

No. 105A



N° 105A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 38th Parliament

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

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 11 October 2006

Mercredi 11 octobre 2006

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Copies of Hansard

Copies of Hansard can be purchased from Publications Ontario: 880 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. e-mail: webpubont@gov.on.ca

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Exemplaires du Journal

Des exemplaires du Journal sont en vente à Publications Ontario : 880, rue Bay Toronto (Ontario), M7A 1N8 courriel : webpubont@gov.on.ca

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



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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 11 October 2006

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 11 octobre 2006

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton): It's time the members across the aisle were held accountable for some of the outrageous things they say in this Legislature.

Last evening, the member from Etobicoke North made remarks about my party that were nothing more than rubbish. They diminished the integrity of this chamber and they were remarks that attempted to impugn my party's commitment to immigrants. This is the same member who made ignorant and sexist remarks toward the former female member from Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Speaker, I want you to know something: I am a proud member of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, and the PC Party is the party of trailblazers in this province. We are trailblazers for women, minorities and new Canadians. Look at our legacy: The PC Party is proud to have elected the first female cabinet minister, the first Jewish cabinet minister, the first cabinet minister of Japanese descent, the first cabinet minister of South Asian descent, the first female finance minister. The list goes on, and with many more firsts to come.

The PC Party built this province, and we built this country. We built it with women, with new Canadians, with visible minorities, with ordinary Ontarians. Liberals may say one thing, but we know the truth.

Before the member opposite makes a half-hearted apology and wishes his mum a happy birthday, we're still waiting for an actual apology out of the member from Sudbury, who made equally demeaning and outrageous statements last week in this place.

Might I remind these members that the conduct in this chamber reflects on all of us. I sincerely hope that the members across the aisle will stop saying whatever they please just because—

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

POVERTY

Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale–High Park): October 17, which is next Tuesday, is the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. It's apropos that I rise to discuss the plight of our working poor in the wealthy province of Ontario.

The House should be aware that any family working full-time and making minimum wage falls below the poverty line in this province, and that the gap between wealthy and poor is wider now than when we all agreed in the House of Commons in 1989 to eradicate child poverty by the year 2000.

The Toronto Star, in a series of articles, has demanded action. It is time that we in this House respond.

Here is what Campaign 2000 recommends and asks for:

(1) That the government build affordable housing. We have 50,000 to 70,000 families waiting for it, and the wait time is five to 10 years, so clearly whatever response has happened is too little, too late.

(2) That we raise the minimum wage and index it to inflation. The poverty line is \$10 an hour. That should be our minimum wage.

(3) That we stop the clawback of the national child supplement.

(4) That we create the daycare spaces required to fulfill your promise to fund this necessary requirement to employment for women.

(5) Restore employment insurance to workers. Currently, only 29% of unemployed workers qualify for unemployment insurance.

One in six children in this wealthy province lives in poverty; 13,500 use food banks. This is ethically reprehensible.

CANCER RESEARCH

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): I rise in the House today to add my voice to a cause that I recently added my footsteps to. Two weeks ago, I participated in the Run for the Cure, in Blackburn hamlet, and was proud to help raise \$18,000 for cancer research.

Many others in our community also took steps to support this worthy cause, even our children. At the Henry Munro Middle School in Beacon Hill, students and staff ran 3,630 kilometres, the distance that would have completed Terry Fox's Marathon of Hope in 1980. At St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School, students from kindergarten up to grade 6 ran a one-kilometre track for an hour, raising \$800. In addition, \$310,000 was raised in the annual Terry Fox Run in Ottawa, the second-highest amount ever raised. I would like to congratulate all the people who made these events such a tremendous success.

Raising funds for cancer research is vitally important. One in three Ontarians will be impacted by cancer. This

year, 25,900 people in Ontario will die from cancer, while more than twice that will be diagnosed. But, thanks to this government, we are now better equipped to find a cure and develop stronger treatments than ever before. The McGuinty government has invested \$142 million to create the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research, which brings together public and private sector researchers to share resources and ideas. This government also gave \$65.2 million to the Ontario Cancer Research Network.

While our government has invested millions into cancer research, our communities are likewise making a difference. As the students of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School said in a letter to a local Orléans newspaper, every little bit helps.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): I rise today to express my concern for the misdirection and contradictions that Ontarians have been subject to by the McGuinty Liberals.

The Premier stated loud and clear that it's time for the federal government to come to the table about climate change. Yet when the federal government begins to work with the auto industry in their plan to reduce air emissions, he immediately is seen arm in arm with Buzz Hargrove, saying that the feds should back off on their plans.

This is a Premier who attacked the federal auto emission controls on the same day that Ontario's Environment Commissioner gave a scathing report, saying the McGuinty Liberals are neglecting their obligations to the environment. This is a Premier whose environment minister says she has a plan for Ontario with respect to climate change, but the Environment Commissioner's report says that after a search of ministry websites and contacting ministry staff, there is no formal plan for climate change.

This is a Premier whose energy minister says that coal-fired electricity needs to stop because of the air emissions, yet he purchases electricity at ridiculous prices from outside of Ontario, which is fired by—you guessed it—coal. This is a Premier who says he doesn't think it's right to get into jurisdictional battles when it comes to climate control, but immediately throws barbs at the province of Alberta, which actually has a plan for climate change.

Contradiction after contradiction; broken promise after broken promise. Say anything to get elected: That's the legacy of this government.

1340

ROCKTON FAIR

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot): One evening, heading out to a farm meeting in Rockton, my seven-year-old daughter asked me where I was going. When I told her "Rockton," she begged to come with me. I asked her what it was about

Rockton that got her so excited. "Oh, Daddy, Rockton has everything. They have the lion safari and the berry farm and the Cookhouse restaurant and, most important of all, the Rockton World's Fair." Those were pretty heady words straight from the heart of a seven-year-old expert, and of course she was right. Rockton does have everything.

There's a reason we refer to the annual Thanksgiving fair as the Rockton World's Fair. Simply put, it's a world-class event, organized and run by world-class volunteers, proudly displaying the richness of our vibrant agricultural community. This year's fair was the 154th and, according to early reports, probably the best attended in Rockton history. Four days of great weather certainly helped, as did the exciting array of rides, displays, homemade crafts and pies, exceptional entertainment and the incredible livestock competitions.

I was pleased to spend the better part of three days at this year's Rockton Fair. It has become a Thanksgiving tradition for many in our community, including myself, to stop, reflect and give thanks at Thanksgiving time in Rockton for the incredible people who have done so much to build our strong and diverse agricultural community.

To all of those connected with the Rockton Agricultural Society and the fair, I say, "Well done." I can hardly wait to get back next year.

COAL-FIRED GENERATING STATIONS

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): Picking up on the theme, it is clear that the only health that concerns the McGuinty Liberals is the health of their own party. If they think it's good for them, they will say it, whether they believe it or not.

Case in point: Their total climbdown from their iron-clad commitment to shut down all coal-fired power plants by 2007. The promise was ridiculous from the start, but that didn't matter to Dalton McGuinty. When it became obvious that they could not follow through, they tried to blame the IESO. We know Liberals could never admit they were wrong themselves. My predecessor, Sean Conway, who knew more than anyone else in the Liberal Party about energy, wanted nothing to do with this promise. He knew that it couldn't be kept.

The Premier said that they based their promise on the best advice available to them from experts at the time. Last week in estimates, I asked the Minister of Energy to provide for me and the people of Ontario the names of those experts. None were provided, although he has promised to get them for me. I won't be holding my breath waiting for him to keep his word. After all, he is a Liberal. Just look at his record.

The McGuinty Liberals won office by saying anything to get votes, anything they felt would work in their favour. We're now into the election year. To the people of Ontario: Heed my warning. The Liberals will be out looking for your votes. More fabrications are on the way.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I would like you to withdraw the last noun.

Mr. Yakabuski: I withdraw, Speaker.

KENT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL HALL OF FAME

Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham–Kent Essex): On October 25, six exceptional individuals will be inducted into the Kent County Agricultural Hall of Fame.

Barry Fraser is the father of the Kent County Agricultural Hall of Fame. He was concerned that the pioneer work of county farmers and their wives in developing agriculture and farm organizations would be forgotten. With the same determination that has earmarked everything he has done, Barry drafted a framework for an agricultural hall of fame that would provide a permanent record of accomplishments.

Edgar and Lynda Gervais have shown tremendous commitment to the future of agriculture through their extensive involvement in 4H and Junior Farmers. They are leaders and mentors to our youth.

In addition to John Peter and Betty VanHaren's contributions to the community, farm and church organizations, their courage and vision have led them to successfully develop swine of superior genetics that have been recognized internationally for their quality.

The late Victor Lauriston was an author, journalist, historian and long-time school trustee. He will be recognized for his pioneer effort in the development of technical education and as a forerunner of agricultural education. His publications, such as *Romantic Kent*, provide a vivid portrayal of the hard work and sacrifices of early Kent farmers.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to these six outstanding Kent county citizens for their contributions to the betterment of agriculture and the quality of life in our rural communities.

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph–Wellington): I rise today to join Children's Mental Health Ontario in recognizing World Mental Health Day.

It was not long ago that mental illness sufferers were shamed in their communities and quickly labelled as insane. Green was often used as the colour to label these individuals. Today, we use the colour green as a tool in the construction of a more educated and tolerant world when it comes to mental health. Green signifies new life, new growth and new beginnings.

World Mental Health Day was first observed in 1992. The theme for this year is "Building Awareness—Reducing Risks: Mental Illness and Suicide." Since 1994, many countries, particularly England and Australia, have held campaigns to mark this day.

Given the violent incidents in schools in both Canada and the United States over the past month, the theme for

this year is particularly important. We must all work to recognize mental health issues and reduce stigmas so that those in need seek treatment.

In fact, the McGuinty government has funded a number of new programs in my riding of Guelph–Wellington. An assertive community treatment team which provides intensive supports for people with serious mental illness to live in the community has been funded, and we've just been pleased to host Minister Smitherman announcing a new home for the Community Mental Health Clinic.

World Mental Health Day is a valuable occasion for all of us to work together to focus on mental health and support the people who suffer from—

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

WATER QUALITY

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): There is John Tory and then there is also his contradictory caucus. According to the contradictory Conservative caucus, John Tory will vote against our proposed Clean Water Act. The former Tory government that was forced to call a public inquiry over the tragic loss of life in Walkerton due to contaminated water, the party that campaigned on implementing all of Justice O'Connor's recommendations, plans, according to the backbencher caucus over there, to vote against the proposed Clean Water Act. Now their leader will have to explain to the voters of Don Valley West why he does not believe governments should act when there is a significant threat to their source of drinking water.

In debate, the contradictory caucus of the Conservative Party says, according to the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, that if they form the government, they will amend the bill, while the member for Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford says they will repeal the bill.

Joe Tascona went on to say last night that the cost of Bill 43 should be borne entirely by the provincial government. John Yakabuski says the cost is \$7 billion; Bill Murdoch says the cost is \$18 billion. I'm looking forward to John "Contradictory" Tory and his platform when he tries to resolve that one. Who is running the shop over there—John Tory or the caucus?

Laurie Scott says that Bill 43 is draconian in regard to property rights—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Order. The member for Perth–Middlesex.

Interjections.

The Speaker: I'd like to remind all members, but particularly this member, that using the proper names of members is improper and that you need to use the constituency name or a particular title of a member in this place.

Mr. Wilkinson: Well, then, I say to the Speaker, when is the vacating member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey going to get his caucus in order?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT
(SCHOOL WASTE REDUCTION), 2006LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR L'ÉDUCATION (RÉDUCTION
DES DÉCHETS DANS LES ÉCOLES)

Mr. Patten moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 147, An Act to amend the Education Act / Projet de loi 147, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation.

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

Member for Ottawa Centre, you may wish to make a brief statement.

Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I think members on all sides of the House will be interested in this insofar as all parties participated in this particular venture, so I'm happy and I'm proud today to rise to speak to the bill, An Act to amend the Education Act regarding school waste reduction. This bill, if passed, will reduce waste generated by schools by requiring, first of all, every classroom in the province to have a minimum of two recycling containers, one for paper, one for plastic and aluminum. Secondly, what's required is that every school cafeteria have a recycling facility and that the recycling facility clearly indicate which materials are recyclable and where in the facility the recycling materials are to be placed.

This bill, before resting sponsorship in my hands, was originally introduced by Kathleen Wynne, the MPP for Don Valley West. As you are aware, she is now the Minister of Education and can no longer sponsor this. Therefore, I stand before the Legislature today to sponsor this bill proudly.

I want to recognize Mike Wise of the CBC, who is with us today, who organized and shepherded the pilot project Making the Grade, which involved all parties in this House—

Interjection.

Mr. Patten:—excuse me for speaking while you're speaking—the teacher Laura Hudgin and the 10 students from the geography club at Georgetown District High School. It is this group of people who, with their perseverance and dedication, made this bill possible.

The project Making the Grade was intended to provide an exercise for students to get involved and to learn more about the political process. From 106 preliminary ideas, five became bills, and three were finally chosen and presented by each party in this House. Those bills were introduced and called for second reading debate on May 10.

I believe that recycling is a worthwhile cause and is in keeping with the government's waste diversion goal of 60%. If this bill is passed, it will create jobs in recycling facilities and will do much to help the environment for the future of these students and their children to follow. I hope that you will support this, and I congratulate the students and the teacher as well.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 11, 2006, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 194. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1353 to 1358.

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Fonseca, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Arthurs, Wayne	Hardeman, Ernie	Ramal, Khalil
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Runciman, Robert W.
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Ruprecht, Tony
Cansfield, Donna H.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Caplan, David	Levac, Dave	Scott, Laurie
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Marsales, Judy	Smith, Monique
Chudleigh, Ted	Martiniuk, Gerry	Smitherman, George
Colle, Mike	McMeekin, Ted	Sterling, Norman W.
Crozier, Bruce	McNeely, Phil	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	Meilleur, Madeleine	Tory, John
Di Cocco, Caroline	Miller, Norm	Watson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	Milloy, John	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	Mitchell, Carol	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard	Yakabuski, John
Dunlop, Garfield	Peters, Steve	Zimmer, David
Elliott, Christine	Phillips, Gerry	

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
DiNovo, Cheri	Martel, Shelley	Tabuns, Peter
Horwath, Andrea	Murdoch, Bill	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 50; the nays are 8.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

TRANSIT SERVICES

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Transportation): I rise in the House today with an update on the McGuinty government's ambitious and multi-faceted

plan to make public transit more convenient and more reliable across the province.

Our government has invested more in public transit in Ontario than any other government in the last decade. The provincial gas tax program will pump \$1.6 billion into transit systems across the province by 2009. That is a record investment. The McGuinty government has made good on its commitment to invest two cents of every litre of gasoline sold in Ontario into municipal transit systems across the province to increase ridership. Very shortly I will announce the third-year gas tax allocations.

Tomorrow I will have the pleasure of announcing a major step forward for the GTTA, the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority. So whether it's the GTTA, the gas tax, the high-occupancy vehicle lanes—I don't know if you've used them; they're absolutely phenomenal—Move Ontario or the growth plan, these are all important elements of our plan to ease congestion and improve public transit so that more people can simply leave their cars at home.

The greater Toronto area occupies less than 1% of Ontario's land mass, but nearly half of the province's 12.5 million residents live in the region. Improving public transit services and increasing ridership are crucial to easing congestion in the greater Toronto area. GO Transit is the backbone of public transit in this area, and I'm pleased to report that GO Transit recently marked its one billionth rider. The original GO Transit train service carried 2.5 million passengers in 1967—that was its first year of operation. Today, the combined rail and bus system moves more than 48 million riders annually. That's the equivalent of taking 170,000 cars off our roads every day.

In one hour on a typical weekday—on a morning, for example—some 39,000 passengers arrive by GO train at Union Station in downtown Toronto. If all of those people drove instead of taking transit, we would need to build four more Gardiner Expressways and four new Don Valley Parkways.

The McGuinty government has invested \$1.6 billion in GO Transit since 2003—\$1.6 billion. We have helped GO Transit add more than 4,000 new parking spaces at GO lots. We've built four new train stations, ordered 31 new buses, 14 double-decker buses, 50 new bi-level passenger rail cars and 27 more powerful locomotives. GO ridership is expected to double in the next 20 to 30 years, and without our critical planning and key investments, such as the ones our government has delivered, we will not be able to handle the increase in ridership, so we've made the investment.

We must be mindful that convenient, reliable and safe transportation is vital to our quality of life and also to Ontario's prosperity. Sustainable transportation is also vital. As Minister of Transportation, sustainable transportation and the protection of our environment are among my highest priorities. When we look at solutions to traffic congestion, keeping goods and people moving safely and efficiently, they must be sustainable solutions.

This is what our plan is doing for GO Transit riders and for commuters right across Ontario. We are making

public transit more convenient and reliable, and more people are choosing to leave their cars at home. Fewer cars on our roads means we are spending less time stuck in traffic, burning less fuel, and ultimately breathing cleaner air.

Starting with the 2004-05 budget, the McGuinty government has put \$3.5 billion into public transit. We have delivered better public transit; we have delivered convenience; we have delivered reliability and accessibility.

I know that all of our honourable members will support all our public transit initiatives and investments right across this province.

NORTHERN ECONOMY

Hon. Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I rise today to inform members of the most recent steps taken by the government to help ensure sustained investment in mineral exploration and to strengthen the north's economy.

Historically, the prosperity of northern communities has been grounded in the rocks and forests of northern Ontario. This is a region that comprises nearly 90% of our province's land mass, a region whose natural resources contribute profoundly to Ontario's economy. In 2005, for example, the province's annual mineral production was valued at \$7.2 billion.

We know that the fortunes of resource industries and the communities that rely on them cycle through highs and lows. While this has challenged governments for years, the difference is that our government is working in an unprecedented manner alongside northerners to seek solutions to our regional issues. But this is not just a concern of northerners. For example, those who live in other areas of Ontario may lose sight of the profound benefit of mining activity for all Ontarians. Beyond the reality that minerals are needed for virtually every aspect of our daily lives, there is the fact that the province's mineral sector provides 23,000 direct jobs and 75,000 indirect jobs in southern as well as northern Ontario.

Currently, the mineral sector is benefiting from an exceptional boom in global demand and profitability. Our government is acting to help ensure sustained, strong investment in mineral exploration. For example, members of this House will recall that the ministry has already launched Ontario's first mineral development strategy, which will enhance the mineral sector's global competitiveness while opening new opportunities for all Ontarians. Members will also recall that we are investing \$15 million over three years for geological mapping in the far north, and members will recall that we are investing \$10 million to help establish the Centre for Excellence in Mining Innovation, housed at Laurentian University.

While the mineral sector is booming, the forest industry in northern Ontario—and across Canada for that matter—continues to be under pressure from several directions. The government is keenly aware of the challenges to this resource-based industry, and that is why we

are investing \$900 million over five years to boost the competitiveness of this vital sector. That's also why we are making a concerted effort on many fronts to promote a diversified economy in the north.

We are focused on building new opportunities and new economic development in the north. Our government's northern prosperity plan brings together a range of targeted initiatives to drive job creation, economic growth and competitiveness, and the participation of northerners in charting our own future.

1410

In addition to increasing the ministry's operating budget by \$3 million and highway spending by \$60 million, our government is working together with northerners to achieve real progress. For example, investments totalling \$182 million through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. alone have helped create or sustain just over 6,000 jobs and work placements since October 2003.

Our government recognizes that young people are yet another valuable northern resource. We are working to provide opportunities for youth to remain in the north, have satisfying careers, grow families and build lives. Through the northern Ontario heritage fund, young northerners are taking advantage of new youth-specific programs for internships, co-op placements and support for entrepreneurs. To date, the youth internship and co-op program have created 425 jobs or work placements in businesses across the north. The young entrepreneur program has helped launch 54 new businesses and created 77 new jobs in northern Ontario.

Another initiative under the northern prosperity plan aims to attract major international investors in northern Ontario. The GO North investor program is marketing the north's advantages abroad in sectors that have been identified as a good fit for northern Ontario. Here at home, the program is helping northern communities ensure that they are ready to attract and respond to interest from foreign investors.

Understanding that economic development is inextricably linked to infrastructure, the McGuinty government, through the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal with Minister David Caplan at the helm, is investing an unprecedented \$1.8 billion over five years—including a record \$357 million in this fiscal year alone—to ensure that northern highways are safe and efficient.

A significant aspect of the northern prosperity plan is northern engagement. Never has a government opened so many avenues of participation for northerners, who are now directly engaged in talking to our government about northern policies and initiatives. For example, northern development councils represent the far north, northwest, northeast, and the major urban cities in northern Ontario. Their first report to me will be based on extensive dialogue for northerners about creating opportunities for the youth in northern Ontario.

Through such measures, the government is actively engaged with northerners to build on the region's proven strengths as well as its tremendous potential to secure

jobs and attract new businesses, innovation and diversification.

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

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound—Muskoka): I'm astonished at the unmitigated gall of the member opposite to stand up and declare that the Liberal Party's northern policies are a success. People in communities like Smooth Rock Falls, Red Rock, Kenora, Opasatika, Thunder Bay, Kapuskasing, Terrace Bay and Sturgeon Falls, to name but a few, will beg to differ.

It's like watching those Liberal ads about how rosy things are in Ontario. Another broken promise: a promise that they made where they said they weren't going to be having partisan ads. You just need to watch your TV daily to see that that promise has been broken.

I'd like to remind you of some of the other promises you made. You promised to make Northern Development and Mines a lead ministry in the Liberal government. The truth is that in 2006 you've cut funding to the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, and on top of that, in 2005 you chose not to spend almost half the budgeted amount for the ministry. Where did that money go?

You also promised to return the heritage fund to its original mandate: fostering private sector job creation through partnerships with the private sector to diversify and grow the northern economy and create jobs. But the truth is, you've used the northern Ontario heritage fund to fund infrastructure projects like water pumps and plants; important, yes, but not the private sector job creators that we were told the money would flow to.

You promised to ensure that the community reinvestment fund would provide northern communities with their fair share of provincial funding, but the truth is that the Liberals' version of the community reinvestment fund, the Ontario municipal partnership fund, has left northern Ontario communities searching for money to pay the bills. The fund makes winners and losers, and unfortunately cities like North Bay, Parry Sound, Greenstone and many others are the losers and are seeing their share reduced as the cost of everything goes up, up and up.

Your government's "let them eat cake" approach to your energy policy has been the final straw for many businesses across the north, and municipal mayors who attended the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association conference are on the record about their relationship with the government. They describe your government as the "say anything, promise anything to get elected" McGuinty government.

Michael Power, the mayor of Greenstone, is quoted as saying—I suggest the minister listen to the clip of the five or so mayors from the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association conference—"If you do not, Dalton McGuinty, government of Ontario, step up to the plate now and put in place the promises you have given us, I swear by all that is holy that there will not be a Liberal elected in northern Ontario—not one." That's a direct quote.

There were many other mayors on the record. Another mayor says, "It appears that nobody cares and nobody

wants to listen and nobody is willing to step forward to the plate, and all we keep hearing is, 'Soon, soon, soon.' It means more delays" and more job loss.

Your energy minister was in Sudbury, where he advised northerners on how to deal with the 55% increase in energy prices in the time this government has been in power that is so crippling the forestry sector. His advice: "Find a blanket, buy some good red wine"—if you can afford the good red wine, you'd be able to pay your energy bill—"and cuddle with someone." That was the Minister of Energy's advice to northerners.

I know the minister likes to talk about grow bonds. I'm curious, because every time I go to northern Ontario, I'm asked, "Who bought those grow bonds, anyway? What are they being used for?"

Where else has your government failed the north? Your timelines for completing Highway 69 and the Highway 11 four-laning are years behind those of the previous government; for Highway 69, which was a favourite project of the minister, five years behind the past government. There have been no improvements in rail and air to better connect the people in the north.

The North Bay hospital is still just a field of dreams. In fact, the only time there's action on the North Bay hospital is when the Leader of the Opposition, John Tory, goes to North Bay. Then, all of a sudden, miraculously, the next day, there's an announcement that some progress has been made. Having been in North Bay just a few weeks ago, the people are still asking, "What's going on with the hospital? It's still an empty field."

The forest industry has been in a crisis for more than half of this government's mandate, but your government has done little or nothing to help, despite the fact that you had all sorts of advice from industry experts. You created a fund, but less than 5% of it has been distributed to an industry in dire need—the number two industry in Ontario, certainly the number one industry in the north, an industry that complete towns rely on, an industry that's seen 9,000 direct job losses in the province. Don't insult the intelligence of—

The Speaker: Thank you. Responses?

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins—James Bay): The minister has a lot of gall to stand in this House today on the very day that Domtar announced that another 140 workers are going to be losing their jobs in Nairn Centre because of this government's failed policy on electricity and a number of other issues that have basically assisted in the layoffs of over 4,500 workers in northern Ontario.

Let me read the list, just so I remind you, Minister: Cascades, Thunder Bay, 375 permanent jobs lost; Abitibi-Consolidated in Kenora, 350 permanent jobs lost; Norampac container board, Red Rock, 300 permanent jobs gone; Columbia Forest Products veneer plant in Rutherglen, 63 jobs lost; Columbia Forest Products, OSB mill, in Hearst, 76; Tembec sawmill in Timmins temporarily shut down, another 19 jobs gone permanently; Weyerhaeuser, one paper machine and wood house, 115 jobs lost for the community of Dryden; Weyerhaeuser sawmill in Dryden, 385 jobs lost permanently; Weyer-

hauser, Sturgeon Falls, 125 jobs lost permanently; EXCEL sawmill in Opatatika, 78 jobs lost permanently; Domtar sawmill, Chapleau, 67 permanent jobs lost; Bowater newsprint, Thunder Bay, 100 jobs lost permanently; Bowater kraft pulp, Thunder Bay, 250 jobs lost permanently; Bowater kraft mill, Thunder Bay, 250 jobs lost permanently; Smurfit-Stone containerboard, Thunder Bay, 100 jobs lost permanently; Temagami Forest Products, Temagami, 55 jobs lost permanently; Tembec, Smooth Rock Falls, 230 jobs lost indefinitely, the only employer in town, as is the case with most of these communities; Tembec, Mattawa, 111 temporary jobs lost; Tembec, Kapuskasing, 65 permanent jobs lost; Kruger, Longlac Wood Industries, 350 jobs lost; Domtar pulp and paper, Espanola, 100 jobs lost; Devlin sawmill, Kenora, 30 jobs lost permanently; Patricia Logging, Dryden, 35 jobs lost permanently; Interlake Paper, St. Catharines, 48 jobs lost; Sturgeon Timber, 70; and the list goes on to Domtar, Cornwall, 910 permanent jobs; and Domtar Ottawa, 185. Some record.

1420

If this is good for northern Ontario, I don't know what planet you're on, Minister, but you're not on the same planet as the rest of us. The quicker you figure out that your policies are leading to what is happening in northern Ontario when it comes to communities across the north, when it comes to forestry, and you guys take your responsibility, maybe the better off we'll be.

All we've had from this government is one announcement after another, which at the end has done nothing. What has been one of their things? Electricity policies. They take the failed electricity policies of Ernie Eves and Mike Harris; and then they say, "We're opposed to it," in opposition; they campaign against it; and then they become Mike Harris incognito when it comes to Dalton McGuinty being the Premier of Ontario.

You take a look at what's going on in regard to forestry policies as far as wood fibre and what it costs to bring wood into mills. This government has had one solution. To an industry that is in debt, they turned around and they said, "Here: We're going to help you out. We're going to lend you money." You tell me of one industry that is in debt as much as the forestry sector, and to say to them, "Here—your Visa is maxed out—let us give you a MasterCard," has been the effect of this government.

If you stand in this Legislature today and say you're proud, as the McGuinty Liberals, of your record in northern Ontario, I can tell you, in the next election in northern Ontario, as it will be in other places, people will remember just how dismal that record is, and far fewer Liberals will be returned to Queen's Park.

TRANSIT SERVICES

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto—Danforth): The Minister of Transportation made an announcement in the House here a few minutes ago, and that announcement is going to be very cold comfort to those who will be sitting

in their cars this evening, going nowhere on the Don Valley Parkway, on the 401 or on the Queen Elizabeth Way, and it will be very cold comfort to those who are packed in like sardines on the Yonge Street subway, because the reality is that this government still spends \$2 on highways for every \$1 it puts into transit.

What we didn't get today was an announcement that the Greater Toronto Transit Authority is going to get the money and the authority to do the job that it's supposed to do. What we do get is a government that's on track to ensure that this whole region, the GTA, will become a scene of permanent gridlock.

The GTTA, this shell, this cover for GO Transit, doesn't have the resources to do what has to be done. This region is more difficult to travel through every day. This government is responsible for that gridlock.

VISITORS

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Members will be glad to know that today, in the members' west gallery, is a very special guest, none other than my youngest daughter, Natalie, and her friend Sean. I want to attest that it's all her mother's doing. She doesn't look anything like me.

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm sure members of the Legislative Assembly will want to welcome Bernadette, Mary Ann, Amanda and Teena, the staff from my constituency office, who are down for a political insight day. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I would bring members' attention to the Speaker's gallery. We have there His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Duc Hung, the newly appointed ambassador to Canada from Vietnam.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to remind all honourable members that the Vietnam-Canada Friendship Association has a reception for the newly appointed ambassador to Canada at 3 o'clock in room 228. All honourable members are invited.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HEALTH CARE

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): I have here a copy of an ad. My question is for the Premier. I have a copy of an ad from the September 22 to 24, 2006, issue of 24 Hours newspaper. It's an ad about wait times, and it says, "To find out how to reduce your wait times, call or visit our website." We had someone call to ask about reducing a wait time in a hypothetical case for someone waiting for 48 days for an MRI. The operator responded by saying that that wasn't too bad a wait time at all. I didn't know they were hired to give editorials as well, but that should fit in with the rest of the millions of

dollars of taxpayer money that you're spending on this. The same response precisely was received in a second call.

Premier, millions of taxpayer dollars are being spent on these ads to create a sense of hope among the people who read them and then pick up the phone to call that their wait time is going to be reduced. It's your "say anything to get a vote" at its worst. This ad is clearly misleading, on top of being a waste of taxpayers' money. Will you withdraw—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I need you to withdraw the offending word "misleading."

Mr. Tory: The reference I made, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Just withdraw, please.

Mr. Tory: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you. Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): The leader of the official opposition may not think that information relating to wait times in Ontario is important, but I can tell you that since we've put up our wait times website, there have been more than 1.65 million visits, which are arming Ontarians with information they never had in the past. It gives a better understanding of what is happening to wait times in the province of Ontario. It gives them a good sense of specifically what is happening with wait times at their local hospital. It helps them make a decision as to where they want to go if they're going to undergo certain kinds of treatment or procedures.

The previous government was afraid to share that kind of information with the public. That's not the kind of information they were prepared to share with the public. We've collected that information for the first time, we've made it available to the public and we're more than proud to share that with them. We look forward to sharing even more information with them in the future.

Mr. Tory: The claim in the ad, which is put into the newspaper at a cost of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money—millions of dollars, by the way, funnelled through your Liberal advertising agency at Bensimon Byrne—is that we can find out how to reduce the wait times by calling this number. Those are exactly the words it says: "To find out how to reduce your wait times, call or visit our website." So we called and asked about someone who had a wait time for four to six weeks for an MRI in Brockville. We were told to talk to the family doctor and get a referral to another hospital. We asked, "Is there any other way to do that?" The answer was, "No." You are creating a false sense of hope among people in the province that they can reduce their wait times. You've put in ads that are incorrect in that they can't reduce their wait time through this website or any other place. Why don't you withdraw the ad and stop wasting the taxpayers' money?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The leader of the official opposition is clearly now establishing himself as a purveyor of doom and gloom in the province of Ontario. He's very reluctant to admit that wait times are coming down. Cancer surgeries are down by 3.7%; angiographies are

down by 50%; angioplasties are down by 25%. Cataract surgeries are down by nearly 20%; by the way, that's down by 61 days. Hip replacements are down by 18%; that's 63 days' shorter wait. Knee replacements are down by 12%; that's down by 52 days. MRIs are down by 23%, down 28 days; that's the equivalent.

The leader of the official opposition is reluctant to admit that by working together with our doctors, nurses, health care professionals and patients, we are actually scoring some real successes in getting wait times down in Ontario.

1430

Mr. Tory: Of course, the facts show that in many places the wait-lists for those very same procedures you talked about are going up, not to mention the new wait-lists that are being created for heart bypasses, shoulder surgery and all kinds of other things—new wait-lists are being created on your watch.

Now, we called you—

Interjections.

The Speaker: The Minister of Health needs to come to order. I will not be warning him again.

Mr. Tory: We called your multi-million-dollar hotline and asked them again about how we can reduce wait times, which is what the ad says. When we called about an MRI in Barrie, they asked us if Barrie was close to Timmins or Peterborough or was it closer to Toronto, which is an interesting commentary on how the money is being spent in and of itself.

But here are a couple of the other helpful answers we got. One of the operators said, "Usually we just tell people to wait for their appointment if there's already one booked." Now there's some helpful advice on how to reduce your wait time.

Another one, when they said, "I don't have a family doctor I can go to to try to get referred somewhere else; I'm one of the 1.2 million who don't have one," the answer was, "Please call the College of Physicians and Surgeons." There's some other really helpful advice on reducing wait times.

How can you countenance wasting these millions of taxpayers' dollars to give people—

The Speaker: The question has been asked. Premier?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Mr. Doom and Gloom has a tremendous amount of difficulty receiving, accepting and welcoming good news. The fact is that we're getting wait times down in the province of Ontario.

I think the leader of the official opposition needs a brief history lesson in terms of what it really means to waste money on advertising. I have a full selection of advertising propaganda that was released during the term of the previous government. Out of respect for this House I will not hold it up, but I can tell you this: If you look at the one relating to education, there's a lovely picture of one Mike Harris on the inside front cover; if you take a look at the one on SuperBuild, there's a picture of six members of the government inside the front cover; if you take a look at the one on health services, there's one there of one Mike Harris and a senior—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Minister of Energy, Minister of Economic Development and Trade, I need to be able to hear the Premier. Premier?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: To make a long and abysmal story very short, that government excelled in an exceptional way when it came to wasting taxpayer dollars on blatant partisan advertising, putting their faces at our front doors every single day.

I have confidence in the people of Ontario to distinguish blatant partisan, door-to-door advertising and good public information.

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

Mr. Tory: My question is for the Premier, and let's talk about some of that good public sector information, or whatever he called it, that Mr. Broken Promise was talking about.

It's very clear that the facts don't support the claims made in this advertisement. We asked how easy it was, when we called the very same call centre—the very same ad that said, "Here's how to reduce your wait time." We asked, "Well, how easy is it to get a referral to a family doctor, so that you might actually explore reducing your wait time?" Here's one of the responses we got, and I quote, "Well, it depends on the family doctor and the relationship with the family doctor. The patient would have to explain to the doctor why the procedure was needed and why they couldn't wait. If the patient had a good rapport with the doctor, a good relationship, then it shouldn't be a problem."

Premier, you're spending \$2 million running these ads—taxpayers' dollars that could be spent on doctors, nurses, waiting rooms and so on, and all they're telling people is that if they have a good relationship with their doctor, they can reduce their waiting time. This is ridiculous. Will you withdraw this ad?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Again, Mr. Doom and Gloom is reluctant—most reluctant—to admit that we are making some real progress when it comes to getting wait times down in Ontario.

He's also reluctant to admit and accept that some 420,000 Ontarians have now found a doctor since we first formed the government. He doesn't believe it was a good thing for us to put in place 150 new family health teams. He doesn't support the construction of a brand new medical school in Ontario. He doesn't believe we should be expanding medical school spaces by 23%. He doesn't believe we should be increasing family medicine resident spaces by 70%.

But what he does believe, the hill he's prepared to die on, what he's prepared to go to the wall for, is to take \$2.5 billion out of health care in Ontario. That's what he believes in.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Stop the clock. Minister of Health Promotion. I can wait. The member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound will come to order. Minister of Labour.

Supplementary.

Mr. Tory: Again, we kind of knew where Mr. Broken Promise was going with that one, but I'd like to ask the Premier this: The ad makes a very strong claim that this ad is about how to reduce your wait times. That's what it says it's about. That's why we're spending millions in taxpayers' money.

We asked, "If we followed the advice to talk to the family doctor and got a referral to a new hospital, would we automatically get the procedure done within a shorter period of time?" That's a logical thing to say: "If we went to the family doctor and got the referral, would we get a shortening of the wait time?" The answer was, "We can't guarantee that."

This is a perfect example of how you and your ads are prepared to say absolutely anything to get a vote or anything else. You don't care whose hopes you dash. You don't care if there are old people who are sick who are waiting on these lists. This ad is not supported by the facts. Will you get rid of it and stop implying to people that you're going to give them some hope that they can reduce their wait time? You're spending taxpayers' money to raise false hopes in people, and that's wrong. It's wrong to spend it and it's wrong to raise false hopes. Will you withdraw it?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The facts here are incontrovertible, they are incontestable, and the head of the Wait Times Alliance—in fact, I'm sure the leader of the official opposition will be interested in this information—described Ontario as having gone from a laggard to a leader when it comes to getting wait times down on a national basis.

If we take a look, for example, at the issue of cataract surgery, wait times are down by 19.6%. That's down 61 days. That may not be of any real significance to the leader of the official opposition, but if you are a senior living alone in your home, it matters one heck of a lot to have your sight restored so you can lead a fuller, more enriched life.

1440

The leader of the official opposition thinks that is meaningless. He thinks it's not important to make wait time information available to Ontarians—

The Speaker: Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Tory: You ask six different questions, and the point isn't at all that you don't want to make the information available to people; the point is—we'll try it one more time—that you spend millions of taxpayers' dollars, channelled through your friends at Bensimon Byrne, to put ads in the newspaper and on television saying you're going to reduce their wait time and how they can phone and find out how to reduce their wait time.

Lastly, at least for today, we actually went to the example of someone who did need shoulder surgery and had them phone and say, "Could you help me out? I've got a shoulder surgery and it's taking a long time to get this dealt with." What do you think they were told? "Well, we're sorry. That's not important. It's not on our priority list." And we said, "Wait a minute. It doesn't say

in the ad that you have to be in the priority areas to reduce your wait times; it just says to call to reduce your waiting times."

Again, we're insulting the hard-working people of Ontario by spending their money—millions of dollars of their money—funnelled through your Liberal ad firm, to say you can reduce wait times when, if you're needing shoulder surgery or—

The Speaker: The question has been asked.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I'll give the leader of the official opposition something: He's got no shortage of nerve. Even though he speaks on a platform, on a foundation, of a previous government that did not want to tackle wait times in any meaningful sense, that refused to make information public to the people of Ontario, he is saying to us that what we've done is wrong because we've chosen five specific areas and chosen to define successes in those five specific areas. Furthermore, he says it's wrong for us to make that information public, and he says we should be expanding this.

What I can infer from that is, yes, we are going in the right direction; yes, it was right for us to choose the five specific areas we've tackled; yes, it's right for us to continue to make progress in those areas; yes, it's right for us to make this information public; and yes, it's right for us to build on this foundation and to look to other areas where we can still reduce wait times.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): A question for the Premier: Four years ago, the provincial government took over school boards in Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton so it could force cuts in the classroom. At the time, you called this "martial law" and said that nothing could improve while school boards were being forced to cut services for kids. You said, "Review the funding formula, make it fair and then talk to school boards about balancing their books."

It's now 2006. You admit that the funding formula is still flawed, unfair and inadequate, but you refuse to conduct the review of the school funding formula that you called for.

Premier, if it was martial law when the Conservative government forced funding cuts on our school classrooms, how is it not martial law when your government is now doing exactly the same thing?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): It's a different time, it's a different era and we're bringing a different approach. The NDP will well remember the combative approach brought by the Conservatives, and of course he will want to forget about the social contract that was foisted upon public servants right across Ontario.

We're bringing a different approach. It is a collaborative approach. The Minister of Education has put in place an individual who will chair a co-management team. We will work together with two trustees from the board. We will work together in the interests of the

students. We will build on the solid financial foundation that we have laid together. We've increased funding so far by 22% for that particular board, even though growth in enrolment has only been 3%. We think we're on the right path.

Mr. Hampton: Parents and students find this all too familiar. You admit the school funding formula is flawed, yet you refuse the fundamental overhaul of the school funding formula that you called for, just like the Conservatives.

Members of your government attack school board trustees, calling them "an embarrassment" just like the Conservatives did, because those trustees refused to force your cuts in the classroom. Now you expect parents and students to be fooled because you're calling your school supervisor a co-manager. As one school board trustee said, "It's like saying the hangman is a nicer guy."

Premier, the parents, students and trustees ask you: When it's all about forcing your cuts in the classroom, how is your hangman any different from the Conservatives' hangman?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: What I'm sure the leader of the NDP would want to admit is that in fact what we're hearing by way of commentary from parents, whether in that board or in any other board across the province, is that they welcome the era of peace and stability. They welcome the massive infusion of new funding into our public schools. They welcome the thousands of new teachers that have been hired. They welcome the new textbooks. They welcome the new funding to restore plant and physical infrastructure. They welcome the fact that our children are making progress on their test scores. They welcome the fact that more and more young people are staying on and completing their high school education.

They welcome the fact that they finally have a government that is fully committed to public education. They welcome the fact that, in those few instances where boards are having challenges when it comes to balancing their budgets, we are bringing a co-operative, collaborative approach. It certainly is a new era in Ontario when it comes to public education.

Mr. Hampton: I admit there are more photo ops now—there are certainly more photo ops—but the whole situation seems so similar.

Democratically elected trustees, backed by parents and their community, voted 7-2 against your cuts. They said no to cutting the reading recovery program, a remedial reading strategy that helps grade 1 kids learn how to read. They're tired of seeing washrooms without soap and buildings in disrepair. They said no to cuts in special education. They don't want to see kids who need extra help languishing on a waiting list.

Premier, this is the question these parents are asking. They say that Dalton McGuinty can find millions of dollars for your pre-election TV ads, but they're asking you, why can't you find the money to fix the funding formula that you called for and that you admit is flawed and inadequate?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Something else that parents throughout the province are welcoming is the absence of strikes, the fact that they can rely on schools being open and that the children go to school every day, uninterrupted. They welcome the fact that we're funding especially teachers like librarians and music teachers and phys ed teachers. They welcome the fact that we've in fact increased the fund for special education.

But maybe the Brampton Guardian had it best of all when they said in an editorial, "Finally, staff, students and parents with the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board will be able to ... get on with the important things, making sure children get the best possible education.... Regardless of what's gone on to get everyone to this point, working together to minimize the impact on the classroom should be the thing everyone focuses on." I simply could not agree more. We will now work together and get on with the job.

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

Mr. Hampton: To the Premier: I think parents will find it strange that you can find the money for your feel-good pre-election television ads, but at the same time, you say it's okay to cut reading recovery. But what's happening in Dufferin-Peel is being mirrored in school boards across the province. Northern Ontario boards, 11 of them, have seen their budgets slashed by your government, and some of them are closing schools and cutting programs to make ends meet. In Ottawa, specialist teachers and educational assistants are on the chopping block. In Toronto, both the public and separate boards are being pushed by the McGuinty government to make cuts on the backs of students.

Premier, you admit the funding formula is flawed, it's inadequate, but then you tell boards to make the cuts and live with it. My question is, are you now going to take over other boards who say they're not going to make your cuts? Are you now going to axe their trustees too in order to force your cuts in the classroom?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The leader of the NDP says that we've slashed funding to northern school boards, and that is completely wrong—completely wrong. He knows better. For 2006-07, northern boards are projected to receive over \$1.3 billion, representing an increase of \$334 per pupil over 2005-06, while enrolment is declining by 2.5%—funding going up dramatically while enrolment is going down.

1450

When it comes to the Toronto District School Board, he knows as well that that's another case where enrolment has gone down but funding has gone up dramatically. Only the NDP would argue that 2.7 billion more new dollars invested in public education does not represent a significant increase in public funding for education, nor a significant commitment on the part of our government for education. Only the NDP could argue that that was not sufficient.

Mr. Hampton: Premier, I've actually met with some of those boards. They're not falling for your movement

of some money out of this envelope into another, but at the end of the day, when they look at the bottom line, they've got less money. They're not falling for that; they're calling you on it. In fact, they refer to this study, an independent study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, which says that many boards have less money now than they had in 1997.

Here is the situation: Students in Toronto are at risk of losing educational assistants, special education and, in some cases, their local school. Once again, you say the funding formula is flawed, you say it's inadequate, but you refuse to do anything about it. I ask you the question again, Premier: Are you going to take over those boards too, axe the trustees and force your cuts on the classroom in those boards, just as you did in Dufferin-Peel?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: No, to be direct. We will continue to work with trustees wherever they may be found throughout the province. We will continue to work with all of our school boards, all of our teachers, all of our administrators, all of our parents, to improve the quality of learning that we can offer inside our public schools. And we will also continue to work on the funding formula.

But I'm sure the leader of the NDP will want to acknowledge some of the progress we've made in that regard. We've created a new \$1.1-billion school foundation grant, part of which will ensure that every school with more than 50 students is now funded for a principal and a secretary. We've created special-purpose grants, because we recognize that one size doesn't fit all, so that rural boards will now receive an additional \$125 million this year. We've also updated the formula's salary benchmarks, so that teachers' salaries no longer have to be taken from other areas of school board budgets. Those are all specific, concrete improvements to the funding formula, and we look forward to working with trustees, parents and administrators to make still more.

Mr. Hampton: School boards hear you make these announcements and then they look at their budget and they see that they actually lost money in their budget so that you can make your photo op announcements.

I just want to remind you of what a certain trustee said in 2002—on the verge of being thrown out of her job by the former Conservative government committed to making cuts: "The minister has known that boards were going to be in trouble this year, and personally, I think it's irresponsible that the minister, having admitted the funding formula was flawed, that they didn't provide an arrangement to provide funding." Who said that? That's your new education minister, Kathleen Wynne.

Premier, in a matter of weeks, trustees at both boards in Toronto will refuse to make the cuts in the classroom that the McGuinty government is demanding. My question again: Since you admit the funding formula is wrong, since you yourself called for a review of it and the fixing of it, are you going to do what you promised—

The Speaker: The question has been asked. Premier.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I just don't share the leader of the NDP's pessimism, nor can I claim to be what he's

pretending to be, which is clairvoyant, in terms of the outcome of these collaborative efforts that we are making with our school boards, particularly those here in Toronto. Sixty-eight out of 72 school boards have managed to balance their budgets. There are four in particular which have some challenges. We will continue to work with those boards.

Now, only the leader of the NDP could claim that \$2.7 billion more constitutes a cut. Maybe that's the new math or something, but over here on this side of the House, we consider \$2.7 billion to be a significant new infusion of public money into our school boards, and we will continue to bring a co-operative, collaborative approach to dealing with all of our school boards as we share in this wonderful enterprise of improving the quality of learning experience for all Ontario children.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): I have a question for the Premier. At a time when your government is spending millions on advertising, as we discussed earlier—\$219,000 on the trillium logo, \$6 million on the lottery corporation logo, \$55 million and counting on Caledonia—at a time when we have 1.2 million Ontarians without a family doctor, emergency rooms in crisis, nurses facing an increasing workload—and you're not keeping your promise on that—can you tell us why you felt it was necessary to create a kind of all-you-can-eat buffet for your Liberal cronies and pals in agencies, boards and commissions by jacking up the pay for appointments substantially and increasing the term lengths for all the people you're appointing to things in your dying days?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): At this point, I'm not going to begin to list former Conservative members we've appointed to Ontario's agencies, boards and commissions. If called upon to do so, I'll be more than pleased.

But let me say this: We think it's very important to retain the best possible talent, to ensure that we have attractive working conditions, including pay, so that people who come and work for Ontario's agencies, boards and commissions, and who do so at arm's length from the government, can deliver the best possible progress and service to the people of Ontario.

Maybe the leader of the official opposition feels that we should not be providing that kind of pay, that kind of remuneration, that kind of support to people whom we are trying to attract into some element of public service, but we think it's the right thing to do for the people of Ontario.

Mr. Tory: Arm's length from the government? If they were any closer, they'd be under arrest.

The old terms for public appointments—

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Supplementary.

Mr. Tory: The old terms were six years, and now you've extended them to 10 years. This is a bold attempt on your part to try and rule from your political grave when you're out a year from now.

But let's look at the money. The Conservation Review Board: The chair gets a 353% increase; the vice-chair gets 304%; the members get a 274% increase. The Ontario Film Review Board: They all get a 102% increase. That is just a sampling of the 1,000 jobs you're handing out to your Liberal friends with a huge raise. It's going to cost \$20 million for you to fund these increases to these people who are on your Liberal gravy train.

I ask you this: You've offered this pork smorgasbord to these people. Don't you think the money would be better spent helping to hire some more nurses, to get some more doctors out there or to get those emergency rooms fixed, or maybe give the money to the school boards instead of—

The Speaker: The question's been asked. Premier.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: When I asked Ernie Eves if he might accept an appointment to one of Ontario's agencies, boards, and commissions, we worked long and hard to ensure that we could accommodate and capitalize on his particular talents. There have been dozens of others of this political stripe opposite who have been hired by an agency, board or commission, including our adjudicative tribunals, to ensure that we have the best possible talent working on behalf of the people of Ontario.

Again, the leader of the official opposition had his office or his team briefed on this weeks ago. There was nothing secret about this. We made it very clear: This is about ensuring that we attract the best people of all previous political stripes to come and work on behalf of the people of Ontario.

1500

DISABILITY BENEFITS

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): In the absence of the Minister of Community and Social Services, my question is for the Premier. Mr. Premier, yesterday, I went to Lindsay to represent the man that I spoke to you about in this Legislature last month. His name is Brian Woods. We learned, during the course of his appeal, that he cannot eat the food that his doctor is prescribing for him because he doesn't have it. We learned that it's not available in the food bank. We learned that, in his case, he has lost 75 pounds this year. We asked your minister, in May and in June and over the summer months, to intervene. We asked you in September to intervene when she refused to do so.

Today, she is quoted in the Toronto Star as saying that poverty is complex. Carol Goar commented, "It is hard to tell whether the minister is defending a vision she believes in or delivering the party line."

Mr. Premier, your special diet allowance schedule is the root cause of this man's grief. When are you going to change it?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I've just been provided with correspondence from Madame Meilleur's office, who's been in contact with Mr. Prue's office, and there's an acknowledgement here: "Thank you for your quick response. I will call you tomorrow. I look forward to working with you to resolve this issue as quickly as possible." That was September 27.

Obviously, this is an issue that has been raised in this House before by the member opposite. There has been some communication with Madame Meilleur's office. It remains an ongoing concern. I know that the minister has now had this matter clearly brought to her attention by my office, and I fully expect that she will continue to work on it.

Mr. Prue: Mr. Premier, your minister's tenure as minister has been catastrophic to special diet recipients.

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Oh, come on. Don't exaggerate.

Mr. Prue: No, I'm not. Don't you exaggerate. From February 2006 to June 2006, a period of only four months, payments to special diet recipients have been reduced from \$151 per month on average to \$100 per month on average—a decline of 35%. Brian Woods has diabetes; bleeding, ulcerated feet; heart problems; and he is blind. He is forced to attend the hearing just so that he can eat. Your across-the-board cuts have been depriving thousands of people just like him of decent-quality food.

You should be a champion for the poor, Mr. Premier. Why are you content to enforce the shameful Harris legacy and, moreover, why have you actually made it worse?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Again, I can't speak to the specifics of the case, but I, of course, remind the member that this is a matter of ongoing communication between himself and the minister's office.

What I can remind the member is that for 12 years, there had been no increases in social assistance benefits in the province of Ontario; in fact, all there had been were cuts. We increased social assistance benefits not once, but twice.

I say to the member opposite, he raises an important issue. It's a matter that has been raised with the minister. It is unfortunate that he did not, when the minister was here earlier today, cross the floor and raise it with her directly, but again, I will convey this to the minister, and I know that she's already in communication with the member's office.

BRIDGE SAFETY

Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre): My question is to the Minister of Transportation and concerns Highway 7/8, a provincial thoroughfare that goes through the heart of my riding.

Over the long weekend, residents of my community were concerned to hear reports about falling concrete and unsafe road conditions on this highway as it passes over Courtland Avenue. I know that the ministry's staff have been on the scene, and I want to ask the minister what steps are being taken by her ministry to repair this important overpass and ensure the safety of this very crucial transportation artery for my community.

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Transportation): I'd like to thank the member for the question. Indeed, a stretch of Highway 7/8 over Courtland Avenue had identified some bonding that had separated on the surface of the road. That was identified on October 8, a Sunday. We sent a site engineer immediately. The site engineer made the inspection and determined that in fact the structure was safe. We then, however, made a detour and closed the lane. We also contracted with a local contractor to have the surface fixed. It will take three days, weather permitting, but I can reassure the member that indeed the structure is secure.

Mr. Milloy: I want to thank the minister for the answer, but raise the issue that the situation on this highway raises obvious concerns about bridge safety in general throughout this province. I wonder if the minister could tell the Legislature: What exactly are Ontario's inspection and safety standards that we apply to our highway bridges?

Hon. Mrs. Cansfield: I'm delighted to be able to respond. The Canadian highway bridge design code in fact is based on the Ontario code. We have the only jurisdiction in Canada that inspects our bridges by professional engineers, required by law, every two years. In addition to that, we do ongoing patrol and we do annual inspections by our own Ministry of Transportation trained engineers. Actually, we are also the only jurisdiction in Canada that does electronic load testing on bridges to ensure that the loads can be taken by the vehicles.

Furthermore, I think that some comfort should be taken that the particular design of the bridge that did collapse in Quebec is not a design that is used in Ontario.

Having said that, however, we are reviewing all of our procedures and practices with the municipalities, as well as ourselves, to ensure that all of our bridges are in good shape and people can feel secure that they have the best bridges in Canada.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo): My question is for the Minister of Health. I have here a letter that you sent out to long-term-care home operators, and in it you claim that the "proposed act will be the cornerstone on which we build the long-term-care home system that will be a model for the rest of country." Well, I can tell you that this bill is definitely not a model, because the rest of the country is already moving ahead with definite plans to eliminate the last of their four-bed wards for residents.

Minister, it was our government that developed the 1998 design standards for long-term-care homes. We built 20,000 new beds to meet the standards. We invested in a renewal plan to upgrade the D homes to meet those standards so that people could live in dignity. I ask you: Where is your capital renewal plan for the remaining 35,000 beds?

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): It's not surprising that the honourable member would bring a budgetary matter to a discussion about a piece of legislation.

It's appropriate to characterize this legislation as a framework for the long-term-care sector, looking forward many, many decades. Of course, through the licensing regime which we propose in this piece of legislation, we are very, very deliberately getting the appropriate attention focused on the renewal of capital stock and, alongside that, making important improvements that will give much greater protection for our most vulnerable residents who find a home in our long-term-care homes.

This is legislation that we're proud of. It provides a very, very appropriate framework to be able to offer even stronger and more strenuous protections in quality care for the residents in long-term-care homes, and I would very much look forward to ongoing debate with the honourable member on all points.

Mrs. Witmer: I would again say to the minister that the current bill is no model for the rest of Canada, as we've certainly learned from other provinces. In fact, you talk about dignity, comfort, security and safety. Well, there are in this province at the present time about 50%, 35,000 residents, who are going to be continuing to live in homes that are 25 to 35 years old. They simply meet the 1972 design standards, which means people are living in three- and four-bedroom wards. They don't have an ensuite bathroom. They don't have wheelchair accessibility throughout the home. They often have to use the elevator; they crowd into it to go into the dining room and the basement. They are paying the same amount of money as the people who are living in the new beds and who are living in the renovated D beds. I ask you again: Where is your plan to ensure that these people do live in dignity, security, safety and comfort? Where is your plan to upgrade these facilities?

1510

Hon. George Smitherman: As I said in my previous answer, that is a budgetary matter, and we look forward to opportunities to discuss that further. I've spoken about the licensing regime, which is an important element of this bill. But let me talk about dignity and respect and the like, which the honourable member was mentioning. Bricks and mortar are, of course, one contribution to the overall experience people have. We can make no argument about that. We understand this well, as a government that inherited hospitals that were, on average, 43 years of age in our province, and we've been working hard to address that. We've been building new long-term-care stock as well, with 5,000 additional beds that have opened on our watch.

Mrs. Witmer: Those are our beds.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: But you didn't pay for them, Elizabeth.

Interjections.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: I might say, if my caucus members will let me, on all points related to the legacy of the honourable member as it relates to health, that it's your bed, so you sleep in it. The reality is that, all across the landscape, this honourable member's efforts, her fingerprints, are very, very well identified with most of the most serious challenges we have.

But in this bill, what we seek to be able to do is offer dignity and respect to our residents through a code that—

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

AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): My question is for the Premier. The proposed 205-acre expansion of Dufferin Aggregates' Milton quarry makes a mockery of your greenbelt legislation and threatens source water protection. The expansion not only carves up the Niagara Escarpment's natural corridor; it requires that massive engineering works be put in place that have to function forever in an attempt to stop this quarry from sucking dry the local creeks and wetlands. Premier, you have been sitting on an appeal to cabinet from environmental groups for over a year. Today, are you going to say no to the expansion of Dufferin Aggregates' Milton quarry?

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

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): As the member rightly notes, this is subject to an appeal to cabinet. It is involved in those processes and is moving along. It hasn't gotten to cabinet yet, but when it does, cabinet will deal with it.

Mr. Tabuns: Wow. We had a lengthy hearing. We had environmental groups that came to cabinet over a year ago, Minister—over a year ago—in one final attempt to see that the environment in this province will be protected. Ontarians want to know: Are you going to stand up for your own greenbelt legislation? Are you going to protect source water? Are you actually going to protect the Niagara Escarpment? Again, are you actually going to take this into cabinet, come back and tell us that this quarry expansion is in fact going to be rejected?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: Again, when it's appropriate, cabinet will be considering the various petitions that come before it. Those have not reached cabinet yet, so they're not there for those decision points.

Let me say to the member that the McGuinty government takes the greenbelt very seriously, as you know, and open spaces and natural spaces in southern Ontario. The greenbelt, I believe, is one of the best accomplishments of this very government. It protects those vital areas of southern Ontario from development so that we have

organized planning, development and growth in southern Ontario.

Aggregates are a very important part of planned development. We need to have aggregates. We need to make sure, for the environment, that aggregates are within the scope of development areas so that you don't have to be importing them for hundreds of miles and causing pollution. There's a balance when it comes to all of this, and I'd just let the member know that in the next few months we'll be talking about some new policy when it comes to aggregates.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): My question is for the Minister of Energy. Electricity prices are always a concern to my constituents. They're still talking about the time when their bills skyrocketed back in 2002, when the Tories irresponsibly opened up the market just before they brought in their irresponsible cap. Electricity isn't something that people can just do without. It plays a major role in people's lives, so I know they would be very interested to know what the Ontario Energy Board had to say earlier today with respect to the price of electricity and whether or not they will see an increase in their bills this winter.

Minister, can you share with the House what this winter's electricity prices will be?

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy): I'd like to thank the member for his question and I'd like to share some good news with the House and with the people of Ontario. Earlier this afternoon, the Ontario Energy Board released their regulated price plan adjustment for November 1 of this year and they announced that prices are going down, on average, 6%. Now we will get out the quotes from the leader of the third party particularly who said that prices were going up this winter. They are in fact going down. What's particularly satisfying about the OEB's decision is that for the first time in the history of Ontario, prices for electricity are being set without the political rhetorical flourish that's been so common on the opposite side of the House.

The member would be curious to know that consumers will pay 5.5 cents on the first 1,000 kilowatts, which is yet a greater incentive to conservation. Conservation, we all know, is very important to the future of our province.

Mr. McNeely: Thank you, Minister. I know that the people in Ottawa–Orléans will be very interested to hear that. Just a question: How did the OEB come to these prices, and will they be sustainable? I know that the artificial Tory price cap ended up costing Ontarians \$1 billion. Can you assure my constituents that the plan in place is a sustainable one that won't leave our children and grandchildren with a debt to bear?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: The regulated price plan was introduced by the OEB in April 2005 to reflect the true cost of energy. It's designed to provide stable and predictable electricity prices for consumers, as well as encourage conservation. While the regulated plan reflects

the blended cost of supplies from our sources like Niagara Falls and the whole range of sources, the plan we've laid out has brought on more supply in three years and will bring on yet more supply. It has also produced a reduction in demand by the most aggressive conservation programs, which are just now starting to take hold. In order to deal with rising electricity prices—price increases that are being reflected in virtually every other jurisdiction in North America—this government has taken the steps and established a plan that is now showing positive benefit to the people of Ontario, and I would predict that those positive trends will continue.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is for the Premier. On September 9, 2004, your former Minister of Community and Social Services announced that three regional centres in Ontario would be closed by March 2009. She indicated that the facilities were institutions and that all residents of the three regional centres would move into small units of five, six, seven or eight people and they would receive the same level of care that they have been accustomed to in the regional centres. I'd like to also inform this House that the county of Simcoe has the longest waiting list for long-term-care beds in the province.

Now we are told that a desperately needed new long-term-care facility in Orillia, with beds that have been transferred from other areas—not new beds added to the provincial total—is about to receive approximately 18 Huronia Regional Centre residents who now have comfortable, apartment-style homes in the Huronia Regional Centre. Premier, the families of the HRC residents were promised smaller units, with the same level of care and service. Why are you breaking that promise by moving them now into institutions?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I know that the Conservative Party and the NDP fully support our government and our move to build more inclusive communities and to remove patients from these long-term institutions. I know we have their complete support in that regard, and we're building on the foundation that they themselves developed.

We have a \$272-million, four-year plan to transform and revitalize the development services sector, and that is underway. Transformation of developmental services in Ontario began in the 1980s and has been supported, as I say, by all three parties over the decades. We look forward to proceeding with that plan, knowing that we will continue to have the support of all parties.

1520

Mr. Dunlop: I actually asked you why you were allowing them to be moved into the institutions. You're moving them out of one institution into another. You're closing the doors on good apartment-style living. Can you tell me then today what I am to say to families who

have had their loved ones on long-term-care waiting lists now that their spaces are now being displaced by residents of the Huronia Regional Centre, who already have comfortable homes? What am I to tell them, Premier?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I say to the member opposite that he can tell his constituents that we will continue to work with them. We will continue to work with the developmental services sector and all people who are committed to ensuring that residents who are finding themselves out of the original institutions have a comfortable place that is in keeping with their needs and that assures their safety and security.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): My question's for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, you recently attended the groundbreaking for a new facility for the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health here in Toronto. The centre's press release acknowledged that "the physical environment makes an enormous difference on how clients recover" from addictions and mental illness. CAMH is the crown jewel of addiction treatment facilities, but are you aware of the problems that the centre has in providing a safe environment for the clients who seek help there?

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I think the honourable member has more to ask and I'll await it in her supplementary. I don't know why she's playing hide and seek here. Here's what I'm aware of: Last week, I had the privilege of being alongside my colleague the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal at the event for CAMH. I'm intrigued to hear whether the third party is now supportive of that or whether they're opposed to it. What we obviously see is an opportunity at CAMH to order the service delivery in buildings which are better suited to what we now know about the very best models of care. It's part and parcel of a \$5-billion reinvestment in the infrastructure of our hospitals, which, as I mentioned earlier in question period, averaged 43 years of age.

We acknowledge the tremendous work that goes on at CAMH, and we appreciate so much the front-line caregivers who provide so much great care, but we acknowledge as well that renewal of capital facilities is one part of the important range of services that can be provided. That's why we're so glad that we could move forward with the first stage of redevelopment at the CAMH site.

Ms. Horwath: The minister can be sure that I'm not playing a child's game. I'm raising a serious issue here in the House regarding my constituent Tim Pocius, who's here today from Hamilton. He went to CAMH for help but had to leave because staff at the time did not enforce the very rules that they put in place to keep their clients safe. They refused to remove a menacing and violent client who was clearly drunk and stoned, who was in possession of alcohol and who was criminally abusing and abusive to other members in the program. Tim com-

plained to the centre's officials, but no one even bothered to move to enforce the rules that existed and make that environment safe for the clients. He did the right thing and sought treatment, but he was forced to quit the program before it was even over for fear of his safety.

Now that you're aware of problem, Minister, will you agree to investigate Tim's complaint? Will you investigate and ensure that CAMH has the staff and resources to enforce their own rules 24/7 and keep the environment safe for people like Tim?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: I will remind the honourable member that our commitment to people in Ontario with mental health is found very clearly in the over 50% increase in funding that we've made for mental health since coming to office. This was to start to clean up a record that goes back to the time when the honourable member's party was in office, because for 13 years there was no investment in the community-based mental health programs.

I'll give the member the benefit of the doubt, and I will work with her to try and make sure that she understands that community-based governance in the province of Ontario means that CAMH is an independently governed hospital. There are appropriate patient advocates who are active within those environments. I will work with the honourable member—

Interjection.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: I will work with the honourable member, difficult as that's proving, to assist her in making sure that the hospital does take very seriously this concern raised by a patient there. We will do that immediately.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce): My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, there is a belief that Ontario's Endangered Species Act is outdated and is not doing its job of protecting Ontario's many endangered species. Scientists have currently identified 190 endangered species in Ontario, of which only 43 are protected by the current act. Minister, what are you doing to ensure that Ontario's species are protected from harm, and how will the Endangered Species Act be updated?

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): I thank the member for her interest in this very important subject. We are currently reviewing our Endangered Species Act so we can provide greater protection for species at risk in Ontario. We're looking at ways to put in effective measures to protect species at risk, including a science-based process to list species and to develop effective tools to help them recover.

I think what's very important is that we're using an advisory committee, a panel of individuals from a variety of backgrounds who are experts in the field of species at risk. This group has met on several occasions over the past few months and is giving us some very good advice

as to how we could bring forward some proposals in nine key areas to make this a stronger act.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you very much, Minister. Ontario is home to many different kinds of plants and animals. It's a part of our unique character, and it's something that we have a duty to protect.

The members opposite have repeatedly claimed that the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario's report highlights what we have done with the environment. The ECO's report mentions the MNR specifically. Minister, is the ECO's report all doom and gloom? Has the MNR abdicated responsibility for environmentally sound policies?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: I'd like to thank the Environmental Commissioner for his praise for a lot of the work that the Ministry of Natural Resources has been doing and some of his helpful suggestions to help us along with further work in regard to helping our environment. I'd like to quote from his latest report. He says:

The MNR has launched a biodiversity strategy for Ontario. I applaud the ministry for taking this initiative. The challenge going forward is to make sure that we follow through with the strategy and integrate procedures to protect and conserve biodiversity into operations of all ministries" across government. I would certainly consider our Planning Act reforms and also our greenbelt reforms in this government to be consistent with that. We're very proud of the work we're doing, as the McGuinty government, in protecting our environment in Ontario.

PETITIONS

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Hydro One Networks Inc. provides hydro to many communities in the region of Parry Sound–Muskoka; and

"Whereas there have recently been several lengthy power outages in this region affecting both private residences, schools and businesses; and

"Whereas rural customers pay among the highest distribution and delivery charges for electricity;

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

"That the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Energy Board require Hydro One Networks Inc. to make improvements in line maintenance and forestry management in the region of Parry Sound–Muskoka to ensure reliable energy for its customers."

I support this petition and affix my signature to it.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): I have a petition. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Re: Expiration dates on prescription drug bottles

“Whereas the health and well-being of all Ontario citizens is of the utmost concern for everyone in this province;

“Whereas to date there is little to no marking on prescription drug bottles in Ontario stating clearly when the drug is past its primary date of use, possibly leading to harmful effects on the health of Ontario citizens;

“We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request that it is made mandatory for the expiration date of prescription drugs to be clearly placed on all prescription drug bottles and containers, as it is for food products, ensuring that no one accidentally uses them past that date, causing unnecessary and preventable harm.”

I agree with this petition and I give it to page Olivia, who’s with me here today.

1530

HEALTH CARD REGISTRATION OFFICE

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): I’m pleased to present a petition, signed by people like Mary Lou Garr of Smithville and Tony Maus of Smithville as well, that reads as follows:

“Reopen the Beamsville Health Card Registration Clinic

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Beamsville health card registration office has helped over 4,000 local seniors, families and other local residents over the last five years renew their health cards close to home; and

“Whereas the Lincoln Centre provided the room and services to the province free of charge; and

“Whereas Lincoln residents are now paying more in a new health tax but are receiving less in services;

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

“The Dalton McGuinty Liberals should immediately reopen the Beamsville health card registration office, which they closed without any notice in the Lincoln community.”

In support, I affix my signature.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have petitions that have been given to me by members of SEIU local 1.on. It reads as follows:

“Whereas, in June 2003, Dalton McGuinty said, ‘Ontario Liberals are committed to ensuring that nursing home residents receive more personal care each day and will reinstate minimum standards, and inspectors will be required to audit the staff-to-resident ratios’; and

“Whereas Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman, in October 2004, said that the Ontario government will not set a specified number of care hours nursing home residents are to receive each day; and

“Whereas Ontario nursing home residents still receive the lowest number of care hours in the Western world; and

“Whereas studies have indicated nursing home residents should receive at least 4.1 hours of nursing care per day; and

“Whereas a coroner’s jury in April 2005 recommended the Ontario government establish a minimum number of care hours nursing home residents must receive each day;

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

“That the government of Ontario immediately enact a minimum standard of 3.5 hours of nursing care for each nursing home resident per day.”

I agree with the petitioners. I have affixed my signature to this.

IMMIGRANTS’ SKILLS

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I have a petition today for access to trades and professions in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario enjoys the continuing benefit of the contributions of men and women who choose to leave their country of origin in order to settle in Canada, raise their families, educate their children and pursue their livelihoods and careers; and

“Whereas newcomers to Canada who choose to settle in Ontario find frequent, arbitrary and unnecessary obstacles that prevent skilled tradespeople, managerial and professional talent from practising the professions, trades and occupations for which they have been trained in their country of origin; and

“Whereas action by Ontario’s trades and professions could remove many such barriers, but Ontario’s trades and professions have failed to recognize that such structural barriers exist, much less to take action to remove them, and to provide fair, timely, transparent and cost-effective access to trades and professions for new Canadians trained outside Canada;

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

“That the Ontario Legislative Assembly urge the members of all parties to swiftly pass Bill 124, the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, and to require Ontario’s regulated professions and trades to review and modify their procedures and qualification requirements to swiftly meet the needs of Ontario’s employers, Ontario’s newcomers and their own membership, all of whom desperately need the very skills new Canadians bring working for their organizations, for their trades and professions, and for their families.”

I agree with this petition and I will affix my signature to it.

WATER QUALITY

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

“Whereas every Ontarian wants the best water quality” available; “and

“Whereas the goal of clean water can be achieved effectively through amendments to existing legislation; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals are determined to hammer through the flawed legislation known as the Clean Water Act; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals have failed to put in place adequate, stable, long-term funding into the bill; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals have failed to effectively address the numerous problems in the bill; and

“Whereas rural Ontario stands to suffer significantly under this poorly-thought-out policy;

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

“To not pass Bill 43 (the Clean Water Act) until proper funding and amendments are in place.”

As I'm in support of this petition, I'll affix my signature to it and give it to Bryce.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

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

“Whereas Ontario enjoys the continuing benefit of the contributions of men and women who choose to leave their country of origin in order to settle in Canada, raise their families, educate their children and pursue their livelihoods and careers; and

“Whereas newcomers to Canada who choose to settle in Ontario find frequent, arbitrary and unnecessary obstacles that prevent skilled tradespeople, managerial and professional talent from practising the professions, trades and occupations for which they have been trained in their country of origin; and

“Whereas action by Ontario's trades and professions could remove many such barriers, but Ontario's trades and professions have failed to recognize that such structural barriers exist, much less to take action to remove them, and to provide fair, timely, transparent and cost-effective access to trades and professions for new Canadians trained outside Canada;

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

“That the Ontario Legislative Assembly urge the members of all parties to swiftly pass Bill 124, the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, and to require Ontario's regulated professions and trades to review and modify their procedures and qualification requirements to swiftly meet the needs of Ontario's employers, Ontario's newcomers and their own membership, all of whom desperately need the very skills new Canadians bring working for their organizations, for their trades and professions, and for their families.”

I completely agree with this petition. I'm pleased to affix my signature and to ask Mississauga West page Taylor Rodrigues to carry it for me.

HEALTH CARD REGISTRATION OFFICE

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): I'm pleased to present a petition signed by Christine Nation of Beamsville and Jennifer Wild of Vineland that reads as follows:

“Reopen the Beamsville Health Card Registration Clinic

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Beamsville health card registration office has helped over 4,000 local seniors, families and other local residents over the last five years renew their health cards close to home; and

“Whereas the Lincoln Centre provided the room and services to the province free of charge; and

“Whereas Lincoln residents are now paying more in a new health tax but are receiving less in services;

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

“The Dalton McGuinty Liberals should immediately reopen the Beamsville health card registration office, which they closed without any notice in the Lincoln community.”

In support, I affix my signature.

VISITORS

Mr. Vic Dhillon (Brampton West–Mississauga): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to welcome Mr. Harpal Dhaliwal. He's a pioneer in educating prospective immigrants who are coming to Canada from India, mainly specializing in the medical field. With him today is a delegation from a medical school in India: Dr. K.M. Selvaraj, J. Arawindhan, K. Ramakrishnan and Dr. Ramadoss. I'd just like to extend a very warm welcome to these folks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Thank you for the introduction. It was not a point of order, so I have nothing on which to rule. I would ask the honourable members in future, as this is a limited—I had to stop the clock. Points of order such as this should be raised after, when the clock is not running. I didn't want to impede on the times. But welcome to the Legislature, gentlemen.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas, even with a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a

resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

“Whereas the allowance for three meals is \$5.34 per day; and

“Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining, and there is a further concern with the residents’ safety;

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

“We, the undersigned, petition the McGuinty government to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, to allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007).”

As I agree with the petition, I affix my name thereto.

1540

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): I have a petition signed by the good citizens of Cambridge, which reads:

“To the Parliament of Ontario:

“Whereas gasoline prices have increased at alarming rates during the past year; and

“Whereas the high and different gas prices in different areas of Ontario have caused confusion and unfair hardship on hard-working Cambridge families;

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

“(1) That the Ontario McGuinty Liberal government immediately freeze gas prices for a temporary period until world oil prices moderate; and

“(2) That the Ontario McGuinty Liberal government and the federal Martin Liberal government immediately lower their taxes on gas for a temporary period until world oil prices moderate; and

“(3) That the Ontario McGuinty Liberal government immediately initiate a royal commission to investigate the predatory gas prices charged by oil companies operating in Ontario.”

As I agree with the contents of the petition, I affix my name thereto.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is silent on property rights; and

“Whereas the Alberta Bill of Rights specifically protects the right to the enjoyment of property; and

“Whereas the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms provides that ‘Every person has a right to the peaceful enjoyment and free disposition of his property, except to the extent provided by law’; and

“Whereas ownership rights should not be abridged or usurped without due process of law; and

“Whereas owners of all lands affected by expropriation should have the right to be included as parties to

a required inquiry to consider the merits of the objectives of the expropriating authority; and

“Whereas the decision of an expropriating authority should be subject to judicial review; and

“Whereas, subject to specific limitations of law, the right to peaceful enjoyment of one’s land must be recognized by Ontario law;

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

“To pass Bill 57, the Land Rights and Responsibilities Act, 2006.”

I affix my signature.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have a petition to amend the Clean Water Act. It says:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas every Ontarian wants the best water quality possible; and

“Whereas the goal of clean water can be achieved effectively through amendments to existing legislation; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals are determined to hammer through the flawed legislation known as the Clean Water Act; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals have failed to put in place adequate, stable, long-term funding into the bill; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals have failed to effectively address the numerous problems in the bill; and

“Whereas rural Ontario stands to suffer significantly under this poorly-thought-out policy;

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

“To not pass Bill 43 (the Clean Water Act) until proper funding and amendments are in place.”

I support this petition.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

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

“Whereas the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is silent on property rights; and

“Whereas the Alberta Bill of Rights specifically protects the right to the enjoyment of property; and

“Whereas the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms provides that ‘Every person has a right to the peaceful enjoyment and free disposition of his property, except to the extent provided by law’; and

“Whereas ownership rights should not be abridged or usurped without due process of law; and

“Whereas owners of all lands affected by expropriation should have the right to be included as parties to a required inquiry to consider the merits of the objectives of the expropriating authority; and

“Whereas the decision of an expropriating authority should be subject to judicial review; and

“Whereas, subject to specific limitations of law, the right to peaceful enjoyment of one’s land must be recognized by Ontario law;

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

“To pass Bill 57, the Land Rights and Responsibilities Act, 2006.”

MEMBERS’ CONDUCT

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I’m referencing standing orders 23(h), (i) and (k). Standing order 23(h), “Makes allegations against another member”; (i) references “Imputes false or unavowed motives to another member”; and (k) says “Uses abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder.”

I know that we do not have the ability to challenge the rulings of a Speaker, and I would never do that. However, earlier today, the Speaker ruled on a comment made by the Leader of the Opposition where he used the word “misleading” with respect to government advertising. Mr. Speaker, I would ask you and others who sit in the chair to consider the implications of our concern with respect to that ruling: that one party, through disruption in the chamber, can result in a ruling that impinges on the ability of another to accurately pose questions or take a position in this Legislature. I think that’s a very serious concern and I would ask the Chair to respond to our concern at the appropriate time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): I will take that under advisement and will refer this to the presiding officers’ meeting. I would agree with the honourable member that it was a little unruly here today. I think your point may be well taken, and we’ll leave it for the Speaker and the presiding officers to consider this at the appropriate time and report back.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I’m referencing standing order 97(d), which requires the government to respond to written questions within 24 sitting days. We have the following questions for which answers are due: In the name of the member for Durham, question 194, and in the name of the member for Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, questions 188, 189, 190, 191 and 193. I’d ask that you direct the government to provide responses, as required by the standing orders.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): To the government House leader: I want to remind you that your colleagues are required, under standing order 97(d), to provide answers to written questions within 24 sitting days. The responses are now overdue. I would ask that you give the House some indication as to when the answers will be forthcoming.

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I will look into the matter at this time, urgently, I’ll say to my friend, and try to ensure that the rule is complied with.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE ACT, 2006

LOI DE 2006 SUR LES PRATICIENNES ET PRATICIENS EN MÉDECINE TRADITIONNELLE CHINOISE

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 27, 2006, on the motion for second reading of Bill 50, An Act respecting the regulation of the profession of traditional Chinese medicine, and making complementary amendments to certain Acts / Projet de loi 50, Loi concernant la réglementation de la profession de praticienne ou de praticien en médecine traditionnelle chinoise et apportant des modifications complémentaires à certaines lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): It was my understanding on the last occasion that Ms. Martel had spoken and had completed her statements. It would now go in rotation to the government bench.

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe): I have the privilege and honour to stand up today and speak in support of Bill 50, the Traditional Chinese Medicine Act, 2006. It’s a very important issue before us, before the House. It was debated very well last week and hopefully will continue. And hopefully it will pass, because if this bill passes, it will add another alternative to many people who are seeking some kind of treatment.

As you know, Chinese medicine has been used for thousands and thousands of years in many different parts of the globe. It came to Canada not a long time ago and is being practised across Ontario, across Canada, and has been effective in many different situations. Many Ontarians go to Chinese medicine doctors to seek support and help. It has been proven, through many locations and many times, that its effective treatments help many Ontarians to be cured of certain diseases and illnesses.

It’s part of our commitment in Ontario to support and ensure the wellness of the people of this province and also, as much as possible, to prevent illness. It’s our duty as a government, it’s the duty of the Minister of Health, to make sure that people who live in this province live in good health. We also try as much as possible to prevent many different diseases and many different issues that will cause illness and disease.

This issue was brought before the House years ago, and the minister and many different members of our government caucus worked very hard to conduct information consultations, to go across the province to talk to many

different Chinese doctors, to see how important this bill, if passed, would be for the people of Ontario.

1550

They found that there is a need—a big demand and a big request by many health professionals in Ontario—for passing this bill. As you know, many Chinese doctors practised without any licence in the past, and without regulation. It is part of our duty as a government to make sure that all practices, all conduct, all services and regulations in Ontario are done according to the law, and regulated. That's why there is a need for a college to regulate all Chinese medicine and Chinese doctors across Ontario, to make sure all the people who practise in Ontario get a licence. If this bill is passed, an act will be established to make sure all the people who practise will have a licence from a new body, and to make sure all the people who practise Chinese medicine are very well qualified in order to serve the people of Ontario.

So many questions came up about acupuncture. As you know, many people seek this treatment, go to many Chinese doctors, go to many different areas to seek acupuncture treatment, which has been proven to have the ability to cure many people in this province. This bill doesn't speak to that directly but in general. Because doctors of Chinese medicine use acupuncture for a big part of their treatment, that doesn't mean that only Chinese doctors would be practising acupuncture. It will be maintained, and all the people in different professions who use it will continue to use it, according to their ability and their professions.

This bill is important for many people in Ontario. People who come to Ontario have a special degree from China, Taiwan, Australia, British Columbia. They have been working and practising medicine for a long time, but didn't get accreditation. They have no rules. In Ontario they were given the ability to have the title of doctor. Then the title of doctor became an issue, because so many people were saying, "We cannot grant the title of doctor to everyone who is practising Chinese medicine." That's why this title and this issue will be left to the regulatory body that will be established if this bill passes, to determine which person will be entitled to carry the title of doctor and which person will be entitled to only carry the title of practitioner. They can use it on their card, on a banner or on advertisements. It's very important to make sure that all the people who practise in Ontario will be qualified, and all the people who deserve the title of doctor will be granted the title of doctor, and those who do not deserve it cannot have it.

Also, this body will examine the situation, and not just in Ontario. They will seek the support of many different jurisdictions that are using Chinese medicine as a treatment, as an alternative to the traditional medicine we use in Ontario, by learning how they use it and how it should be regulated, whether in British Columbia, Australia, China or Taiwan. They have long experience, long traditions in using this method of treatment. That's why I think it's very important for the board that is going to be established—or the council or the regulatory body—if

this bill is passed, to seek the support and advice of those people who have been using this method for a long, long time.

It's part of our commitment as a province, part of the commitment of the Ministry of Health, to make sure that all the people in the province get treatment in a way that benefits them and the whole province, because it's important to make sure that all the people in Ontario live in good health and have the ability and the chance to seek whatever alternative benefits them and cures them.

It's an important bill. It's an important piece of legislation before us. If it passes, it will make sure that many people who have been prohibited from using this treatment for a long time will be able to use it with comfort and some kind of security, making sure that all who are treating people using this method will be regulated by a body licensed by the government of Ontario, regulated by a body that is well qualified, consisting of a doctor of Chinese medicine and people who have been in the business for a long, long time, who understand the whole atmosphere, the whole situation, what should be done and what should not be done.

It's important, as I mentioned, for the government to step in and give permission to establish regulations and a regulatory body to make sure that all people who are doing this business in the province of Ontario are doing it according to the law. I think we owe the people of Ontario some kind of clarity, understanding and protection. The only way we can protect them is by allowing a special interest group that has the best interests to establish a greater body, and this group will know more about Chinese medicine and how Chinese treatment should be done in the province.

I think this is a great initiative. I want to commend the Minister of Health for bringing it forward. Regulating this profession is very important too because, as I mentioned, the people of Ontario trusted us in this place and have given us the ability, the tools and the mechanisms to make sure everything runs and works in the province of Ontario, and is regulated and running according to the law and regulations.

Chinese medicine has proven through history, through the years, its effectiveness and its ability to cure many people. The technique being used is well proven and well conducted and has given good results by curing many people in Ontario.

Hopefully, all members on both sides of the House will support this bill. If this bill passes, as I mentioned, it's going to be good for all of us, good for all the people of Ontario by creating an alternative for many people in this province who are looking forward to seeing it pass and exist in order to go and seek alternative treatment to regular treatment.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing me to speak. Hopefully all members will support this bill.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I'm pleased to respond to the member from London–Fanshawe with regard to Bill 50, An Act respecting the

regulation of the profession of traditional Chinese medicine, and making complementary amendments to certain Acts. This bill seeks to introduce a new health professions act with respect to the regulation of traditional Chinese medicine. It would be subject to the health professions procedure code under the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1993.

Of course, with a bill such as this, I believe that patient safety is paramount and should be in the forefront of our discussion. We recognize the importance of regulating this area of medical practice. It's important that we get input from all those who will be affected by the bill, so that the legislation is the best possible.

We look forward to more input and debate on the bill.

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): There's no doubt that not only do New Democrats have a great respect for traditional Chinese medicine but also agree that there needs to be regulation of traditional Chinese medicine. What we have concerns with, however, is the bill that's before us, because the bill does have some serious problems and challenges that, the government will know, have been raised already with them in the process that's already taken place. What we would certainly like to see is some assurance that the issues that have been raised by practitioners themselves are taken seriously and taken into consideration so that appropriate amendments are made to make the regulation of traditional Chinese medicine something that all practitioners and all people of the province who use this method of healing and wellness are able to feel good about, feel positive about, and know, without a shadow of a doubt, that we've done the right thing and struck the right balance. That is our concern.

1600

The member spoke a little bit about some of the history, as he identified it, of the use of traditional Chinese medicine. Interestingly enough, one of the practitioners in my community, who is with us today, has provided me with a natural historic outline going back to 300 BC and talking about the separating out of treatments of different types of living beings—not all humans—and how traditional Chinese medicine has been used as a healing and wellness method for quite some time historically.

I'll be talking about that a little bit more when I have an opportunity for longer remarks later this afternoon, but I do say that we certainly support the concept but we really need to see some major issues addressed in this bill.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): It's a pleasure to have a couple of minutes to speak on this bill and to comment on the comments of my friend Mr. Ramal, from London.

Basically, I think the act we're looking at, An Act respecting the regulation of the profession of traditional Chinese medicine, and making complementary amendments to certain Acts, is long overdue. I could think of large communities within the Toronto area and even throughout other parts of Ontario. But in Toronto, and in particular in Scarborough now, we have a large Chinese

community, and I've gone to some of the stores in that community where they offer and sell these herbs and other types of medicines. At the same time that they sell the herbs, they may have a room set aside for acupuncture treatment or certain other treatments. This has long been going on in Scarborough and Toronto and in other parts of Ontario.

I think it's a matter of regulating it, letting it have some sort of regulatory body to review it to make sure it's done properly. I have had treatments from individuals who are trained in traditional Chinese medicine, and the first thing I was afraid of was whether or not the needles they use are reused. They explained, "No, we recycle them or use new ones each time"—so concerns like that.

There could be people out there who want to practise this who may not use new acupuncture needles and may not use some of the herbs and things that are appropriate to use and may use other substances. So the bill actually will make it safer. It's building on a system of health care that was invented 3,000 or 4,000 years ago and has been successful in a great part of the world. So I'm happy to stand here today and support this bill.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): I'm pleased to rise and comment on Bill 50 and the learned discussion put forth by my colleague from London–Fanshawe. But from a wider picture, I must say, coming from an area that has such a shortage of doctors, that I wonder why we are discussing this matter today. Though important, surely it does not come up to a par with the lack of doctors and emergency rooms closing in the region of Waterloo. We're not talking about that in this House, and that is the choice of this government. They're trying to cover up the fact that we have a severe lack of doctors.

In my little city of 120,000 people, 20,000 women, children and men do not have family physicians, and now their very emergency ward is threatened. What's being done? This is being done. We're talking about a bill that will not help us in that regard, and the people of Cambridge want to know what is being done.

As a matter of fact, I just put a bill in which for the first time would give government a target to shoot for at least, because we hear, "Well, we increased this by 20%, that by 25% and this by 100%," but it's all meaningless because the per capita ratio of doctors to population in this province is one of the worst in the industrialized world. It is almost twice that of the United States of America, and we're falling back behind the UK. It's an absolute disgrace.

The Acting Speaker: The member for London–Fanshawe has two minutes in which to respond.

Mr. Ramal: I want to thank the members from Parry Sound–Muskoka, Hamilton East, Scarborough Southwest and Cambridge for speaking and commenting on my speech.

I agree with the member from Hamilton East that there are some questions about why acupuncture does not have the ability to form their own college, but we address this issue. We don't want to duplicate the—

Interjection.

Mr. Ramal: The issue is that acupuncture is being practised by Chinese medicine doctors and also by other professionals, like physiotherapists and many different doctors, so there's no need for duplicating the whole college and to create another body, since this bill will include all the people who try and choose traditional Chinese medicine.

The member from Cambridge was talking about the shortage of doctors. We know that. When we got elected in 2003, we knew we had a shortage of doctors that was huge, humungous, and many different communities across the province of Ontario were suffering from a shortage of doctors. That's why the people of Ontario elected us in 2003: to solve that issue, to solve that file. I'm proud to be part of a government in which we have a great Minister of Health who increased the medical spots across the province almost by double the numbers, from London all the way to Ottawa, to the north, to the south, to the west, in every spot in the province of Ontario. Also, since yesterday we were talking about the foreign-trained professionals, for instance, we doubled the spots from 90 to 200. Almost 200 spots are being filled this year.

This is a government that cares about the health of the people of this province. That's why we work tirelessly and we work on a daily basis, to make sure we have all the ability and the mechanisms to help the people in Ontario to seek any possible healthy way or alternative to be treated. That's why today we're discussing a very important piece of legislation before us, in order to make a great alternative for the great people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): I'm pleased to have this opportunity to speak in the House this afternoon concerning Bill 50, An Act respecting the regulation of the profession of traditional Chinese medicine, and making complementary amendments to certain Acts.

I'm pleased to follow my friend the member for London-Fanshawe, who had the opportunity to speak about this bill just now. In his response to some of the questions and comments that were brought forward by other members of this House, he talked about the doctor shortage in the province of Ontario and how we're responding in this Legislature. I heard him say that the Liberal Party was elected in 2003 in part to respond to the doctor shortage. I would have to question that comment and also question whether or not the government has had very much success in terms of solving the doctor shortage problem. Certainly, there are a significant number of communities in Waterloo-Wellington that have been experiencing for a long time a shortage of family doctors.

I've been nominated to seek re-election to the Ontario Legislature in the new riding of Wellington-Halton Hills, and obviously I'm very interested in getting to know the people in the new part of my riding. I've had the chance to discuss these issues with some of the people who are involved in health care, and there's a huge doctor short-

age problem in the town of Halton Hills, which comprises communities like Acton and Georgetown. Obviously, there is a great deal more that the provincial government needs to do to address the doctor shortage issue.

If you don't have a family doctor, of course, your health care needs tend to be looked after either in a clinic or at an emergency department, and there's very little continuity of care in those sorts of health care settings. Obviously, it's better than nothing, but you don't have the opportunity to get to know your family doctor, to develop a rapport, and for your family doctor to develop a knowledge of your family medical history. So it's not as good as it should be, and we have to do more as a province to address this issue.

But coming back to the bill that's being debated today, Bill 50, An Act respecting the regulation of the profession of traditional Chinese medicine, this bill was introduced in the Ontario Legislature just before Christmas, on December 7, for first reading. It has been before the House since that time. The bill is intended to enact a new health professions act with respect to the regulation of traditional Chinese medicine, and it makes complementary amendments to other acts.

1610

It creates a new college. The name of the new college is the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners of Ontario, and the new profession is the profession of traditional Chinese medicine. Of course, this new profession is going to be regulated by the effect of this bill.

The scope of practice of traditional Chinese medicine is the "assessment of body system disorders using traditional Chinese medicine techniques and treatment using traditional Chinese medicine therapies to promote, maintain or restore health."

The college council that will be created by this bill will be composed of at least six, and no more than nine, persons who are members of the college, and at least five and no more than eight persons appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The council shall have a president and vice-president elected annually by the council.

Bill 50 restricts the use of the titles "traditional Chinese medicine practitioner" and "acupuncturist" to members of the college. No person other than a member may hold themselves out as qualified to practise as a traditional Chinese medicine practitioner or acupuncturist. Anyone who contravenes these restrictions is guilty of an offence and, on conviction, is liable to a maximum fine of \$5,000 for a first offence and a maximum of \$10,000 for a subsequent offence.

Other important features of this bill include the definition of "drug" under the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act being amended to exclude any natural health product, to ensure consistency with federal drug legislation. This will ensure that natural health products may be used in the practice of the profession. The definition of "drug" is also amended under the Ontario

Drug Benefit Act to include the new definition under the DPRA, and includes any substance supplied under the Ontario Drug Benefit Act before the act comes into force. The definition of “drug” is amended under the Drug Interchangeability and Dispensing Fee Act to include the new definition under the DPRA, and include any substance designated as an interchangeable product before the act comes into force.

This bill also amends the Regulated Health Professions Act in the following way: It allows members of this new college to use the title “doctor.”

The bill amends Ontario regulation 107/96, controlled acts, under the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, by revoking the provisions allowing anyone to perform acupuncture. The bill adds provisions allowing acupuncture to be performed by members of colleges and persons registered to practise under the Drugless Practitioners Act. Persons who perform acupuncture as part of an addiction treatment program within a health facility will also be permitted to perform the procedure.

This bill has received a limited amount of debate in the Legislature, having been called for second reading, I believe, about two weeks ago. The Minister of Health led off the debate, and I was present in the House for his speech and his remarks. Of course, our party’s health critic, the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, responded. So there hasn’t been a great deal of debate in this Legislature on this issue, although I know that for a number of years, there has been discussion initiated—actually, by the previous government—with people who are interested in this issue. A great deal of work has been done, which has led us to the point we’re at today, where there is a bill before the Legislature.

I think it’s most important, because there are a number of outstanding concerns about this issue, that people who are concerned about this particular bill and the government’s approach on this issue be given an opportunity to bring those concerns to a standing committee of the Legislature. It’s my understanding that the Minister of Health and the government are willing and prepared to send this bill to committee, and I would suggest that that’s the appropriate course of action. I’m glad that our party called for hearings, and I’m glad that the government has agreed to allow those hearings to take place. On an issue such as this, that’s so important for the health care of the people of Ontario, we have to make sure that we get it right, and I think that by more public hearings by a committee of the Legislature, everyone who has an interest in this issue will have an opportunity to speak to it. Hopefully, all of us will listen to those discussions that take place at committee, and the bill will be considered for amendments and improvements so as to ensure that the public safety of patients in Ontario is protected.

Now, I know that our party has a number of aspects that we are highlighting with respect to this issue. Our caucus recognizes the importance of regulation in this area of medical practice. In fact, we recognize that many Ontarians want choice in medicine and regulation in this

area and would want the government to ensure that patient safety is protected. Certainly, they would expect that the government would do nothing less.

We have also heard from many stakeholders who believe that there has been inadequate consultation on the bill and that the length of time that they have had to prepare their presentations was insufficient. The government apparently did not leave enough time available for some of the people who were interested in this bill to make their presentations informally to the government before the bill was presented, so more discussion needs to take place. Again, our party is strongly recommending that the government commit to send this bill to committee and hold public hearings. Again, it’s my understanding the government has expressed their willingness to do that.

I know that when our party was in government, the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council was asked to make recommendations on the best method of regulating traditional Chinese medicine and some other related alternative medical practices. I know that our caucus is quite concerned about the discrepancies between the government’s bill, this Bill 50, and the recommendations that were made by the HPRAC, which of course is an important advisory committee to government made up of medical experts whose opinions we should obviously listen to and heed.

Some of the background on this bill, I think, is relevant to this debate as well. The Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, was proclaimed in this Legislature on December 31, 1993, back when the New Democrats were in power. I remember those debates quite vividly. That was an important piece of legislation that received a great deal of debate and was a long time coming in terms of the consultation that took place with people who are interested in health issues. It was a significant piece of legislation for the NDP government at that time. That bill, now that law, provides a framework for regulating health professions that provide the majority of health services in Ontario. Currently, 23 professions are regulated under 21 profession-specific acts.

I’m told that if the Traditional Chinese Medicine Act, 2006, is passed into law, this Bill 50, it will be the first time that a new health profession has been regulated in Ontario since 1993. This will make Ontario the second province in Canada, after BC, to regulate traditional Chinese medicine and the fourth in Canada to regulate acupuncture. Again it would appear that Ontario is breaking, to some degree, new ground on this issue—all the more reason to ensure that we take the time to get it right.

This bill is intended, I’m told, to fulfill a Liberal campaign promise. Of course, the government is very sensitive to charges from the opposition about broken promises. Our caucus has pointed out from time to time that the Liberal caucus—they don’t really appreciate hearing this, but there have been a significant number of promises that were made during the election campaign in 2003; we think about 50. Perhaps another one has been

broken today; I don't know if we should add to it. Our caucus brought forward an opposition day motion last Wednesday raising this issue and the government voted it down. But I think it's important that we draw those issues to the attention of the Liberal members from time to time when there are opportunities to do so. However, this would appear to be an effort on the part of the government to actually keep a promise. So this would make it news.

The bill is intended to fulfill the Liberal campaign promise to enhance public protection for those who choose to use alternative approaches to health care, beginning with the regulation of traditional Chinese medicine. Again, that's my understanding of the commitment that was made by the Liberal Party in the last election.

HPRAC produced two key reports in this area. The first was in 1996, while our party was in government, regarding acupuncture, and an updated report on traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture in 2001. Both reports, I'm told, recommended the regulation of traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture under the Regulated Health Professions Act, so this bill is consistent with that part of the HPRAC recommendations.

However, HPRAC recommended to the Minister of Health that the profession of traditional Chinese medicine be regulated with (1) a distinctive scope of practice and (2) four controlled acts authorized to the profession, including communicating a traditional Chinese medicine diagnosis, performing a procedure on tissue below the dermis for the purpose of acupuncture, prescribing and dispensing natural health products, and prescribing, dispensing and compounding Chinese herbal remedies.

1620

Unfortunately, Bill 50 does not act on these specific recommendations. Bill 50 lacks a distinctive scope of practice and fails to refer to any controlled acts authorized by the profession. The scope of practice—this is a point that I know our party's health care critic made reference to in her speech two weeks ago—as outlined in Bill 50 is very, very broad. The practice of traditional Chinese medicine is the assessment of body system disorders through traditional Chinese medicine techniques and treatment using traditional Chinese medicine therapies to promote and maintain or restore health. I'm told that this bill does not authorize the performance of controlled acts to the profession.

So again, even though the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council, HPRAC, made specific recommendations about how this bill ought to be regulated, it would appear that the government has ignored the specific recommendations to some degree and has a much broader scope of practice included in Bill 50 than HPRAC would have recommended.

I know that there are some stakeholders who are very supportive of this legislation. Obviously, I respect that and respect their view, but from our perspective in opposition, we have an obligation to bring forward the concerns of people who feel that their views have been

given short shift or their perspective has been ignored by the government in terms of legislation or the policy of the government. We are bringing forward some of those concerns during the context of this debate.

I'm told some acupuncturists object to the fact that, under Bill 50, acupuncture will not be recognized as a health profession in Ontario, as it is currently in Quebec, Alberta, British Columbia and 48 states in the United States, but merely as a modality or a technique. As a result, they believe practitioners in Ontario will not have equal status with their professional counterparts in many areas of the world, and across Canada as well.

There has been objection to the access granted to members of all 23 regulated health professions to practise acupuncture in accordance with the standards of practice of the profession. It should be noted that this objection is not shared by all, in particular, chiropractors and physiotherapists, who have been practising this treatment for over 30 years. Currently anyone can perform acupuncture, and certainly that underlines the need for some degree of legislation.

I had the opportunity to meet with a family doctor in my riding about eight or nine years ago. He was quite insistent that we had to get together and talk about an issue, but he was quite secretive about what he wanted to discuss. I went to his office, we sat down, and he informed me that he had recently been approached by a number of people to see if he could perform acupuncture on them to alleviate pain in, I believe, their spinal area. He had initially resisted the request because he was very skeptical, actually, about whether or not the acupuncture would work, but he was intrigued and professionally interested in the procedure. He looked into it, and he was able to educate himself as to how it was done. He thought that if his patients were requesting the service, perhaps he should give consideration to performing it.

He was surprised, he told me, by the incredible positive impact that the procedure had on his patients who had otherwise been experiencing severe back pain. So you have a doctor here who goes into it with a great deal of skepticism about whether or not it's going to be effective, and he thought it was important to tell me, as his member of provincial Parliament, the great success that he'd had with the procedure. He'd come away from this experience converted to the benefits of acupuncture.

A number of the members in the House in the course of this debate have talked about some of the medical procedures that they've undergone. I can't say that I've ever experienced acupuncture as a patient, but I would relate that story and that anecdote to the House because I think it is of some interest. Obviously, there are many thousands of patients across the province who believe in this, have had very positive success with the procedure and are very supportive of this.

Another concern we're hearing from some stakeholders is the disapproval of the emphasis on traditional Chinese medicine. There has been a request made to rename Bill 50 as the Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture Act, to create a college of TCM and

acupuncture of Ontario, and to include title protection for “doctor of acupuncture.” This is an issue that, again, has been brought forward and that apparently has not yet been satisfactorily resolved through Bill 50. Hopefully, during the course of discussions at committee, there may be a chance to address this through amendments.

I want to bring forward a number of other concerns that have been brought forward by some of the health stakeholders.

I’m told the Ontario Physiotherapy Association has said they believe acupuncture should be treated as a controlled act and included in the scope of physiotherapy, as well as other providers such as physicians and chiropractors. The Ontario Physiotherapy Association apparently does not support limiting the scope of practice of acupuncture to TCM practitioners, physicians, nurses and dentists. I’m told that this particular organization, the Ontario Physiotherapy Association, has said that the recommendations of the Liberal task force should not be allowed to circumvent the process of HPRAC in making changes to the Regulated Health Professions Act, and that this task force is an entirely Liberal initiative, without input and consultation from other parties—fairly strong criticism from the physiotherapists in the province.

I know that the director of McMaster University’s contemporary medical acupuncture program, a Dr. Elorriaga, has said that regulation of traditional Chinese medicine or any other form of non-conventional medicine should be regulated separately and not based in providing a monopoly on any one single technique—more so when there’s no evidence that a separate knowledge from biomedicine is required to use the technique. That is an issue that’s been identified by the director of McMaster’s contemporary medical acupuncture program, obviously something that we would not want to dismiss out of hand.

I’m told that Dr. William Wine, who is a licensed acupuncturist and the Canadian regional director of the American Naturopathic Medical Association, has significant concerns as well that he has articulated, but I find that I’ve run out of time. Thank you very much for listening to me. I appreciate it.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): I will be speaking next, for 20 minutes or so, and so I’ll leave the bulk of my comments for that time, except to say that the member for Waterloo–Wellington raises the issue of hearings. That is a critical part of this debate, because we know that various members of the Liberal Party were part of consultations, and they spoke to a fair number of people. What we want are hearings that are open and obviously accessible to everyone so that they can bring forth all of the concerns they have with respect to this bill.

For sure, you will have many who will simply accept the bill as is, but you will also have others who will say, “This bill can be improved and must be improved.” You’re going to get a variety of different opinions, and it hopefully will make this bill better, assuming the Liberal

government will accept those changes that we are going to propose, that Shelley Martel, our health critic, has already proposed, and some of the concerns the member for Waterloo–Wellington has raised. All of that, I have no doubt, will be part of those hearings.

I haven’t heard the minister talk about how eager or how interested he is to have full hearings far and wide—including your area, possibly, member from Wellington. Who knows? I don’t know. We’re certainly interested in making sure that we travel around the province and get a good sense of what people have to say about traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture and the regulation of this profession as put forth by the Liberal Party.

1630

Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I’d like to comment on a couple of things the member from Waterloo–Wellington identified. I gather, seeing that he spent most of his time kind of repeating the nature of the bill, that he’s sympathetic and empathetic and supportive.

Both this member and the member from Trinity–Spadina identified hearings, and I can assure you that the minister is prepared to have hearings and to listen to a variety of people who would like, some perhaps again—as you may know, there was a task force that did travel fairly extensively last summer throughout Ontario. By the way, that was open; that was not by invitation. It was open to anybody. We had people from all walks of life and from a variety of professions—indeed, many from regulated professions—and others who were practitioners.

We have with us today the president of the Toronto School of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Dr. Mary Wu, who has been gathering information and who has made some very good suggestions. She still has some suggestions related to this particular area. But I want to assure that we will do that.

The other thing is that there are assumptions about the nature of the college. Of course, that’s to be expected when you propose that it’s up to the college to develop their particular standards, their regulations. One thing about that is that people get nervous. There are some guidelines that are in the bill.

My time is almost up. Perhaps I’ll comment on it later in another two-minuter, but to reassure people that the important thing is getting the very best there to do the job that is going to serve us all.

Mr. Miller: It’s my pleasure to add some comments to the speech by the member from Waterloo–Wellington, who does such an excellent job and who I’m sure will be representing the people of Wellington–Halton Hills after the next election.

The PC caucus recognizes the importance of regulation in the area of medical practice that is traditional Chinese medicine, as put forward by Bill 50. We recognize that many Ontarians want choice in medicine, and regulation in this area would allow the government to ensure that patient safety is protected.

We’ve also heard from many different stakeholder groups that there hasn’t been enough consultation on this

particular bill, and there have been concerns raised to do with this bill. So I do ask that it go to committee so that there can be more input from various groups. We've got different stakeholders who are in favour of the approach of the bill and others that are not. I know that physiotherapists and chiropractors think the approach is okay, and there are various acupuncturist groups that don't think it's okay.

The member from Waterloo–Wellington brought up broken promises in the health field, commitments that this government has broken so far. I note, in the short time I have, that there are, of course, some 50 broken promises we've counted so far, but many have to do with the health field, like funding medically necessary health care services. What has the government done? They've delisted eye exams, chiropractic care and physiotherapy care. Promise 13: They promised to cancel P3 hospitals in Brampton and Ottawa, and of course they haven't done that. They were going to hire 8,000 nurses. Well, they're a long way from doing that. The health tax itself is a broken promise—they were going to spend every penny of that new health tax on health care. Of course, they haven't done that. Lately, they're going to unclog emergency rooms, and we're seeing huge challenges with some 20 emergency rooms around the province.

Ms. Horwath: In making some remarks about the speech by the member from Waterloo–Wellington, I was pleased to hear some of the comments by the member from Ottawa Centre. What he raised in the discussion is the issue that New Democrats have been bringing to this debate since our critic first waded into the issue, and that is around not only the need to get more of those perspectives and concerns out in the open and discussed and debated among the various stakeholders in this bill, but also the fact that we have to be very respectful and cognizant of traditional Chinese medicine, of its history and of the different types of treatment that exist within that envelope of treatments called traditional Chinese medicine, as well as what some other professionals who provide treatments are doing. What are the differences? What does that mean? How, then, do we create a bill that does what practitioners want, which is to bring the profession, the practice of traditional Chinese medicine into a scope of regulation where they can assure the public—who are, in many ways, turning to non-Western methodologies in terms of treatment and health care, who are looking for these kinds of solutions and who are acknowledging the many centuries of tradition and healing and alternatives that go into traditional Chinese medicine.

What New Democrats would say is that this is certainly an important first step. We need to make sure that government is hearing stakeholders who are saying, "Let's make it right. It's too important not to make it right." Let's make sure there are fulsome public hearings so that we get it right and do the right thing by traditional Chinese medicine practitioners.

The Acting Speaker: The member from Waterloo–Wellington has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Arnott: I want to welcome members of the public who are here in the visitors' galleries today. I think they're demonstrating a great deal of interest in this issue and I'm very pleased that they're able to join us to listen to some of the debate that's taking place on this issue this afternoon.

To the member from Trinity–Spadina, I want to thank him for his kind comments. I'm pleased that he's speaking next and I look forward to hearing his perspective on this issue. I'm sure he's given it a great deal of thought and will bring forward the views of his constituents on this issue in a very interesting way, as he always does.

To the member for Ottawa Centre, I want to thank him for his response to my speech. I understand the member for Ottawa Centre had a great deal to do with the development of this bill. From what I see in Hansard, a question from the member from Markham before he resigned his seat in the Legislature made reference to a number of his colleagues who were asked to consult with Ontarians on the best way to regulate traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture, and the member for Ottawa Centre was among those.

I also want to thank him for presenting the private member's bill that he brought forward today, which had to be done because the member for Don Valley West was elevated to cabinet as Minister of Education and the bill had previously stood in her name, this bill being the bill that was initiated by students at Georgetown high school who were trying to encourage a greater degree of recycling in our high schools. It's a bill that I would have been happy to bring forward if I'd been aware that there was a movement to do that, but apparently the government wants to keep it all in the family, and that's just fine. I'll certainly be supportive of that bill when it comes forward for second, and hopefully third, reading debate. I would hope that that happens.

I want to thank the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka for his kind comments. Again, the member talked about the need for committee hearings and greater consultation on this issue—of course, I would agree, as did the member for Hamilton East in her two-minute response—and the need to get this right, because it's so important to protect the public in Ontario. I hope the government will listen to the discussion that takes place at public hearings when this bill is sent to committee.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Marchese: It is a pleasure to speak to this bill. I have a diverse community in my riding. The biggest linguistic community is Portuguese Canadian and the second-biggest is Chinese Canadian, right in the middle of Chinatown—Spadina and Dundas. We have a growing community, in fact, east of Spadina and west of Spadina. So people like me have good knowledge of the fact that many of my constituents actually adhere to traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture. But it isn't just limited to Chinese Canadians, because we've known for a long time that many people have taken an interest, and a growing interest, in alternative therapies to health care.

In my view, it was just a question of time until we regulated this profession. Remember, at the moment,

anybody can practise acupuncture—anybody. That's not something we should be happy about, because we don't have any standards at the moment. We don't know who's practising, because anybody is practising, and can be, if they want.

1640

The purpose of Bill 50 is to regulate this profession, and in this regard, it is an important thing. We support regulation. We support it because we believe that protecting the public with respect to the delivery of health care services is important, and we want to make sure that those who practise are qualified, are competent health care providers, are knowledgeable professionals and have successfully completed a great deal of study and work in this field. We want to be sure that that is the case, and everybody wants to be sure that they're getting care from people who have practised in this field.

We, as New Democrats, regulated many professions, as some of you know, and as the member from Nickel Belt, who is our health critic, stated. From 1991 to 1993, we regulated approximately 23 professions under the Regulated Health Professions Act, and we were in the process of reviewing bringing in traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture as part of those professions that should be regulated. Ruth Grier, the minister at the time, was actually doing the work to include that as part of the regulated health care service. It didn't happen in time. By the time we were asking the questions about what and how, Mike Harris came along, and that changed the whole scenery for a long, long time.

But we now have this opportunity to debate this bill, and we're pleased. We New Democrats support regulation, as do the Liberals. But there are some serious limitations of the bill that our health critic, the member from Nickel Belt, spoke about that I want to address as well, and I think the way she puts it is very useful.

The government says it wants to stop having just anyone perform acupuncture. She agrees; New Democrats agree.

The government also says that the performance of acupuncture will be regulated to ensure that the service is provided by qualified and competent individuals. Our critic agrees; we agree.

The government says that those who work in a health facility and provide acupuncture as part of an addiction treatment program should be able to do that. We agree with that as well.

But the bill as drafted, not just in the opinion of the member from Nickel Belt but in our opinion and in the opinion of others I will quote in a few moments, allows every health professional in every regulated health profession to perform acupuncture. Further, because each of those health care professionals can perform acupuncture in accordance with the standard of their profession and within the scope of practice, there really doesn't seem to be any minimum standard regarding what our health critic expects from someone who is delivering acupuncture. There doesn't seem to be any minimum level of training, educational experience, practical experience or

historical experience that is applied and will be applied in common to everybody who wants to practise acupuncture in Ontario.

This, in our view, is part of the problem that hopefully the member from Ottawa Centre will address, because it appears that he is carrying this bill. If he does, then we will see amendments to this bill, and we need to see amendments to this bill in order for it to be the bill we all can agree on.

Ms. Lombardi is a member of an association and a committee supporting the perspective that I am about to reveal by quoting her. She's the president of the Ontario Association of Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine. That association includes others: James Yuan, president, Canadian Association of Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine; Luheng Han, director, Committee for Certified Acupuncturists of Ontario; Jing Yuan, president, Ontario Acupuncture Association; and Jia Li, chairman, Ontario Examination Committee. This group says the following:

"Bill 50 removes the exemption on acupuncture, making it a part of the controlled act of 'a procedure below the dermis.' However, in the same sentence, it exempts all 23 regulated health professions, all health professions regulated under the Drugless Practitioners Act (naturopathic doctors) and all those individuals practising acudetox for addictions, allowing them to continue to practise acupuncture with their own standards. This means, effectively, that presently no regulation for the practice of acupuncture exists. There are still going to be 26 different standards of education and training for the practice of acupuncture; these multiple standards put the public at risk," says the group. Some of you may disagree with this, but you need to treat this seriously. These are serious individuals who practise in this field and raise good points that I happen to agree with.

The group also says the following:

"The traditional Chinese medicine community was hopeful, after several rounds of government consultations, that the government would create a regulation to clearly distinguish between the profession of acupuncture (based on years of training and education within the traditional Chinese theoretical model) and the adjunct modality being practised by physiotherapists and chiropractors with very little training. The public perception has always been that all acupuncture is the same.

"Unfortunately, the Ontario Liberal government gave us Bill 50, which is seriously flawed. It ignores the fundamental principles of professional regulation: public safety, professional standards, and professional equality."

They raise important points that need to be heard by all three political parties. It's possible you may have heard them when you did your round of discussions, but they're not reflected in the bill. It's good to have the hearings because we will hear what I've just read on the record again, and we hope that the government will listen as a way of strengthening Bill 50 and as a way of making it possible for people like me to support this bill.

I know that the member from Ottawa Centre mentioned Dr. Mary Wu, who is present here today. She

was mentioned by my colleague who is now the Minister of Citizenship, then a regular member of the Liberal Party. In his remarks, he too mentioned Dr. Wu and, on page 5008, talks about Ms. Wu, her other friends and the fact that they support this bill. We understand that. We also know—and I hope Dr. Wu doesn't mind us quoting her remarks in response to the remarks made by the health critic from Nickel Belt. She says, "I like the idea of setting minimum standards for all the regulated health care professions who wish to include acupuncture in their scope of practice. But I do not think that all professions should be allowed to practise acupuncture as they wish."

Just to remind you, Ms. Wu has a slew of credentials that I want to read for the record. She is the founder and president of the Toronto School of Traditional Chinese Medicine, which offers a Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine diploma program that includes five academic years, 4,420 hours; an acupuncture diploma program that includes three academic years, 2,260 hours; a Chinese herbal medicine diploma program, three academic years, 2,260 hours; tuina massage diploma programs, three academic years, 2,260 hours; and she is a practitioner of TCM diploma program, four academic years, 2,880 hours. She is the founder and co-director of the Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture Schools Council of Canada, executive council member of the World Federation of Traditional—it's just a long list. I don't know how you did it. So when she says, "I like the idea of setting minimum standards for all the regulated health care professions who wish to include acupuncture in their scope of practice," I take it seriously. I am hoping the member from Ottawa Centre does as well, and all the others.

1650

The fact that there is no minimum standard speaks to the problem of Bill 50. Understand that there are a number of practitioners who simply go for a course, maybe a continuing education course or some course offered by some of these practitioners for 30 or 40 hours, possibly—maybe more; I don't know—and they're qualified to do acupuncture. It just isn't right. When I read in the record what Dr. Wu does or did and the depth of the study to be able to do traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture, which takes thousands and thousands of hours and years and years of study, to then allow anyone of the health regulated professionals to do it with a mere, what, six months' training or a couple of months' training is simply inadequate, wrong. It's problematic, and it could be dangerous. Why dangerous? Because, as they remind us, there's some of the traditional Chinese medicine, including acupuncture, that causes many problems if not done correctly—meaning it leaves you, as a patient, very vulnerable. Meaning that when you go to any one of these practitioners, you don't know what you're getting. It could be good; it could be bad. It could be deleterious to your health.

So including a minimum of practice, minimum standard, is critical to the reform of this bill. What is the minimum standard? The member from Nickel Belt recommended 200 hours, based on WHO, the World

Health Organization, which suggested 200 hours as a minimum. But again, compare that to Dr. Wu's hours of study, which includes thousands and thousands of hours. With a minimum requirement of 200 hours, it's not much. Better than 30 hours; better than 40 hours. At least it includes a minimum. We don't have that in this bill. That is the problem and the weakness of this bill. To simply say we're going to support it now in the hope that someday this government will make it better, or another government will make it better, is not the correct approach.

The member from Nickel Belt looked at the scope of practice of all of the regulated professions, and none of them include acupuncture—none of them. We're allowing these 23 regulated health professionals to be able to do acupuncture, but nowhere in her review—because she called each and every one of them—does it in the scope of practice include acupuncture. That's a serious weakness. It speaks to the fact that we haven't done an adequate amount of work in doing this bill. We want to make it better. When it comes to the matter of the standard of practice, yes, acupuncture is included in some professions in terms of a standard, but not all, and it all varies from one regulated profession to the other, meaning, once again, that there is no harmonized standard across all those regulated professionals who can practise traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture. So when the government allows these professions to practise, I remind you: no scope of practice that includes acupuncture, and the standard of practice is so irregular that we're leaving ourselves very vulnerable.

You might say, "Well, they're chiropractors." You might say, "Oh, my goodness, they're physiotherapists." You might say that they're massage therapists. You might even say, "They're doctors. They should be able to do this." If that is the case, why is it the case that people like Dr. Wu took years and years and years of study and thousands and thousands of hours to do? It means it isn't that simple, that the process is complex. So we urge the member from Ottawa Centre, who obviously stated here that he wants to make this bill a little better, to take our concerns into account, the concerns raised by Dr. Wu and the concerns raised by the association members that I mentioned to you as well.

Just to bring another little thought into the debate, the association members I talked about earlier—Ms. Lombardi being one of the spokespeople—say this: "Bill 50 has also granted the title of 'doctor' to those individuals who meet the criteria to be set by the new college of traditional Chinese medicine "and approved by the Lieutenant Governor. However, in Bill 50, doctors of traditional Chinese medicine "are not given any of the rights" or "privileges of any of the other regulated health professions also granted use of the title 'doctor.'

"For example," traditional Chinese medicine "doctors will not have the right to communicate a diagnosis," will not "be able to order tests or X-rays or move the joints of the spine beyond their normal physiological range" etc. Traditional Chinese medicine "doctors will not have access to any of the controlled acts, meaning that the title

of doctor holds no authority in the eyes of the law. It is simply an 'honorary title' offered to please the Chinese community. This seems unfair to those"—

Mr. Patten: Who's saying this?

Mr. Marchese: The group that I mentioned—"individuals with many years of medical training in addition to extensive training in traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture."

These are two issues that I wanted to raise here today in my remarks, reminding those who want a little more in-depth view of this that the member from Nickel Belt, who is the New Democrat health critic, has spoken to this for a whole hour. Those who wish to have a little more in-depth look, please review the Hansard; we can get it for you if you want. But what we want is those public hearings to allow these groups to come to the committee and speak to how we can make this bill better, so as to treat those who have a great deal of experience seriously and with the dignity they deserve, and also to make sure that those who get service from traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture get the best service that is offered by them, that it's the most secure and the healthiest that you can give. That's what we want to be able to get from that committee.

We want to work with the Liberals on this to make it better. If that doesn't happen, people like me are going to say no to this bill, and I'm assuming our colleagues are going to follow suit in that regard.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Patten: I always enjoy my colleague from Trinity-Spadina, his enthusiasm and his insight. He's absolutely correct. He began by suggesting that this was an attempt to protect the public, to regulate something where standards were no longer present, that someone in short order, after a weekend, might be able to hang up a shingle and say, "I'm an acupuncturist." That's not good enough and nobody supports that.

By the way, this is complex; believe me.

Interjection.

Mr. Patten: I share that. It's very complex. We are dealing with a multiplicity of professions, therapies, looking at standards and accepting into another culture a cultural tradition of health and treatment from another society. As a matter of fact, it's already here, so we've got to organize it. So it's really organizing it, making sure that people are protected, making sure that whoever is using it is indeed using it in the appropriate fashion and within the scope of practice.

The member did say one thing which I fear I must correct him on, that all of the professions were exempt and somehow they could all do whatever they wanted in terms of acupuncture, for example. That is not true. That will not happen. You will not have a dentist who uses acupuncture and may use this in the gums or in a part of the structure of the teeth and bones—he or she is not going to be using this in your left arm or in your toe or this kind of thing. That is regulated within the college of dentistry. Each college does have some standards and does suggest activity—I wish I could speak longer—for each of those and the TCM college will be looking at

putting pressure on each of them for how you are going to—

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

1700

Mr. Miller: It's my pleasure to add some comments to the speech from the member from Trinity-Spadina on Bill 50. I know he has a large Chinese population in his riding and has a keen interest in this bill.

I note that "In 2001, the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council (HPRAC) recommended to the minister that the profession of traditional Chinese medicine be regulated with 'a distinctive scope of practice ... and four controlled acts authorized to the profession,' including

"(1) communicating a TCM diagnosis;

"(2) performing a procedure on tissue below the dermis for the purposes of acupuncture;

"(3) prescribing and dispensing natural health products; and

"(4) prescribing, dispensing and compounding Chinese herbal remedies."

Bill 50 does not act on these specific recommendations.

What is the McGuinty government doing to improve your health care—the big issue today here at question period? Well, they're running ads. They're spending millions of taxpayer dollars through the same firm that created the famous "I won't raise your taxes" ad—that's Bensimon Byrne—and the ad claims that you can call a number to find out how to reduce your wait times. This is in fact not correct, and just more "Say anything to get elected" from the McGuinty government. But that's what they're spending the precious health dollars on: ads that will not benefit anyone at all and in fact mislead people into thinking that they'll be able to shorten their wait time for certain procedures, when in fact they're not able to do that.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Yes, I believe the member is correct on the use of that word. It should be withdrawn.

Mr. Miller: I withdraw that word.

The Acting Speaker: Further questions and comments?

Ms. Horwath: It's my pleasure to make a few remarks about the speech from the member from Trinity-Spadina, putting out on the table not only some of the things that we have in agreement as New Democrats in regard to the regulation of traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture, but also some of the serious issues that need more debate and that continue to need to be reviewed by the government in the process of bringing this bill to its final stage. I think it's very clear, by some of the quotes my colleague brought to the discussion and some of the remarks he was able to highlight from people who are intrinsically involved with the practice of traditional Chinese medicine, and are extremely hopeful that we will actually get to a point of regulating TCM and regulating acupuncture, that they see it as being in their best interests.

However, they also acknowledge and recognize, as the member from Trinity–Spadina raised, and as the NDP health critic, Shelley Martel, raised in her speech, that there are serious concerns with the way the bill currently addresses a couple of issues, particularly the amounts of hours required in study to be able to claim oneself as a practitioner fully qualified and regulated under this act of traditional Chinese medicine, particularly of acupuncture, as well as the realization that if we do not do the right thing, if we do not take these issues to their most serious end, we could end up in a situation where—and the member from Trinity–Spadina was very clear and I agree with him 100%—we do more harm than good. We certainly don't want that. We want to hear the practitioners. We want to reflect on their expertise and centuries of knowledge and we want to make sure that the bill is reflective of that so that we end up with good legislation.

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): I am delighted that our government is bringing this piece of legislation forward and that we are so supportive of complementary alternative medicine.

Millions of people all over the world, maybe billions, have been helped, have been cured, have been saved by traditional Chinese medicine, I being one of those who has been helped by acupuncture—and many others. Jean-Marc Lalonde has been helped. Back here, the minister, Mike Colle, has been helped by this.

Traditional Chinese medicine is rooted in thousands of years of practice. There are many practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine who have put in thousands of hours of study and thousands of hours of practice. They deserve the recognition. They deserve to be recognized, some as doctors, but to be regulated to make sure that all the people in this province—12 million people—can be assured that, when they seek out a different type of medicine that maybe they're not used to, like traditional Chinese medicine, it will be safe, they will be making the right choice and it will lead them to the best practice, the best care they can get in traditional Chinese medicine, be it tuina, herbal medicine or acupuncture.

Today that's not the case. Today the case is that people are out there just hanging up shingles and can be doing acupuncture. For too long this has gone on in an unsafe manner. This piece of legislation is going to bring safety to traditional Chinese medicine in the province. It is going to allow many to be helped and cured, as many have been in the past.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Trinity–Spadina has two minutes in which to respond.

Mr. Marchese: I thank all the speakers, and I want to address myself to two: the member from Mississauga East and the member from Ottawa Centre.

First of all, New Democrats quite clearly support traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture. That's not in dispute, I'm assuming, because based on my speech, which I thought he heard, he would not have deduced that, from the comments that he made. So we are in agreement with that.

Secondly, we are not in disagreement with the idea of having regulations. I'm assuming, based on the fact that

he heard my speech, he agrees with me in that regard as well.

So putting that aside, the comment that I wanted the member from Mississauga East to reflect on, including the member from Ottawa Centre, is the following—because he was trying to correct me, and I'm going to try to correct him. His own bill says, in section 18(2), “A person who is a member of a college is exempt from subsection 27(1) of the act for the purpose of performing acupuncture in accordance with the standard of practice of the profession and within the scope of practice of the profession.” That's what your bill says.

I remind you, member from Ottawa Centre, that what I said is that when we look at all the professions, acupuncture does not figure in at all in their scope of practice—at all. Now you say to me that you're going to chat with them and you're going to force them to do so and so. It's not in the bill. And in terms of the standards of practice of acupuncture, they vary from profession to profession. Please, speak to those issues. Don't blah, blah, blah about how wonderful this is, because we agree with that.

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): It is wonderful. What have you got against TCM?

Mr. Marchese: And to the Minister of Citizenship, who's right behind me yapping, and is my good friend, what I say is this: We need to have minimum standards and we don't have—

Hon. Mr. Colle: You did nothing on this for—

The Acting Speaker: Stop the clock, please.

Order, please. The minister is not in his seat. The minister is creating quite a disturbance. I would suggest, if you wish to heckle, that you should be back over in your seat.

Mr. Marchese: Can you put some seconds back on here? Give me some seconds.

Hon. Mr. Colle: Okay. Give me a minute.

The Acting Speaker: I did stop the clock.

Now, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration knows far better than to do what he's doing. I would suggest that you allow the honourable member sufficient time to finish his statement.

Mr. Marchese: The Minister of Citizenship wasn't here at the time when I made my speech, but I'm glad he's here now. And we're friends; that's not the issue.

The point is, there is no minimum standard set in this bill, and that's what we need. We are for regulation and we are for minimum standards, and that is lacking in your bill. You need to work on that. You, the government, need to deal with that, otherwise—

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

1710

Mr. Kuldeep Kular (Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale): It's always a pleasure to take part in a debate on health care issues, such as Bill 50, the Traditional Chinese Medicine Act, 2006.

First of all, I want to not only commend the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for bringing this bill

forward, I also want to congratulate him in keeping public safety as the number one priority when bringing this bill forward. As you know, at present anybody can perform acupuncture, but Bill 50, the Traditional Chinese Medicine Act, is seeking that any Ontarians who want to have acupuncture services—they can only go to a person who would be qualified to do acupuncture. This bill is not only to ensure that the regulated health professionals may perform acupuncture, but this bill also gives Ontarians the choice of who they wish to receive the acupuncture services from.

During the debate, the honourable member from Waterloo–Wellington has mentioned that the Traditional Chinese Medicine Act is about fulfilling the McGuinty government's election promise. Mr. Speaker, let me tell you, this bill, entitled the Traditional Chinese Medicine Act, 2006, is not only about fulfilling a promise to Ontarians; it's about enhancing protection for Ontarians who choose alternative methods or approaches to health care.

This bill is also about promoting wellness and preventing illness. This bill is about setting the standards of practice. It's about setting the requirements for getting into Chinese medicine professions. It's about ensuring that members of the Chinese medicine profession are up to date on recent developments in their own field.

Mr. Speaker, this bill, Bill 50, is also about setting a complaints and discipline process of their members. It's about public safety. This bill is also about being accountable to a regulatory college.

Let me tell you what the Canadian Society of Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture says about this bill. The Canadian Society of Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture insists "on traditional Chinese medicine regulation" and does not "tolerate anyone who jeopardizes the progress of regulation."

This bill not only sets up standards for Chinese medicine, but it also allows the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council to give some advice, guidance and recommendations to the traditional Chinese medicine regulatory college. The Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council will help to set the educational requirements needed to use the title "doctor."

This bill is about Ontarians' safety. It's not only fulfilling the McGuinty government's election promise, even though, if this bill is enacted, it will definitely be one of the promises fulfilled for Ontarians' health safety. I would urge all members on all sides of this House to support this bill, so that any alternative medicine is regulated in this province.

About a year and a half ago, there was a parliamentary delegation visiting Canada from Italy. They came here and played a soccer match with parliamentarians from Canada. I was one of the players there, and I strained one of my muscles. An acupuncturist was there. As a family doctor turned politician, I was at first skeptical about it. I said, "Let me see what an acupuncturist does to my strained muscle." She did some acupuncture and, let me tell you, what a relief from the pain I was getting from the strained muscle.

Since then, I have felt that it's very safe to bring acupuncture into this province as a regulated profession. I definitely support this bill, and I want all the members of the Legislature to pass this bill.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): It's a pleasure to be able to take the next couple of minutes to respond to the discussion on Bill 50. I think that many people appreciate the importance of providing consumer protection. We have it in many, many areas of our lives, and obviously one of the areas in which we are most vulnerable is health care. I think this particular piece of legislation provides an opportunity for the people of this province to feel a security and comfort in knowing that the intent of the bill is to ensure the kind of regulatory framework that would allow a very long-standing practice, that of acupuncture, and a very long-standing field of medicine, traditional Chinese medicine, to achieve that kind of recognition and status in our community. I think that many people—frankly, thousands of people—have experienced, as certainly members in my own family have, the benefits of traditional Chinese medicine and of acupuncture itself. I think the importance of this bill is as a first step in providing the kind of consumer protection that the people of this province, quite frankly, deserve.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please.

The member from Hamilton East.

Ms. Horwath: Again, I want to take the opportunity to make a few remarks on the member's speech, but really to reiterate the belief New Democrats have, which our critic has put on the record and which my colleague from Trinity–Spadina put on the record not too long ago, that we support the regulation of traditional Chinese medicine. But we support it with the understanding that the government is going to take what we currently have in front of us, which is more or less a draft, that they will hear very clearly and take under advisement some of the very legitimate concerns that have been raised by stakeholders and by members of this Legislature in regard to how to make the bill better, and that they will move forward in a committee process that will allow for a broader consultation and for public hearings to be undertaken, so that people can come and debate with the government—maybe "debate" is the wrong word, but certainly put on the record with the government through the committee process more specifics around their concerns, and particularly the thing we're concerned about: What happens if those concerns are not taken to heart? What happens if the government decides to simply ignore the knowledgeable issues that have been raised, the knowledgeable factors that have been brought to the fore by Dr. Wu, by Natalie from my community. I'll be reading some of her comments into the record very shortly. If we don't do that, then in fact what we are doing is failing the traditional Chinese medicine practitioners in Toronto, in Hamilton and in every other community of this province, because we have not respected their knowledge and we have not respected their tradition

in a way that is appropriately reflected in the bill that we're going to move into legislation.

1720

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): It was a pleasure for me to listen to my colleague the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale, who himself was, before coming to this place, a very distinguished family physician in the Brampton area.

This is a rather short bill, six pages in length, but in many ways Bill 50 is a very historic bill for this Legislature, to recognize the very important role of traditional Chinese medicine in the delivery of health service in Ontario. It seems to me that this could be one of the rare times in the Legislature when all three parties, I hope, will come together on a bill. I think we all mutually share the broad framework objectives that have been clearly articulated in the bill—an opportunity to take this bill to committee, to go out to various communities throughout the province to listen to these very skilled professional men and women who are currently practising under the umbrella of TCM in the province, to hear their views on the bill, to in fact improve the bill and hopefully bring it back to this House, and we'd have, as I said, one of those opportunities to have unanimity when it comes back for final approval.

There are a number of items in the bill: to create an autonomous self-governing college; to set standards of practice at a very high bar; to establish requirements for entry into the profession; to ensure that members are up to date on recent developments in their field; and of course, very important for consumer protection, to develop a complaints and discipline process for members like the college of physicians and surgeons that we now have in the province to take complaints to.

Mr. Miller: We've certainly heard from many different speakers that this bill really needs to have input and needs to go to committee. We're at second reading debate right now.

We note from the stakeholders we've heard from that there are differing opinions on what should happen. We've heard that some acupuncturists object to the fact that under Bill 50 acupuncture will not be recognized as a health profession in Ontario, as it is in Quebec, Alberta, BC and 48 states in the US, but merely as a modality or technique. As a result, they believe practitioners in Ontario will not have equal status with the rest of the world. Those are acupuncturists. We also have objections to the access granted to members of all 23 regulated health professions to practise acupuncture in accordance with the standards of practice of the profession. It should be noted that this objection is not shared by all of them. In particular, chiropractors and physiotherapists who have been practising this treatment for over 30 years would like to be able to continue. Also, there's disapproval of the emphasis on traditional Chinese medicine and a request to rename the bill the TCM and Acupuncture Act and create a college of TCM and acupuncture of Ontario and include title protection for "doctor of acupuncture."

Those are some of the concerns we've heard from the stakeholders. It's obvious that what this bill needs to do

now is get out to committee so the many people who will be affected by the bill can give input and improve the bill so it protects the public and also works for those people in the profession of acupuncture or traditional Chinese medicine. We look forward to this bill going out as soon as possible to committee, with lots of advertising so those affected will be aware of the committee hearings and will be able to give public input to this Bill 50.

The Acting Speaker: The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale.

Mr. Kular: I want to thank the honourable member from York North, the honourable member from Hamilton East, the member from Peterborough and the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka.

When this bill was initially brought forward, the group called CSCMA, the Canadian Society of Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture, was kind of skeptical about it, but at this point in time the majority has come in support of this bill and wants traditional Chinese medicine to be fully regulated so that Ontarians' health is safe, and so that Ontarians can count on alternative types of medicine, maybe traditional Chinese medicine, which will help them with their sickness. All over the world not only millions, but billions, have already gotten help from traditional Chinese medicine.

I think this bill, if enacted, will definitely make traditional Chinese medicine another step to help deliver health care in this province. I really want to thank all the members of this House who, at the end of the day, will support this bill.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms. Horwath: It's my pleasure to have an opportunity to raise some issues about Bill 50 that I think are important and put on the record some of the things that I have heard from members of my own community, as well as through some of the documentation, not only in terms of various pieces of correspondence but also in records of some of the debate that has already taken place, that is to be found in our Hansard records.

One of the things that I think is extremely important to acknowledge and celebrate is the additions, the benefits, that a growing Chinese community has brought to my city, the city of Hamilton. I had the pleasure and honour, when I was a city councillor representing the area where many Chinese small business owners operated, to work together with them to try to encourage the continuance of small business in Hamilton, operated and owned by the Chinese members of our community. I can tell you that they are people of great integrity, great drive and great dedication.

In the context of traditional Chinese medicine, I have to say that my opportunities weren't very many at the time that I was a city councillor because I didn't spend much time with practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine when I was in that role. However, I was recently enlightened and made aware of the importance of this legislation in my role as a member of provincial Parliament, when I had the pleasure of meeting and talking to an amazing woman in the city of Hamilton, a woman who came from China a mere five years ago and

has become a huge success in our city as a practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine.

I'm speaking of Nathalie Xian Yi Yan, who is with us today, and who has actually come to the House every time this bill has been debated because she's extremely interested and concerned about what she sees as lacking in this bill. I'm going to speak to that, because it's not simply what Nathalie has raised with me; interestingly enough, at the very beginning of my education that she so graciously provided me in regard to traditional Chinese medicine, she raised many points in anticipation of a bill coming forward that in fact have been reflected in comments that have been provided by other practitioners around what needs to happen to make sure the bill is the right bill, the appropriate bill, the bill that does the things we want to see done in regard to the regulation of traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture. Unfortunately, at this point in time—we all know it and it's been said many times—anybody in Ontario can hang out a shingle, can put some fancy words around their name, having no requirements for any particular education, no requirements for any particular training, no requirements for any kind of justification at all, no verification at all of their understanding of the practice of acupuncture; nothing at all for the consumer, the person in the community who's looking for an alternative, who's looking away from Western medicine, which may not have provided the kind of health care options, the kind of results, not only in terms of disease prevention but in terms of wellness, pain relief and all kinds of areas.

1730

I'll read out some of the other areas that traditional Chinese medicine envelopes, because it's more than acupuncture, but I did want to raise the issue that acupuncture particularly is one of those issues that, as my friend Rosario Marchese from Trinity-Spadina indicated, is something that can cause harm.

In the context of these practitioners having said, not just within the context of Bill 50 but historically in Ontario for several years now, that they want to see regulation, that it will do them good to have regulation—in fact, the traditional Chinese medicine community believes that “regulation is a very important step for our profession.” This is a quote that was in the *Vitality* magazine article written by Marylou Lombardi. It says: “The ... (TCM) community believes that regulation is a very important step for our profession. It will increase credibility in the eyes of the public and force us to create high standards for the practice of our profession. We also believe that regulation is necessary for the future growth and development of the profession.”

There are other practitioners who have been involved in this debate, in this discussion and in the consultation that the government members put together to bring us to this point, which is debate on the draft bill that's in front of us, a bill that from my perspective is a draft because we have to make some amendments to it, and I look forward to that.

One of the things that is extremely problematic is this whole debate over whether or not minimum standards

exist, and exist to the expectation of the practitioners who have participated in the discussion. It's causing some friction, it's causing some tension, because there are people who are very seriously concerned that the standards don't exist. Notwithstanding what some of the members of the government side are saying, that continues to be the case to this moment today with the bill that's in front of us.

First of all, though, just for the benefit of getting it on the record, because I think it's an important distinction that maybe people are not aware of, there's a difference between TCM acupuncture and something that is called adjunct acupuncture. This is the difference between the real, historic, traditional, centuries-old type of acupuncture and the acupuncture that is practised in many cases by other health professionals like chiropractors, for example, or RMTs—registered massage therapists—or physiotherapists. Maybe not massage therapists, but there are certain other practitioners who do provide acupuncture specifically within the narrow scope of pain relief as part of the other types of treatments they provide for people in the scope of pain relief. TCM, specifically, is performing a procedure on tissue to below the dermis and membranes for the purpose of acupuncture for health promotion, disease prevention and treatment according to the diagnosis and differentiation of traditional Chinese medicine.

As we heard earlier from my colleague Rosario Marchese from Trinity-Spadina, and as I heard so clearly from Nathalie Xian Yi Yan from Hamilton, the people who practise traditional Chinese medicine acupuncture within the scope of traditional Chinese medicine have thousands and thousands of hours of training—over 4,000 hours of training—and have many years of experience as well in the provision of that kind of treatment. So it's quite different from a physiotherapist, for example, which was my experience not too long ago. My physiotherapist did a fine job, so I'm not disparaging her work. But it was specifically for pain relief, and she was very clear with me that she had had a couple of hundred hours of training in acupuncture at McMaster University, which is a very well-respected health care teaching university in my community that's associated with a teaching hospital. Nonetheless, the point was that a couple of hundred hours as an adjunct acupuncture treatment is what my professional, who was a physiotherapist, provided me with, the extra after doing physiotherapy. Going through some pain relief opportunities in traditional or regular physiotherapy formats, we moved on to acupuncture specifically for the pain relief.

I have to tell you, it was a fine experience. I have no complaints whatsoever. But I can say to you quite clearly that I can see the distinction between the kind of treatment I received and the kind of treatment we're talking about when we're talking about acupuncture in relationship to traditional Chinese medicine. They're quite different, because the other type of acupuncture is described as being—and this is adjunct acupuncture—“a procedure on tissue below the dermis for the purpose of acupuncture pain relief in conjunction with other modal-

ities, such as western medicine, physiotherapy and chiropractic adjustment, according to human anatomy and physiology.” So that, in the crux of it, is the issue around what we’re talking about when we’re talking about acupuncture and the scope of practice.

At this point in time—and it has come up many times before, and I’m going to be putting it again on the record—acupuncture is not a controlled act. Anybody can perform acupuncture in the province of Ontario. This comes from the remarks of my health critic, in terms of some of the things that she was putting on the record. She’s a very thorough person, as you know, and when it comes to her role as the health critic, she understands how important it is to examine the issues and bring to the table educated debate, because health care, particularly in this context—Bill 50, the possible regulation of TCM and acupuncture—is extremely important. The people of Ontario deserve to have that kind of thoughtful critique which particularly opposition critics bring forward when it comes to these kinds of bills.

What Ms. Martel, the member from Nickel Belt, says is, “under section 8 of the regulation itself, acupuncture is exempt from being a controlled act. The bill proposes to revoke that exemption, meaning stopping just anybody from hanging out a shingle and performing acupuncture, by revoking paragraph 1 of section 8 of the regulation. But if you look at section 18 of the bill”—and this is something my colleague from Trinity–Spadina raised as well—“in the very next paragraph, the government proposes the following: ‘A person who is a member of a college is exempt from subsection 27(1) of the act for the purpose of performing acupuncture in accordance with the standard of practice of the profession and within the scope of practice of the profession.’”

As was indicated, going through the scope of practice of the various professions, it becomes very clear that acupuncture is not identified as a scope of practice of any of those other professions. The problem is that you’ve left a blank slate, you’ve left a gaping hole, and that is absolutely problematic and something that New Democrats are extremely concerned about.

One of the issues that came up is the issue of using the term “doctor.” I know Nathalie has raised that issue as well and has made some specific recommendations around who should be able to be considered a doctor. I’ll read you some of them because I think it’s really clear that the issue of who could be called a doctor—the word “doctor” is something that we, here in Ontario, here in Canada in fact, and probably anywhere, have an automatic understanding in our minds about, what that means, if you’re a doctor in relation to the provision of health care. When we think of the word “doctor,” we automatically know, in our current realm of understanding of that word, that it connotes a certain amount of study, a certain amount of expertise, and a certain amount of documentation and assurance that in fact the person who we’re dealing with in regard to our health care provision is someone who is credentialed, someone who we can be sure has gone through the rigours of the appropriate learning, examination, experience and training.

1740

For example, one of the suggestions is that the title “doctor” be reserved for graduates of a four- or five-year full-term degree program at a university of traditional Chinese medicine, followed by one year of clinical internship, who are currently practising TCM full-time; graduates from an accredited medical school with an MD in Western medicine who are currently practicing TCM full-time, and who have taken a one-year, full-time continuing education TCM program or a two-year apprenticeship with a qualified TCM doctor. There are several others: graduates of other regulated health professions from an accredited university currently practising TCM full-time who have taken two years of continuing education in a TCM program or three years of apprenticeship with a qualified TCM doctor—again, several different examples, the point being that the people who are practising traditional Chinese medicine, who have been trained for thousands and thousands of hours, are saying not to allow the word “doctor” to be used unless we are sure that the qualifications, the understanding, the value, and the confidence that we put in the word “doctor” is in fact reflected in the requirements that this legislation, this bill, is proposing to put on practitioners of traditional medicine.

Unfortunately, there’s a bit of a concern about whether or not that is what is being contemplated in the bill. In fact, the way the bill is written right now, the “doctor” title will not give TCM practitioners the authority it gives other doctors to undertake various controlled acts that are set out in legislation: for example, communicating a diagnosis; setting a fracture or dislocation; inserting an instrument, hand or finger; injection; inhalation; prescribing, dispensing, selling or compounding a drug; vision care; hearing care; dental care; allergy testing. In other words, the issue becomes that if other doctors in the province of Ontario currently have access to controlled acts, and if in fact we are saying that traditional Chinese medicine practitioners are going to be considered doctors, then why is it that they are not going to be having access to these other kinds of controlled acts as currently identified?

What we don’t want to see, then, is the questioning of that term. We want to make sure that as we move forward with this bill, it’s a bill that is clearly going to identify not only for myself, having some experience and having taken some time; not only for the members of this Legislature, who sit through the debates and are likely learning more than they’ve ever known before about traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture; not only for the people who are current clients of practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine; and not only practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine—but that in fact, as I stated at the very beginning of my remarks, everyone, people who have only heard of the term “traditional Chinese medicine,” will have a common understanding, common confidence and common security in the knowledge that when we go forward with the regulation of traditional Chinese medicine, we’re doing so in a way that completely respects, completely acknowledges and

completely sets out the standards and requirements that we want to see, so that we can all equally have that confidence and, as I mentioned at the beginning, so that people can be encouraged.

The West has its way of doing things. Our traditional way of dealing with health care issues, wellness and disease is relatively young when you think about traditional Chinese medicine methodology. Again, I was going to say at the beginning what some of that is, and now I've lost my note on that; hopefully, I'll find it before the end of my discussion. Acupuncture is one of them, herbal medicines or herbal treatments is another, and there are a couple of others that I will hopefully find. But the bottom line is that if we, as humans, are prepared to be open to and enlightened by the cultures and traditions of the Chinese people, who have been doing this kind of not only study but practice for thousands and thousands of years, it only serves us in a positive way to open our minds to the kinds of opportunities they bring to us.

We often talk—and I did at the beginning as well—about the bountiful gifts the Chinese community has brought to my city of Hamilton. One of those is this very new way of dealing with health and wellness, and with disease and pain. If we are only given, let's say, the security, as western people who have a certain model, a certain scope of the way we've traditionally dealt with our particular health care experiences, and we open our minds to the possibilities and let ourselves experience the gifts and the enlightened way that traditional Chinese medicine practitioners bring, the wholeness of the being—again, talking to my friend Nathalie, she explained to me many things, including what to eat and what not to eat, how to deal with your day and how much to sleep.

Needless to say, there is much that we can learn, but we can't be secure in that knowledge unless we have a proper scope of regulation in this bill.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Berardinetti: It's a privilege to have an opportunity to make a few comments on the remarks by the member from Hamilton East.

The bill in front of us is not a very long bill, but I just want to point out a couple of key provisions. The bill restricts the use of the titles "traditional Chinese medicine practitioner" and "acupuncturist" to members of the college. So once this college is established, only those people who are members of the college can use the titles "traditional Chinese medicine practitioner" or "acupuncturist." It says here, "No person other than a member may hold themselves out as qualified to practise as a traditional Chinese medicine practitioner or acupuncturist. Anyone who contravenes these restrictions is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to a maximum fine of \$5,000 ... and ... \$10,000 for a subsequent offence." So the college does have a certain standard that will be set up.

I also want to draw members' attention to section 7 of the bill, which restricts the titles: "7(1) No person other

than a member shall use the titles 'traditional Chinese medicine practitioner' or 'acupuncturist', a variation or abbreviation or an equivalent in another language."

Only those who have that title can use that. With respect to traditional Chinese medicine, this bill will create an autonomous, self-governing college with the authority to set the standard of practice, establish requirements for entering into the profession, ensure that members are up to date on recent developments in their field, and develop a complaints and discipline process for members. I can see no one better to do this than those who actually practise it and are members of the college.

So the bill is strong and, in my view, watertight, and provides proper protections so that acupuncture and TCM can be practised properly in the province of Ontario.

Mrs. Munro: I'm pleased to be able to add a few comments in the debate today. I think that many of the speakers have referenced the intent of this bill and the support of this bill, but also recognize that hearings need to be conducted after second reading, because this is an opportunity to break into new ground in terms of recognition of acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine. It seems to me, as we have heard from various practitioners and experts, that there is more work for this government to do in terms of providing the kind of consumer protection that each of us thinks is paramount.

1750

I think also, in the moment that I have, it's important to recognize as well, in making sure that we're moving in the correct manner to achieve our goal of recognition and consumer protection, that this speaks to the broader public issue in the area of health care, and that is that one of the consequences of a greater globalization or the shrinking of the planet is, of course, the fact that we have the opportunity to learn and understand and appreciate health patterns and regimes that have been in place, in some cases, for many generations, and traditional Chinese medicine, of course, is one of these. So as we learn more and as we become a community which relies on a wider variety of health care options, it's very important that we set the stage correctly for all Ontarians.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I was listening intently to the debate of members here this afternoon from my office, and it's an interesting issue. I was a bit surprised. I was contacted in my constituency office by a couple of people who practise some of the traditional medicines or traditional practices that are listed—and would be listed in this bill, should it pass—and I was surprised at the opposition.

I assumed that there would be a fair amount of support from within the community in regard to wanting to go further, and I've not had a chance to sit down and really discuss with them what their key concerns are, other than what my staff have told me at morning meetings that we have every morning. So I just want to say, I heed the caution that I'm hearing in this debate that we really need to make sure that this bill goes to committee and that we don't end up in committee forever for the bill not to come out, but really try to do the job that needs to be done in order to make sure that the specific concerns addressed

by the practitioners and those who are patients of traditional Chinese medicine are heard.

I think we need to go forward—that would be my gut instinct—and certainly support the direction of what we’re trying to do, but clearly there’s not unanimity out there, and if I’m getting phone calls in the constituency of Timmins–James Bay, where you wouldn’t expect to hear a lot about this, I’ve got to believe that it’s probably louder in other communities where it’s practised in larger numbers.

I must say, however, there have been, over the last 10 or 15 years, many people in my community of Timmins and others who are turning to traditional medicines as a way to deal with their illnesses and are getting quite good success. So if the practitioners are the ones who are charged and currently responsible for treating people who choose to go that route because they find that conventional medicine doesn’t work for them, I think we need to hear what they have to say.

The only other thing—and I hope I’m going to get a chance to do this when I get further debate—is the issue of grandfathering. I support the concept of grandfathering. I only wish the government had done the same thing when it came to other regulated professions that they didn’t give the same grandfathering provisions to, but I’ll talk about that a little bit later.

Mr. Kular: As has been said time and again during the debate about Bill 50, at the present time any person can perform acupuncture in this province, and the Ontarians who want to receive acupuncture have no idea whether the person who is giving the service of acupuncture or the practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine is qualified or not.

As a family doctor, I very well know that physicians and surgeons in this province are regulated by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. In the same way, Bill 50 is seeking to have a regulatory college to set standards of a high kind of medicine in the area of traditional Chinese medicine. The college will definitely set high standards so that the persons who receive acupuncture or natural products are regulated and are very sure that those things are safe. By bringing this bill forward, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has made public safety the number one priority of this bill.

I would again urge all the members of this Legislature to support this bill so that it becomes an act. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The member from Hamilton East has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Horwath: I want to thank all of the members who made some remarks on what I had to say.

I thought I would complete my remarks by saying this, and I’m quoting, again, from the article I mentioned earlier: “The traditional Chinese medicine community was hopeful, after several rounds of government consultations, that the government would create a regulation to clearly distinguish between the profession of acupuncture (based on years of training and education within the traditional Chinese theoretical model) and the adjunct modality being practised by physiotherapists and chiropractors with very little training. The public perception has always been that all acupuncture is the same.

“Unfortunately, the Ontario Liberal government gave us Bill 50, which is seriously flawed. It ignores the fundamental principles of professional regulation: public safety, professional standards, and professional equality....

“Bill 50 removes the exemption on acupuncture, making it a part of the controlled act of ‘a procedure below the dermis.’ However, in the same sentence, it exempts all 23 regulated health professions, all health professions regulated under the Drugless Practitioners Act ... all those individuals practising acudetox for addictions, allowing them to continue to practise acupuncture with their own standards. This means, effectively, that presently no regulation for the practice of acupuncture exists. There is still going to be 26 different standards of education and training for the practice of acupuncture; these multiple standards put the public at risk....

“From a legal perspective, the fact that the other 23 regulated health professions, plus health professions regulated under the Drugless Practitioners Act ... and those using acupuncture for acudetox, are included in this piece of legislation suggests that ‘The College of TCM’ is authorizing or allowing these other professions to practise any style of acupuncture, including TCM-based acupuncture.”

That is the crux of one of the issues we need to clean up in committee, in the process of getting this bill right, because everybody wants to see the regulation, and we want to see it done properly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The time now being 6 of the clock, this House stands recessed until 6:45 this evening.

The House adjourned at 1757.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Line(s)	Should read:
102	5211	2	54	Mr. Runciman: I ask the Premier once again to show some

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (L) Speaker / Président	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Beaches-East York / Beaches-York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Millroy, John (L)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, deputy government House leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement	Lanark-Carleton	Werling, Norman W. (PC)
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (L) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London West / London-Ouest	Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Eglington-Lawrence	Colle, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (L) Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration	London-Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L) Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Erie-Lincoln Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L) Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement	Nepean-Carleton	MacLeod, Lisa (PC)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Guelph-Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara Falls	Craitor, Kim (L)
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)
		Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)
		Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)

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

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

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

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

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Wayne Arthurs, Bob Delaney,
Garfield Dunlop, Andrea Horwath,
Tim Hudak, Phil McNeely John Wilkinson,
Jim Wilson, David Zimmer
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Finance and economic affairs /
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Phil McNeely
Ted Arnott, Wayne Arthurs, Toby Barrett,
Pat Hoy, Judy Marsales,
Phil McNeely, Carol Mitchell,
Michael Prue, Liz Sandals
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Présidente: Linda Jeffrey
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jim Brownell
Jim Brownell, Brad Duguid, Kevin Daniel Flynn,
Linda Jeffrey, Jean-Marc Lalonde,
Jerry J. Ouellette, Peter Tabuns,
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Cheri DiNovo, Michael Gravelle,
John Milloy, Julia Munro, Ernie Parsons,
Laurie Scott, Monique M. Smith,
Joseph N. Tascona, John Wilkinson
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Justice Policy / Justice

Chair / Président: Vic Dhillon
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Maria Van Bommel
Bas Balkissoon, Lorenzo Berardinetti,
Vic Dhillon, Christine Elliott, Frank Klees,
Peter Kormos, Ted McMeekin,
David Oraziotti, Maria Van Bommel
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Bob Delaney
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mario G. Racco
Bob Delaney, Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese,
Ted McMeekin, Norm Miller, Jennifer F. Mossop,
Tim Peterson, Mario G. Racco, Mario Sergio
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Public accounts / Comptes publics

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Vacant
Ernie Hardeman, Shelley Martel,
Deborah Matthews, Lisa MacLeod,
Bill Mauro, John Milloy, Richard Patten,
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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

Chair / Présidente: Andrea Horwath
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony C. Wong
Gilles Bisson, Kim Craiton, Andrea Horwath,
Dave Levac, Gerry Martiniuk, Bill Murdoch,
Khalil Ramal, Mario Sergio, Tony C. Wong
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Social Policy / Politique sociale

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal
Ted Chudleigh, Peter Fonseca,
Kuldip Kular, Jeff Leal,
Rosario Marchese, John O'Toole,
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal, Kathleen O.Wynne
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Electoral reform / Réforme électorale

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

CONTENTS

Wednesday 11 October 2006

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Members' comments	
Ms. MacLeod.....	5361
Poverty	
Ms. DiNovo.....	5361
Cancer research	
Mr. McNeely.....	5361
Climate change	
Ms. Scott.....	5362
Rockton Fair	
Mr. McMeekin.....	5362
Coal-fired generating stations	
Mr. Yakabuski.....	5362
Kent County Agricultural Hall of Fame	
Mr. Hoy.....	5363
World Mental Health Day	
Mrs. Sandals.....	5363
Water quality	
Mr. Wilkinson.....	5363

FIRST READINGS

Education Amendment Act (School Waste Reduction), 2006,	
Bill 147, <i>Mr. Patten</i>	
Agreed to.....	5364
Mr. Patten.....	5364

MOTIONS

House sittings	
Mr. Bradley.....	5364
Agreed to.....	5364

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

Transit services	
Mrs. Cansfield.....	5364
Mr. Tabuns.....	5367
Northern economy	
Mr. Bartolucci.....	5365
Mr. Miller.....	5366
Mr. Bisson.....	5367

ORAL QUESTIONS

Health care	
Mr. Tory.....	5368, 5369
Mr. McGuinty.....	5368, 5369
Education funding	
Mr. Hampton.....	5370, 5371
Mr. McGuinty.....	5370, 5371
Government appointments	
Mr. Tory.....	5372
Mr. McGuinty.....	5372

Disability benefits

Mr. Prue.....	5373
Mr. McGuinty.....	5373

Bridge safety

Mr. Milloy.....	5373
Mrs. Cansfield.....	5374

Long-term care

Mrs. Witmer.....	5374
Mr. Smitherman.....	5374

Aggregate extraction

Mr. Tabuns.....	5375
Mr. Ramsay.....	5375

Hydro rates

Mr. McNeely.....	5375
Mr. Duncan.....	5375

Services for the developmentally disabled

Mr. Dunlop.....	5376
Mr. McGuinty.....	5376

Mental health services

Ms. Horwath.....	5376
Mr. Smitherman.....	5376

Environmental protection

Mrs. Mitchell.....	5377
Mr. Ramsay.....	5377

PETITIONS

Electricity supply

Mr. Miller.....	5377
-----------------	------

Prescription drugs

Mr. Berardinetti.....	5377
-----------------------	------

Health card registration office

Mr. Hudak.....	5378, 5379
----------------	------------

Long-term care

Ms. Martel.....	5378
Mr. Martiniuk.....	5379

Immigrants' skills

Mr. Leal.....	5378
Mr. Delaney.....	5379

Water quality

Mrs. Elliott.....	5378
Mr. Miller.....	5380

Gasoline prices

Mr. Martiniuk.....	5380
--------------------	------

Property rights

Mr. Runciman.....	5380
Mr. Arnott.....	5380

SECOND READINGS

Traditional Chinese Medicine Act,

2006, Bill 50, Mr. Smitherman	
Mr. Ramal.....	5381, 5383
Mr. Miller.....	5382, 5387, 5391, 5394
Ms. Horwath.....	5383, 5388, 5391
	5393, 5394, 5398

Mr. Berardinetti.....	5383, 5397
Mr. Martiniuk.....	5383
Mr. Arnott.....	5384, 5388
Mr. Marchese.....	5387, 5388, 5392
Mr. Patten.....	5387, 5391
Mr. Fonseca.....	5392
Mr. Kular.....	5392, 5394, 5398
Mrs. Munro.....	5393, 5397
Mr. Leal.....	5394
Mr. Bisson.....	5397
Debate deemed adjourned.....	5398

OTHER BUSINESS

Visitors

Mr. Bisson.....	5368
Mr. McMeekin.....	5368
The Speaker.....	5368
Mr. Ruprecht.....	5368
Mr. Dhillon.....	5379

Members' conduct

Mr. Runciman.....	5381
The Acting Speaker.....	5381

Answers to written questions

Mr. Runciman.....	5381
The Acting Speaker.....	5381
Mr. Bradley.....	5381

Erratum.....	5398
---------------------	-------------

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mercredi 11 octobre 2006

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

Loi de 2006 modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation (réduction des déchets dans les écoles), projet de loi 147,	
<i>M. Patten</i>	
Adoptée.....	5364

DEUXIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 2006 sur les praticiennes et praticiens en médecine traditionnelle chinoise,	
projet de loi 50, <i>M. Smitherman</i>	
Débat présumé ajourné.....	5398