me that if an emergency worker puts himself or herself at risk in the course of saving somebody's life—yours, mine, a family member's—in view of the fact that there are infectious diseases out there that have become commonplace, not that a whole lot of people have them but they've become commonplace and are part of our daily vocabulary, that police officer, firefighter or paramedic has a right to know whether or not they have to take those immediate health measures to protect themselves, to do anything they can to avoid contracting the disease.

Mr. Prue is bang on when he talks about private members' bills. In this case, Garfield Dunlop's private member's Bill 105 gave rise to a bill that was passed. I remember the Ministry of Health was in there and he had to fight his own ministers—he did—because he was a government member at the time. He took them on and he didn't let go. The firefighters, police officers and paramedics, amongst others, were in there too. Even his own government had to be dragged kicking and screaming into the committee room—they did. But eventually it was clear and everybody supported the bill. New Democrats supported Bill 105. Liberals supported Bill 105. It was the right thing to do. It was a matter whose time had come.

Heck, I remember Dianne Cunningham back in the early 1990s, a delightful member from London for whom I have great regard. Ms. Cunningham, who was a member of the Conservative opposition at the time, brought forward a private member's bill that would require kids on their bicycles to wear helmets. Ms. Cunningham wouldn't mind my saying that she had in her own family a child who had suffered a serious head injury, so she was acutely and very personally and intimately and lovingly aware of what that type of injury can do to the victim and to his or her family, and what it does in the context of the health care system.

I chaired the committee that heard her private member's bill during the days of the NDP government. I was particularly proud, because prior to that it wasn't very often that private members' bills got passed at all. From time to time the government would co-opt them, plagiarize them—thank you kindly—

1710

Mr. Leal: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Some people have just arrived in the members' east gallery: Councillor Shirley Eggleton from Peterborough, staff member Ellen Stewart from the Peterborough recreation department, Pickering Mayor David Ryan, Ajax regional councillor Colleen Jordan and Ajax councillor Joanne Dies. Maybe we could welcome them. They are here to view our proceedings this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker: That's not a point of order, but we welcome your guests.

I return to the member for Niagara Centre.

Mr. Kormos: Mr. Leal, in view of the fact you spend so little time on your feet in here, I'm more than pleased to let you use some of my time to introduce folks from your community. You finally made it into Hansard. You should clip that and send it out to all your constituents.

Where was I? I almost feel compelled to start all over again. Look what Mr. Leal has gone and done.

I was talking about the importance of private members' public business. I was talking about my pride in the fact that the NDP government began to effectively appreciate and understand the importance that private members can play, and about Ms. Cunningham's bill with respect to bicycle helmets. We heard some incredible, good evidence from any number of experts, victims and families

of victims, and the bill passed. The bill became law with the support of the government.

That's why I'm especially pleased that a member of this chamber has a resolution on the order paper. What happens with private members' public business is that there's literally a lottery and lots are drawn by the people at the clerks' table to see the ordering of the debate for private members' public business. Each member has one one-hour slot. There are 102 members—there's the Speaker, of course, but as it is, he at the moment is not in a position to introduce bills because he can't perform on the floor.

Mr. Yakabuski: Neither can cabinet.

Mr. Kormos: And cabinet ministers, of course, can't because they've got all the floor time they want. If they want to introduce bills, let them introduce bills. Oh, and they do so with some of the silliest stage settings. They've got the cheerleaders with the pompoms and the wannabe backbenchers out there doing the puppy dog bit, jumping up on their leg, and they've got to shake them loose like when the neighbour's puppy gets you when you're sitting down in the kitchen and you wonder what's clamped onto your leg. These cabinet ministers with all the fanfare press conferences and wannabe backbenchers just holding on for dear life, and the cabinet minister is trying to shake them off and asking aides to please take these people away. "Go away. Go, go, go. Go away."

So cabinet ministers get to do this all the time. Private members' public business is a very important part of the weekly process here and it has produced some incredibly important stuff. Quite frankly, most members who introduce private members' bills could care less whether the government adopts it as one of their own and runs with it—and that's happened more than a few times—or if in fact the member's bill is allowed to pass, like Ms. Cunningham's was, like Mr. Dunlop's was—by his own government, I must say, so I suppose Ms. Cunningham's success as a Conservative with an NDP government was somewhat more remarkable than Mr. Dunlop's success with his own government, but for the fact that he had to fight them tooth and nail.

Unfortunately, there's only two hours a week allotted to private members' public business: Thursday mornings, one hour for each bill. Not a whole lot of debate, is it? Indeed, if a member has a number down the road on the lottery, that member's slot may never come up should an election be called, should the government be defeated because backbenchers rise up in disgust and anger against a government that's broken every promise it ever made. Think about that for a minute. Think about the fact that this government here at Queen's Park, the McGuinty Liberals with their huge majority, could be defeated if only government backbenchers were prepared to vote with their hearts and their minds and say, "A government that breaks its promises doesn't deserve to maintain the confidence of the people and we should put this to the people again." What an exciting proposition that would be.

I see member Shafiq Qaadri from Etobicoke North, who is a capable member. I've seen him perform well in

debate, perform well as Chair in committee, but I've also—I don't purport to read minds, but one can read body language. Today, when the government made it clear that it was going to break its promise yet once again—it was going to break a promise after breaking a promise after breaking a promise—to get rid of coal-fired generating stations, why, Mr. Yakabooski—

Mr. Yakabuski: "Buski."

Mr. Kormos: —Yakabuski, he says; of course it's Yakabuski—was generous enough to give me a copy of a letter dated March 16 to Jan Carr, CEO, Ontario Power Authority, a good friend of the Liberal government: "I read, in connection with my authority as the Minister of Energy"—that's Ms. Cansfield.

Mr. Yakabuski: At the time.

Mr. Kormos: As she was then, because things are fluid around here. Things can change overnight. Check the early morning papers. There's the inevitable schadenfreude by government backbenchers when they see the plight of a minister in the headlines of the morning papers, because there's the oh, so delightful prospect of maybe that telephone ringing and some minion saying, "Excuse me, Ms. Backbencher, but the Premier would like to speak to you." The limo is waiting. The key just has to be turned and the motor purrs, and the leather upholstery has that aroma of wealth and power. So the attraction of a backbencher to cabinet status, the prospect of a phone call, the demise of a minister—oh, my, how the backbenchers cluck when a minister falls from grace, but in fact the mind races as they anticipate whether their letterhead—

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: Order 23 in the standing orders of debate talks about "a member shall be called to order" if he—this is 23(i)—"Imputes false or unavowed motives to another member." I would like to suggest that in this case, the member for Niagara Centre is imputing false or unavowed motives to backbenchers of the government.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much for your intervention. I would like to respond to the member for Niagara Centre and ask him to make his comments relevant to the bill.

Mr. Kormos: Of course, Speaker. I'm being chastised by the Speaker yet once again. I bear the scars of 18 years of admonishment by a succession of Speakers, but I want you to know the regard in which I hold you and your opinion and your direction. So as we move from the lust of government backbenchers for seats at the cabinet table, the passion—Speaker, do you need time to confer? Are we okay?

The Acting Speaker: I'm just fine. Thank you very much for inquiring. I would ask you again to resume your speech and make relevant points with respect to the bill.

1720

Mr. Kormos: Thank you, Speaker. I'll refrain from references to lust in this chamber, even though it's, I'm sure, on the minds of so many people who are persistently playing with their BlackBerries.

Private members' public business, which is what gave rise to Dunlop's bill, which of course is what's being amended here and now—Madame Clerk, I trust I'm back on track. Private members' public business is an important function, and I use this opportunity to illustrate that. And if the clock isn't turned back on, I'll be speaking for yet another hour. Thank you, table. I appreciate that.

But I want to draw your attention to the resolution that's before this House, that's on the order paper, that reads, "In the opinion of this House"—this is a resolution that hasn't had a chance to be debated yet. It's one that is notable and noteworthy and worthy of support.

The resolution reads, "That, in the opinion of this House, to enhance the role of the private member, and allow for the debate of more private members' ballot items"—why, just think of what that could do for the member for Don Valley West. Just think of it. The member for Don Valley West should be enthusiastic about this resolution. She wouldn't have to rise on points of order to get floor time; she would be addressing her bills.

The resolution says, "That, in the opinion of this House, to enhance the role of the private member, and allow for the debate of more private members' ballot items, the standing orders should be revised as follows...." I don't want to get into the—the author of the resolution, with a legal mind, has adopted all the legalisms and the legal language of the standing orders. Because don't forget, the amendment we're speaking to today, Bill 28, is all about a private member's bill, Bill 105, Garfield Dunlop's effort. I'm correct when I state that, I presume, Speaker. It's all about private members' public business and how it gave rise to this modest proposal of police officers, firefighters and other emergency response personnel being able to protect themselves.

So the author of this resolution says, oh so modestly, "Why don't we start working at 9 o'clock on Thursdays, rather than 10? That way, instead of just being able to deal with two members and their bills or resolutions, we could deal with three. That means that that many more members of this assembly could bring forward resolutions and bills." I'm not talking about the silly stuff. What was the one last week? "Let's make Ontario a province of character." I say, start with making the Premier keep his promises. We need laws? I suppose we do after what we've witnessed from this government over the course of three years. It's very important stuff.

So the member from Waterloo–Wellington, who introduced the resolution I referred to, deserves credit. And I know that he is a conscientious member of this chamber when it comes to understanding the role of the individual member and the important role that the member can play, especially during the course of presenting and then calling private members' public business. I want to indicate that I haven't always agreed with that member in terms of some of the bills he's called. Well, I haven't. Nothing wrong with that. This place is about debate. It's about divergent views being put forward. One of the things that's cumbersome about this place, about the

chamber, about the Legislature, about this Parliament, is that there's so little debate. And then—

Mr. Ramal: Oh, come on.

Mr. Kormos: Oh, please, Mr. Ramal, the canned speeches that you get fed by the respective ministries do not constitute debate. Now, you're not bad on your feet and at speaking off the cuff. You're not bad at all. But come on; you've listened to some of your colleagues, just as I have. If boredom were regulated by the standing orders, most of this day would be out of order. You know exactly what I'm talking about, Mr. Ramal, so I appreciate your spirited defence of your rather feckless and lacklustre colleagues. They appreciate it as well. But the problem is, it doesn't cut it, because people watch and the problem is that we lose audiences. We do. I mean, here we are; we're competing—heck, it's 5:30 at night—with local broadcast news.

Mr. Ramal: Soccer.

Mr. Kormos: And the soccer. Nobody on College Street is watching. Take a walk down College Street, whether it's at 4 in the afternoon or 12 midnight, and nobody is watching the legislative channel anyway; that I promise you.

I've got an interest in this particular bill going to committee. I think it's got to go to committee. One of the things I'm concerned about is that I'm not sure the government's amendment makes the Dunlop proposition better. I'm not sure that it doesn't make it more cumbersome. I'm not sure that the process doesn't become more bureaucratic, more burdensome, and time is of the essence, isn't it? When a person has exposure to another person's blood, and that other person is a stranger, and that other person—the bleeder, if you will; the source of blood—may not even be aware of the state of his or her health, it seems to me you've got to move relatively quickly. Unlike some other members in this House, I'm not a doctor, but the information we got at the hearings around Dunlop's bill, Bill 105, was that you can do immediate responses that improve the likelihood of not contracting the disease that's spread by the contagion in the blood.

Private members' bills—another one that I'm particularly excited about is the bill of my colleague Mr. Prue, Bill 120. Dunlop's bill, Bill 105, has provided a level of comfort for emergency workers. It's the amendments to that bill we're dealing with today. This is as much a debate about private members' public business as it is about anything else, isn't it, Mr. Prue? The Prue bill, Bill 120—catch this; this is the synopsis. This is the Coles Notes of legislation. If there are students watching this who are told on a daily basis, "Don't you dare touch a Coles Notes," understand that members of the Legislature rely upon the explanatory note rather than reading the actual bill, just like more than a few students in the province of Ontario rely upon Coles Notes rather than reading Shakespeare. Some actually succeed and move on as a result of doing it.

Here we are: the explanatory note. This is Mr. Prue's modest proposition. It's a private member's bill. It's what Garfield Dunlop did which gave rise to this whole

proposition of making life a little safer for firefighters, police officers, paramedics, other emergency response personnel and good Samaritans. This is what Prue's got to say about making life safer for folks in our community: "Every residential building with two or more dwelling units is equipped with fire detectors in all public corridors and common areas of the building and interconnected fire alarms that are audible throughout the building." Boom. That's not rocket science, is it? It's pretty basic: two dwellings or more, you could have fire alarms that are interconnected and that are in common areas.

But the most dramatic and interesting part of Mr. Prue's bill—I was shocked to read this, because for the life of me I didn't understand how in the year 2006 this wasn't already the law in the province of Ontario. Mr. Levac will be interested in this because he's had considerable success with private members' public business: His Bill 3, which I was proud to support and proud to advocate for in terms of getting through to third reading, is another illustration of a very important contribution to making people's lives a little safer, a little healthier, hopefully, one thinks, a little better, a little more prosperous, a little more just.

Michael Prue, Bill 120. Is there anybody who would dispute the commonsensical quality of the proposition that "every fire escape is constructed of non-combustible material"?

Mr. Prue: It's bizarre.

Mr. Kormos: Mr. Prue says—

Mr. Prue: It's bizarre.

1730

Mr. Kormos: Mr. Prue responds.

It's bizarre that the building code in Ontario permits fire escapes that are made of flammable material. Oh, that's comforting. It makes me sleep better at night to know that that fire escape, those stairs right outside my second-floor apartment, which I've got to try to descend, are on fire. All Prue is asking for is for the members of this assembly to approve—and they have—an amendment to the building code that says, "For Pete's sake, get with it." You've got to be dumb as a bag of hammers not to realize that fire escapes should be made of non-combustible material.

Mr. Leal, give me your bill and I'll speak to yours as well. Pass it over here.

Mr. Leal: Internet gaming.

Mr. Kormos: Mr. Leal wants to advocate Internet gaming. I'm afraid I don't agree. I come from a totally different perspective on gambling and gaming. I've not been a fan of it. Everything we—the critics of it—predicted about wide-open gaming in Ontario has ended up coming true. The real addicts, of course, are governments. But Mr. Leal wants to halt illegal Internet gaming so that the gaming interests in Ontario can keep it all to themselves, so that we don't have to share. I appreciate the interest that Mr. Leal is representing and advocating for in that regard. I support his bill. My concern is that I suspect the government doesn't, just as the government

doesn't seem to support Prue's Bill 120, notwithstanding that the members of this chamber voted in support of it.

That's why I like the Arnott resolution—remember, I talked to you about that, Speaker? Ted Arnott from Waterloo-Wellington and his resolution—that if this place is going to become a little more relevant, a little more meaningful, if individual members are going to have a little more effective role, as they can have, then we should be expanding private members' public business—what a modest proposal—to but three hours a week as compared to two.

You see, the government has a technique. This is why you heard me—and Mr. Runciman might be interested in this, because he may have some of the very same questions. What bothers me and what I wonder and query is why it took Bill 28 seven months to be called for second reading. I've had to tell people over and over again—we get all these calls in our offices—Mr. Runciman does, Mr. Barrett does, Mr. Prue does, Mr. Balkissoon does, Mrs. Jeffrey does, Mr. Leal does—saying, "Why isn't Bill X, Y or Z being made law?" And I've got to explain, "No, it's the government that controls the order of business. It's the government that controls it." It's the government House leader who calls bills. In fact, once a private member's bill has received second reading, it's no longer a private member's bill. Speaker Stockwell cleared that up some years ago. Mr. Runciman will recall that. It's only the government that can call even a private member's bill. It's only the government.

Once Mr. Prue's Bill 120 has received second reading, as it has, it then becomes the property of the government. So if there's a failure to proceed with a bill like Bill 120, which does nothing more than call for fire escapes to be made of non-combustible material, if there's a failure of that bill to be called for third reading, and presumably passage, it's the government's failure. If there's a failure for Bill 28 to have been called for mere second reading—because it isn't a private member's bill—for seven months, it's the government that declined to call it for that long. Yet the government insists that Bill 28 is all about expediting the process whereby a police officer or a firefighter, amongst others, who gets exposed to the blood of an injured person, or is exposed to not just blood—we've all heard about tragic situations. For instance, police officers, in the course of effecting arrests, interfering or trying to break up a fight, a scrap, a violent altercation—there are regrettably more than a few incidents of police officers in the course of doing that, in the course of engaging in some very dangerous work, coming into contact with saliva or other bodily fluids. That makes it even more dramatic. We all know of the accused being arrested who bites the cop, right? There are incidents of police officers contracting hepatitis C, amongst other things, as a result of that. Immigration officers—people working in immigration who have to effect arrests—are subject to the same sort of risk. Correctional officers are subject to the same sort of risk.

I want to congratulate Mr. Dunlop as well for having come full circle and now clearly being in support of

public correctional facilities. Garfield Dunlop, the member for Simcoe North, has rejected privatized superjails, and I congratulate him for recognizing the failure of private jails.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): What were the failures?

Mr. Kormos: Well, Penetanguishene, for one. It was a horror show.

Mr. Runciman: Lower cost?

Mr. Kormos: Lower cost until the next contract round came along. Runciman is now on the record; we're engaging in this debate here. "Lower cost," he says. Lower cost until the next contract comes around, but lower levels of service, higher risk to the community. Look, it was a noble experiment, but it failed. Mr. Dunlop recognizes that.

Mr. Runciman: I'll have to talk to him.

Mr. Kormos: Mr. Runciman says. Look, Mr. Dunlop is not exactly some member of the socialist caucus of the Conservative Party. Nobody is going to suspect Dunlop of being some sort of pinko Tory. Mr. Dunlop, I suspect, is about as conservative and right-wing as they come, although I don't want to speak for him. The Conservatives now have a centrist leader, according to Greg Sorbara, the Minister of Finance for the Liberal Party and head cheerleader for Liberal federal leadership candidate Bob Rae. Mr. Sorbara has been around a long time, and if he wants to define Mr. Tory as a centrist, who am I—it's up to Mr. Tory to defend himself, and I look forward to that debate.

The Solicitor General, the Minister of Community Safety, for whom I have the greatest regard—I've known him for many, many years and just hold him in the highest regard—brings this bill forward, not inappropriately, and finally. I can't imagine the struggle he had to go through, fighting and fighting day in and day out, to get his bill called for second reading—seven months on the order paper; nine pages long.

It's going to be passed. It's going to committee. That's where the hard work is going to be done. That's where the nuts and bolts are going to be addressed. I just can't imagine the fighting, tooth and nail, that the minister had to do to finally get this bill called. We've only got another six days here; legislative staff are understandably looking forward to that. But time is of the essence, as they say, and we want this bill to go to committee. I'm not sure it's going to be resolved today. In fact, I was waiting for the government House leader to get back to me to see whether it could be resolved today. It appears it may not get resolved today. These things happen. But look, we're still going to work over the course of the next six days to see if we can get Bill 28 wrapped up for second reading so it can get into committee. I'm going to do my best. I'm going to work as hard as I can in that respect and to that goal.

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But I've got to tell you this: It was shocking during committee hearings on Bill 56, in view of the fact that the Minister of Community Safety finally gets to call this bill

for second reading seven months after it was introduced for first reading, to hear police officers at the Bill 56 justice committee explain that they still haven't got, at a cost of less than 10 bucks per unit, the biohazard safety kits in all of their police cruisers—less than 10 bucks a unit.

Although we didn't have time to get into the details of what they contain, you can just imagine—the gloves, perhaps some sort of disposable suiting, perhaps some plastic eyewear, so that when police officers are called out to a scenario where there are biohazards, they can take some modest safety precautions and maybe save their lives. Less than 10 bucks a unit, and it's prescribed by the government. It's on a list of prescribed equipment for police officers, but they're still not in police cruisers across Ontario. Is that nuts, Speaker? I think so. Is that how little we value our police officers?

Speaking of biohazards, I would be remiss if I didn't indicate to you—we're talking about people being safe, aren't we? Bill 28 is about people being safe. It's about enhancing personal safety in the community. Why, then, for the life of me, this government and its Minister of the Environment would permit paper fibre biosolid sludge to be dumped willy-nilly on farmland down in Pelham—to be specific, Church Street just north of Webber Road. You come down Regional Road 24 off the QEW through Vineland, turn east on Webber Road and just before you hit the tracks, you've got Church Street, and there it is. Tim Hudak, the member for Erie–Lincoln and I—because, you see, his riding is right across the river. The Welland River separates our ridings. It's into the Welland River that the toxins from this unregulated dump are flowing because this government, notwithstanding its own experts, the ones who wrote the Report of the Experts Panel on Sound-Sorb—prepared, lo and behold, for the Minister of the Environment, January 31, 2005, which says clearly that this sort of sludge "should be controlled by certificates of approval ... that provide equal or better protection for human health and the environment at all stages from its generation through transport, composting and final use."

Yesterday, when I put the question to the minister about the unregulated sludge being dumped down at Church Street there, just north of Webber Road in Pelham, she said, "Well, we're watching." Tim Hudak and I were down there watching too, watching this mountain of sludge grow and grow, become higher and wider and longer, reaching closer and closer to the Welland River so that it can then flow into the Niagara River and so that it then can infect and impact ground source water.

How many more tragedies do we need before these guys learn? Bill 28 is all about—you knew I'd get there, didn't you, Speaker? We've done this before. Bill 28 is all about making people a little safer in their day-to-day lives. That's what the people of Ontario and Pelham expect of their Minister of the Environment and the ministry: to make their lives a little safer on a day-to-day basis.

But just as this government, Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals, still haven't got those less-than-\$10-per-unit biohazard safety kits in police cruisers across Ontario, what are they doing? Watching, waiting to see whether a cop gets him or herself poisoned with biohazards because they don't have a modest amount of equipment, just like they're watching the sludge grow and flow—orange, we're told, and the smell of decomposing bodies, this mountain of sludge on Church Street, just west of the railway tracks going north across Weber Road.

Folks down there had a picket line set up this morning. They'd never been on a picket line before in their lives. They'd never held a picket sign. There might have been a few industrial workers, but they'd never held a picket sign before in their lives. They're not radicals. There might be one or two, but by and large they're not radicals. They're hard-working folks. Some of them have families who have lived for generations down in Pelham—a beautiful community—and some chose Pelham as a place to live out the rest of their lives because they saw it as a peaceful agricultural community that accommodates reasonable levels of residential properties. And then to be assaulted on a daily basis by this mountain of sludge, stinking of decomposing bodies, and the truck traffic on a daily basis just roaring up Church Street, raising dust, and stones flying as it delivers sludge, truck after truck after truck dumping it on this site so more and more of the orange fluid can flow downstream. And the Minister of the Environment is watching? It's hard not to watch. It's hard not to see it. It's pretty obvious. She's watching and her own expert's report says that she should be requiring certificates of approval. One of the components of this stuff, you've got to understand: This paper sludge contains significant concentrations of acrylamide polymer, a known animal carcinogen, as well as total petroleum hydrocarbons, along with other contaminants. How would you like that in your drinking water, friends? Have a glass of acrylamide polymer, or even just have the smallest of sips, if you dare, or maybe some total petroleum hydrocarbons, or just simply some of the other contaminants.

The Acting Speaker: I've allowed the member some degree of latitude in terms of his comments. I would ask him to return to the subject of Bill 28.

Mr. Kormos: God bless you, Speaker. You're astute. You are on your feet promptly when a member might happen to stray from the subject, and I want to apologize to you because I want you to understand that when I stray from 28—we've talked about this before. Do you remember that we talked about this before? We were talking about the brass monkeys. Remember that? We talked about how there are two ways to get to where you're going. There's the direct route and then there's the scenic route. You can get down to Niagara Falls by taking the QEW or you can take regional road 24 south at Vineland and then Highway 8 east, or go all the way down to Highway 20 and hit some of the fruit stands on your way there. Both routes are going to get you to Niagara Falls and the casino, if that's your pleasure. But I've got to tell you, taking Highway 24 down to Highway

8 or even Highway 20 is going to be far more informative.

So look, I'm speaking to Bill 28 here, Speaker. But I want this to be as informative a route that we're travelling and—

Mr. Yakabuski: And scenic.

Mr. Kormos: —as John Yakabuski says, as scenic a route as we could conjure in this chamber.

I hope Bill 28 goes to committee. I hope it goes to committee promptly. I don't know whether that can happen. I'm going to work very hard, as I said, with the government House leader to get this bill into committee as promptly as possible. I am. I'm going to work very hard. Sometimes you've got to make compromises. Come on now, please. As folks here know, compromise is not quite my middle name, but it's not foreign to me.

1750

Laughter.

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): "Honourable members: Ho, ho."

Mr. Kormos: Says Bradley.

I'm prepared to sit down with the government House leader and figure out a way whereby today—look, you folks sometimes get a little short-tempered and a little impatient, but think about this: Perhaps by taking that scenic route, there's been a thorough enough consideration of this that maybe second reading debate doesn't have to carry on. Once again, unfortunately, I don't have time this afternoon to complete my comments. I will be back when the bill is called next, whether it's next week or indeed the week after. If we have to sit through the final week of June to deal with some of this stuff, beyond June 22—

Ms. Wynne: Or into July.

Mr. Kormos: July 1 is a holiday, but after that my schedule is clear. If we have to sit until the final week of June—

Mr. Yakabuski: You're not doing any tours through Vineland?

Mr. Kormos: I get to come through Vineland every time I come up to Toronto.

Mr. Yakabuski: You are one lucky guy.

Mr. Kormos: I am one lucky guy. That is God's country down there.

Mr. Yakabuski: Do you live down on the Welland River?

Mr. Kormos: I live two blocks away from the Welland River, as a matter of fact, down on Bald Street.

Look, the bill has to get to committee. First of all, I want to hear the government explain how it is that this version of the Dunlop bill is going to enhance the protection of the people we're offering protection to: police officers, firefighters and paramedics, amongst others.

The other problem, and I've got to tell you there's a fundamental problem here, is that the bill once again clearly provides this protection to victims of crime, understandably, and clearly to people providing emergency health care services or emergency first aid and,

this is what's interesting, if the person was ill, injured or unconscious as a result of an accident or other emergency. Why would they put that in, Mr. Prue, as compared to being ill, injured or unconscious for any other reason? I find that very peculiar. Let me put this to you: There's a flaw. "While providing emergency health care services or first aid to the person, if the person was ill, injured or unconscious as a result of an accident or other emergency." Does it qualify, because there's no definition of "accident," if I or anybody else lose consciousness, pass out, fall, break my nose and start bleeding profusely? Is that the sort of accident that's contemplated? I don't know. The government seems hell-bent on restricting the class of persons who are eligible for this protection by virtue of that particular paragraph. But then here's the kicker; here's the kicker.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Just as I was enjoying the wonderful speech by the member opposite, I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome Miss Melissa Grover. She's Miss Teen Port Hope—in my riding—hopefully soon to be Miss Canada. Welcome.

The Acting Speaker: That's not a point of order, but we're pleased to extend our welcome to your guest.

I'll return to the member from Niagara Centre.

Mr. Kormos: Miss Port Hope, you're welcome anytime. I tell you, any one of us would have been pleased to introduce you to the chamber.

I've only got 10 minutes left and I'm only going to be able to do five, because we're getting close to 6, and then I'm going to come back to do the five.

Mr. Yakabuski: Oh, that seems unfair.

Mr. Kormos: But catch the kicker.

Interjection: Is there a way to rectify that?

Mr. Kormos: Please, can we have some order?

"In the course of his or her duties, if the person belongs to a prescribed class." This is what is of concern. What's the prescribed class? How restrictive is the government going to make this?

For instance, are they going to include teachers? Think about it. Teachers administer to children in any number of ways, not necessarily as a result of an accident. Heck, little kids in a lower level class vomit. Life for a kid is bodily fluid after bodily fluid. It's just one big bucket of bodily fluids, whatever it might be; well, it is. I see teachers in classrooms wiping noses, among other things. Think about it, Ms. Wynne. You've been there; you've done it. Don't tell me it's not. You've wiped up more bodily fluid in your life—you're a mother, for Pete's sake. You know exactly what I'm talking about.

Are teachers going to be included here, because surely that's relevant, isn't it? The government reserves to itself the power merely by regulation to define or describe those people in a prescribed class who will be eligible? Because this is protection. I'm going to tell you that one

of the questions that is going to be put at committee is the need for us to have some understanding of what this prescribed class is going to be. New Democrats and, I'm confident, our counterparts in the Conservative Party, are going to want that class to be as broad as is possible, as broad as is reasonable, broad enough to contemplate all those people who might be put at risk. The victim of crime is obvious. The police officer, as a victim of crime, is obvious, and I presume police officer is going to be part of the prescribed class. It would have been so nice if you guys had put it into the bill. It would have saved me at least 50 minutes of the last hour of debate. Had you put it in the bill, we could have just moved forward from there.

You people don't want it to go to committee. I suppose you could utilize the jackboot time allocation power that you've not been afraid to utilize in the past, but New Democrats are going to insist that this go to committee. I want the affected parties to be able to talk about how significant these amendments are, the process, because this significantly changes the procedure. No longer is the medical officer of health the sole authority, but authority is extended to the Consent and Capacity Board. That just smacks to me of more bureaucracy, more red tape, more time, more applications, more forms, more desks that it's got to pass over. And while all that's happening, some innocent victim is being infected with hep C—who knows what—and is being denied the opportunity to undertake that immediate prophylactic sort of medical process that could prevent the disease from infecting them and/or from them spreading it along to other people: their partners, their family members, other people they work with.

An interesting proposition, one that New Democrats will be pleased to deal with—I want to hear from people who have already had to utilize the existing legislation, who have had to use the Dunlop bill. I want to hear what the problems are, or whether this is just a make-work project on the part of the government and on the part of the minister. Is this merely buying a little time, a little filler so that opposition members are forced to occupy themselves with addressing these matters rather than, for instance, the government's failure to deliver on electricity? The incredible disaster today of go nuclear big, go nuclear all the way: Which one of your neighbourhoods is going to have the nuclear waste receptacle in it? Think about that. Which riding, which member, is going to be responsible for carting the nuclear waste to their riding? Are you ready to do it, Speaker?

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much. It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until later on this evening at 6:45 p.m.

The House adjourned at 1759.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

