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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 15 November 2006

Mercredi 15 novembre 2006

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 15 November 2006

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 15 novembre 2006

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HERSHEY CANADA

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): I rise today to share a story of good corporate citizenship. When Hershey Canada discovered traces of salmonella in an externally sourced ingredient used to make its chocolate at its plant in Smiths Falls, management immediately contacted the Food Inspection Agency of the Canadian government. Hershey stopped production immediately and issued a voluntary recall of all products affected.

I want to remind parents that Halloween products were not included in this recall and were not affected.

The Hershey plant is a huge part of the Smiths Falls economy, employing some 500 individuals and supporting many local businesses, including 300 local dairy farms. Hershey is also a tourist attraction, offering free tours of their factory. Last year, this included 300,000 visitors.

I know that for the 500 workers this unscheduled lay-off is frustrating. I hope they are proud to work for a company that is so concerned about the safety of its products and those who use them. I know that Hershey is doing everything it can to solve the problem and get those workers back to work.

I want to commend Hershey for acting quickly and for issuing a voluntary recall before any reports of illness. I'm sure all members of the House would join me in expressing our support for Hershey Canada and the community of the town of Smiths Falls.

CANADIAN FILM INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): Telefilm Canada recently released its yearly tabulation on the state of the Canadian film industry. Box office earnings from English-language cinema declined again this year, dropping from 1.6% to 1.1%.

Given the important contribution the film and television sector makes to its economy, Ontario needs to champion English-language cinema. The level of American productions choosing to shoot here is prone to fluc-

tuations, leaving the long-term vitality of the sector in part dependent on a strong domestic industry.

There is robust evidence showing our domestic film industry has tremendous growth potential. Quality films made by English-Canadian filmmakers, many of whom live in Toronto, have been earning Canada a reputation internationally as a film industry to watch.

Prescriptions on fostering a strong domestic industry include Ontario reintroducing a film development fund and providing marketing support. Large American studios, thanks to deep pockets, can allocate multi-million dollar budgets toward promotion.

We in Ontario need to support marketing of Canadian films in the form of allocating screen time for Canadian movie trailers. Such a measure would help give exposure to upcoming Canadian productions. Canadian movies have been winning over audiences abroad; there is a local audience waiting to be tapped into. With an adequate amount of exposure via marketing and screen time, box office receipts for Canadian moves can grow.

CONSERVATION AREA

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): Recently, I had the pleasure of representing this government and the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, David Caplan, at the official dedication of a new 650-acre parcel of open space in north Oakville.

In partnership with Conservation Halton, the Liberal government is continuing its commitment to building a permanent greenbelt around the greater Golden Horseshoe. This government's strong commitment to environmental conservation has been a tremendous benefit to my community of Oakville, and the latest initiative builds on previous government announcements that have protected hundreds of acres of parkland, including the expansion of Bronte Creek Provincial Park by 168 acres.

This newest conservation area will create an important east-west link between the Niagara Escarpment and the Golden Horseshoe greenbelt. The new park is a fitting way to celebrate Conservation Halton's 50th anniversary as a community-based organization that is dedicated to the protection, maintenance and management of local natural resources. The organization is complemented by a team of dedicated ecologists, land use planners and educators.

To mark this great occasion, Conservation Halton is holding a contest to name the new park. It runs until November 30, and it's open to all residents of Oakville.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the environment is an issue that is near and dear to me. I would like to wish all the participants in the name-the-park contest good luck, and eagerly await the winning entry.

WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): I rise, on behalf of John Tory and the PC caucus, to warmly welcome members of the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association in the gallery today. They are here today and tomorrow to meet with MPPs and bring attention to the current state of our water and waste water systems in the province.

I have repeatedly questioned the McGuinty Liberals' ongoing avoidance of responsibility on this issue. I have stated and questioned the Minister of the Environment in April, June and October of this year, and not once have we heard an answer.

We have seen numerous watermain breaks, which have caused severe hardship and financial burdens on communities and businesses across the province. It has become clear that this government is either not willing or has no plan to address our aging water and waste water infrastructure. This is in spite of the fact that their own expert water panel report is nearly one year old and, as well, that the tools have been in place since 2002 through the Sustainable Water and Sewer Systems Act.

I certainly hope that the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, who at one point stated, "This is an important priority for our government," will have the courage to respond to the needs of Ontario and stop hiding behind their rhetoric.

I encourage the members of the OSWCA to ask Liberal MPPs for a straight answer as to when they will respond to their own report and when consultations will begin. It's time for the Liberals to stop saying anything to get elected, to stop breaking promises, and to get some real work done.

1340

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West): I am pleased to rise in the House today to applaud the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board and the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board, as well as the local French public and French Catholic boards. These boards have worked together to bring forward a plan to build a single transportation system that will cover the entire city by 2008.

I am proud to announce that Hamilton has taken on the challenge that, in 2006, our government began implementing: reforms for student transportation. The Hamilton school boards are expected to begin this plan in February so that some bus routes can be incorporated by the fall of 2007. This is a huge responsibility that these boards assume, as this plan will transport 28,000 students

in over 500 vehicles to schools. Bell times will be staggered, along with school hours, so that every school bus will be filled and the overlapping of services will no longer be required. According to the manager Daryl Sage, "one bus, one road, one policy and one department" is how best to describe the plan. The collaboration will include a single database of students, a single digitized route map and one department for all school boards to field calls about busing issues. The goal is to gain efficiencies while maintaining the level of service.

We in Hamilton West commend the Hamilton school boards for developing a thriving partnership which will deliver student transportation effectively, efficiently and with the best of care: another fine example of leadership being demonstrated in Hamilton.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton): Ottawa headlines today: "McGuinty Will Reconsider Provincial Cash for O-Train if Track Altered"; "McGuinty Puts Light Rail in Doubt." The \$200 million promised by the Premier to Ottawa mere days before a federal election at a star-studded Liberal love-in designed to save federal Liberals is now in jeopardy.

You'll remember, Mr. Speaker, that on May 14, 2004, three levels of Liberals said anything to get elected and promised \$600 million to the people of Ottawa. It was a great photo op. But in a change of fortune, now that the Martin-Chiarelli Liberals have been ousted, this Liberal government is planning to break one more promise to voters and renege on its \$200 million.

Liberals at all levels can't get this one right. First the former Liberal mayor couldn't convince voters that his Liberal plan was the right one. Then the federal Liberals condemned federal Conservatives on their value-for-money audit. Now, with the Martin-Chiarelli Liberals out, the McGuinty Liberals are reconsidering their \$200-million promise.

Council should have the right to determine its own transit needs without interference from the crowd opposite. The Premier should follow the federal government's example: Respect Ottawa council's rapid transit decision and keep the \$200 million he promised to Ottawa in Ottawa.

CORNWALL HOSPITALS

Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh): Shortly after I was first elected MPP, I presented the newly minted Minister of Health and Long-Term Care with the plans for two hospitals in my riding: the Winchester District Memorial Hospital and the Cornwall Community Hospital. Since that time I have gotten to know the minister, and he has become a true friend to both myself and my riding of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh. That is why it is my pleasure to tell him today about the realization of a project we have both worked hard on.

On Thursday, November 9, I was present for the launching of the first phase of the redevelopment for the Cornwall Community Hospital. It was an exciting day for me and for all the people of Cornwall and area who have worked so hard to make this redevelopment a reality.

With construction well under way on the St. Joseph's complex continuing care centre, development beginning now in the Cornwall Community Hospital, and construction slated to begin next year on the Winchester District Memorial Hospital, my riding is poised to have some of the most advanced and comprehensive health care facilities anywhere in the province.

I want to thank Minister Smitherman, hospital chief executive officers Jeanette Despatie, Trudy Reid and Bonnie Ruest, the hospital boards and all the people of Cornwall, Winchester and across the riding who have worked hard to make health care renaissance a possibility and to bring those projects to fruition. The strides we have made this term are immense. I can't wait to see what we can achieve in our second term.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): Last week was constituency week, an opportunity for every member in this House to spend some time in their ridings. Over the course of the week we met with constituents and community groups, attended events in our communities and even had a chance to host events ourselves. I had the pleasure of hosting the Honourable Mike Colle, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, in my riding. He kindly spoke at a breakfast round table, an information session with local community groups from Orléans and the surrounding area. It was great to welcome the minister to my riding and to introduce him to some of my friends and colleagues from organizations like the Catholic Immigration Centre, the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services centre, LASI World Skills and the Somali Centre for Family Services.

Representatives from these groups had the opportunity to hear the minister speak about Bill 124, the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, an excellent piece of legislation. If passed, this bill will help foreign professionals to find work in their chosen fields. Ottawa is becoming one of Canada's main points of entry for immigrants from around the world. As of 2001, there were 185,000 people born outside Canada residing in the Ottawa-Gatineau area, making up 18% of our metropolitan population. This legislation would help ensure that the skills and talents of the thousands of internationally trained professionals coming to Canada do not go to waste.

I'd like to thank the minister for attending our round table and discussing with our Ottawa–Orléans immigrant servicing agencies the ways that the McGuinty government is helping new Canadians to find work in their own professions. Yes, the McGuinty word is good on the—

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

The Speaker: Order. Members' statements.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre): I rise today to speak about the McGuinty government's commitment to ensuring that Ontario can and will prosper in the new economy.

Recent remarks made by members of the official opposition criticizing the McGuinty government's auto strategy are just another example of how out of touch they are with Ontario's economic reality. Members opposite believe that cutting taxes whenever you can will solve all of our economic concerns. The Harris-Eves government took that approach, telling everyone that tax cuts would pay for themselves and that everything would be okay. The truth is that between fiscal 2000-01 and fiscal 2003-04, tax revenues declined by 0.7% while expenditures increased by 22%. Over their entire term in office, Ontario did not attract one new auto plant despite 19 new ones being built in the US. They refuse to learn from their mistakes, and their federal cousins are now going down that very same road.

Fortunately, we on this side of the House recognize that there needs to be investment in research, innovation and commercialization for Ontario to compete in the new economy. That's why we're investing \$1.7 billion over five years into research, commercialization and outreach programs. It's why we have the \$500-million automotive investment strategy fund that's leveraged over \$7 billion in—

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

BIRTH OF MEMBER'S GRANDCHILD

Mr. Bruce Crozier (Essex): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like all of you to join a proud grandma and grandpa in welcoming into this world baby boy Cowan Eric James Crozier. He was born yesterday and lives with his mother Jolean, father David and big brother Benjamin in Calgary.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): I beg leave to present a report on charitable gaming from the standing committee on public accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The member may wish to make a brief statement.

Mr. Sterling: As you know, the public accounts committee reviews the auditor's report, which was presented in late November 2005. I believe the auditor will be presenting his next report early in December, next month. This particular report, worked on by the all-party committee, relates to the oversight of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission, particularly on municipal licensing ofingos, break-open tickets and that kind of thing.

One of the particular concerns of the public accounts committee related to the interpretation by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission as to whether or not the existing order in council that is the regulation under the act permitted the AGCO, the authority, to oversee municipal licensing services. It is clear that the intent of the legislation is such. Unfortunately, there appears to be a difference with regard to the legal opinion the AGCO has and the Auditor General for Ontario.

The committee therefore recommends, as one of its major recommendations, that within 30 days this problem be resolved to give the AGCO clear authority to oversee municipal licensing activities in the province of Ontario. This is necessary in order to ensure that when a bingo is held or the proceeds from break-open tickets are received, a proper amount is given to the charities for which they were intended. So this oversight is very, very important.

As well, there are recommendations in the report dealing with the training of municipal licensing staff to ensure that they are providing the oversight needed in their municipalities over this important gaming activity in the province of Ontario. All members of the committee from all three parties want to ensure that the charities that are intended to benefit from these particular charitable gaming activities do, in fact, receive that money. I recommend that all members of the House read the report. With that, I will adjourn the debate.

The Speaker: Mr. Sterling has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on social policy and move its adoption.

The Acting Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Mr. Leal, from the standing committee on social policy, presents the committee's report as follows and moves its adoption:

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

Bill 50, An Act respecting the regulation of the profession of traditional Chinese medicine, and making complementary amendments to certain Acts.

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

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

VISITORS

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I wonder if all members will join me in welcoming a delegation from the Sherbourne Health Centre, a fantastic health care provider in the great riding of Toronto Centre–Rosedale.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): At the special request of the member for Niagara Centre, I have a motion to present to the House.

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, November 15, 2006, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 228. 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 1354 to 1359.

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

Ayes

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Balkissoon, Bas | Hardeman, Ernie | Parsons, Ernie |
| Barrett, Toby | Hoy, Pat | Peters, Steve |
| Bartolucci, Rick | Jeffrey, Linda | Phillips, Gerry |
| Bentley, Christopher | Klees, Frank | Ruprecht, Tony |
| Bountrogianni, Marie | Kwinter, Monte | Scott, Laurie |
| Bradley, James J. | Leal, Jeff | Smith, Monique |
| Brownell, Jim | Marsales, Judy | Smitherman, George |
| Caplan, David | Matthews, Deborah | Sterling, Norman W. |
| Chudleigh, Ted | McMeekin, Ted | Takhar, Harinder S. |
| Colle, Mike | McNeely, Phil | Van Bommel, Maria |
| Crozier, Bruce | Miller, Norm | Watson, Jim |
| Delaney, Bob | Milloy, John | Wilkinson, John |
| Di Cocco, Caroline | Mitchell, Carol | Witmer, Elizabeth |
| Dombrowsky, Leona | Munro, Julia | Wynne, Kathleen O. |
| Duguid, Brad | O'Toole, John | Yakabuski, John |
| Flynn, Kevin Daniel | Oraziotti, David | Zimmer, David |

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

Nays

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Bisson, Gilles | Kormos, Peter | Murdoch, Bill |
| DiNovo, Cheri | Marchese, Rosario | Prue, Michael |
| Horwath, Andrea | Martel, Shelley | Tabuns, Peter |

The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 48; the nays are 9.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I beg the indulgence of the House to allow the pages to assemble for introduction. I would ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of legislative pages, serving in the second session of the 38th Parliament:

Ian Attema from Erie–Lincoln; Sarah Bax from Brant; Connor Boyce from Sudbury; Andrew Curtis from Scar-

borough East; Shannon Edgar from London–Fanshawe; Or Grunebaum from York Centre; Mackenzie Gunn from Durham; Sara Hicks from Peterborough; Simon Jefferies from Cambridge; Colby Koecher from Trinity–Spadina; Philip Lee from Ottawa West–Nepean; Gloria Lee Shing Koon from Halton; Alexandra Le-Heeralal from York South–Weston; Julian Li from Don Valley West; Mariam Nawroz from Whitby–Ajax; Daniel Rickert from Kitchener Centre; Arianne Sawh from Mississauga East; Kelsea Shadlock from Simcoe–Grey; Eshan Shah from Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale; and Philip Spencer from Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford.

Applause.

The Speaker: Thank you.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

FIRE SERVICES

Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services): Today I rise for two important reasons; first, to pay tribute to the men and women of the Ontario fire service and the organization that represents them, the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association. I'm also pleased to inform the Legislature of the appointment of a new fire marshal of Ontario.

Last summer, Fire Marshal Bernard Moyle informed me of his intent to retire after more than 16 years as fire marshal. While I was disappointed to hear this news, it also gives me an opportunity to reflect on and applaud him for the important contributions he made to Ontario's fire services over the years. I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to a successful career and wish Bernie much happiness.

One of Bernie's greatest achievements was helping develop and implement the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, the most progressive fire safety legislation in Canada. Ontario's falling death rate from preventable fires is largely the result of the tireless work conducted by the Office of the Fire Marshal under his leadership.

As Bernie departs, it gives me great pleasure to announce that Patrick Burke, currently the fire chief of the Niagara Falls fire service, will be Ontario's new fire marshal. His extensive background in fire prevention and suppression began on the trucks. His career in the fire service, both in Windsor and Niagara Falls, spans well over 30 years. He is also president of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, where he works with fire chiefs from across Canada to reduce the loss of life and property from fire. His many years of front-line service and work at all levels of the fire service make Patrick Burke an ideal choice to succeed Bernie Moyle. I am delighted that Chief Burke has taken on the job as fire

marshal, and I know that the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association is delighted as well.

OPFFA members are committed to the safety of all Ontarians, and they deserve our support. When I met with the OPFFA yesterday at their annual legislative conference, I assured them that their efforts are recognized and appreciated by the McGuinty government.

We actively support Ontario's firefighters in many ways. Through the Ontario fire grant, the McGuinty government has invested an unprecedented \$30 million into fire services across the province, the first time in more than 20 years that the province has invested in Ontario's fire services. These funds help provide training and equipment and support fire prevention and public education programs.

OPFFA members and fire services get out our recent Fire Prevention Week message by reminding people to "Watch What You Heat" and prevent cooking fires.

Prevention is as important as response, and we're seeing some encouraging results. Over the past decade, preventable residential fires have been reduced by a third while preventable fire deaths have dropped by almost half, to the lowest in Ontario's history.

The OPFFA is our ally in fire safety. They supported our recent improvements in the Ontario fire code, which make working smoke alarms mandatory on every storey of every home and consolidate stricter fire safety requirements for hotels and motels.

We not only recognize their contributions, we honour them. Each year, we award the Ontario Medal for Firefighter Bravery. There's also the firefighters' memorial at Queen's Park, a worthy project that we were pleased to support.

The Premier also recently announced a new honour for firefighters, police and military personnel who have died in the line of duty: the Tribute to the Fallen. The first plaques for firefighters will be presented at the annual firefighters' memorial ceremony in October 2007.

As I assured the OPFFA yesterday, and as I assure the members of this House, the McGuinty government will continue to support and honour these very special people.

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES SENSIBILISATION CONTRE L'INTIMIDATION

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education): I rise in the House today to recognize Bullying Awareness Week.

Tous les élèves ont le droit de se sentir en sécurité à l'école et sur le terrain de l'école. Nous savons que les écoles sécuritaires sont une condition préalable au rendement des élèves.

During this week, I hope that students, teachers and parents alike will take some time to consider the issue of bullying and the role it may be playing in their lives or in the lives of others.

1410

Our government takes bullying prevention very seriously. Bullying and violent behaviour are never acceptable in Ontario's schools or communities. That is why our government has invested more than \$20 million in various initiatives to reduce these incidents and change attitudes towards bullying. I'd like to highlight some of these initiatives.

Our safe schools action team, led ably by my parliamentary assistant, Liz Sandals, released its bullying prevention report, *Shaping Safer Schools*, in late 2005, and recommendations from the report led directly to the implementation of a comprehensive, province-wide bullying prevention plan. As part of that plan, we have invested \$3 million in a three-year partnership with Kids Help Phone, thus doubling the 24-hour, seven-days-a-week, toll-free helpline's capacity to provide anonymous counselling to students who are dealing with bullying issues.

That partnership was expected to help an additional 30,000 students each year. In fact, for the first half of 2006 alone, I can report that the Kids Help Phone counsellors received and responded to 21,583 contacts from Ontario youths—an increase of 16% compared to the same period in 2005. And for bullying-related calls, the increase was a remarkable 224%.

Our government has also provided funding in the amount of \$1,500 for every elementary school, \$2,000 for every secondary school and \$1,500 for each school authority for resources to support a bullying prevention program in every publicly funded school in Ontario.

And we've established a registry of bullying prevention programs on the ministry's website to provide one-stop access to a wide range of products that may be purchased to help schools and boards combat bullying.

Au début de la présente année scolaire, une brochure sur la prévention de l'intimidation a été envoyée aux écoles, pour qu'elles la transmettent aux parents par l'entremise des élèves. Elle a aussi été affichée sur le site Web du ministère. Si les parents soupçonnent que leurs enfants font l'objet d'intimidation, ils peuvent y apprendre ce à quoi il faut faire attention, ce qu'il faut faire et où aller pour trouver de l'aide.

Especially important in this age of information technology, our government has also developed cyber-bullying software for grade 7 and 8 students. This software is intended to make our children safer online by raising awareness of the cyber landscape, especially around issues such as internet luring, cyberstalking and the use of gaming websites.

The ministry has created a bullying prevention training program for principals and vice-principals, and training for teachers is being planned for the 2007-08 school year.

Let me also add that last month our Premier announced \$2 million in funding to support character building in schools and inspire students to become caring and contributing citizens. We firmly believe that character

education in our schools will be fundamental in the fight to reduce bullying.

Our government is making significant progress on bullying prevention as part of our \$26.2-million investment to make Ontario schools safer. We are making progress by working with the people who teach our children and who run our schools.

Bien que les progrès soient manifestes, nous ne sommes pas au bout de nos peines.

So I ask that everyone join the effort to reduce bullying in schools and playgrounds around our province.

OSTEOPOROSIS**L'OSTÉOPOROSE**

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion): November is Osteoporosis Month.

Osteoporosis has been named the "silent thief" because it results in pain, disfigurement, loss of work, disability, reduced independence, patient isolation, and can even lead to death. Yet, for far too long, too many have suffered from osteoporosis without even being assessed for the disease, let alone diagnosed or treated.

Notre gouvernement est déterminé à ce que cela change. Nous sommes conscients du besoin de traiter cette maladie et également de sensibiliser la population aux moyens de réduire les facteurs de risque afin d'éviter que cette maladie n'afflige les Ontariens et Ontariennes. Voilà pourquoi nous avons lancé notre stratégie révolutionnaire de lutte contre l'ostéoporose l'an dernier.

The \$4-million osteoporosis strategy has five key components:

(1) Public education to improve early recognition of osteoporosis, and emphasize the importance of physical activity as well as calcium and vitamin D intake for bone health.

(2) Early diagnosis to give primary care doctors and other health care professionals the tools they need to determine when a person should get a bone mineral density test.

(3) More research to expand the knowledge base about osteoporosis, improving both prevention and treatment in the future.

(4) Improved quality of care for osteoporosis sufferers through the integration of services in the system.

(5) Guaranteeing a consistent province-wide level of care by helping medical professionals share best practices.

I'm pleased to report that in addition to this strategy, our government is working with partners on a number of innovative osteoporosis initiatives, both prevention-focused and treatment-focused.

We have provided funding to the Dairy Farmers of Canada for their Power4Bones program, which was launched in January of this year. Power4Bones encourages grade 5 students in Ontario to take care of their bones. The program responds to research outlined in the 2004 chief medical officer of health's report *Healthy*

Weights, Healthy Lives, which shows Ontario's children and youth are not eating well enough or getting enough physical activity to keep their bones healthy and strong.

I'm proud to say that for the first time, we've partnered with the Dairy Farmers of Canada on their extremely popular milk calendar, a great way of reaching millions of people across Ontario about our message of prevention. My colleague from Lanark–Carleton asked if I was going to be posing in the milk calendar, and I'm pleased to report I am not. We want people to read the milk calendar and not go away ill. This Saturday, November 18, the 2006 milk calendar will be available in most daily newspapers across Ontario.

We now know that it is equally important to reach out to those most likely to be afflicted by osteoporosis: those over 50. The statistics are chilling: One in four women and one in eight men over the age of 50 suffer from this disease. That's why our government is providing funding to Osteoporosis Canada for the delivery of the bone health program for seniors and the education program for seniors. The goal of these programs is to improve bone health and prevent osteoporotic fractures by raising awareness about the modifiable risk factors, signs and symptoms of the disease, while promoting the benefits of early diagnosis and options for treatment.

Earlier this month, the Minister of Natural Resources will be pleased to know, I joined members of the Ottawa chapter of Osteoporosis Canada for their fourth annual Bone China Tea fundraising event, held at the Château Laurier. This marked my fourth year of involvement with this event that supports the important work of Osteoporosis Canada in the areas of research, advocacy, education and patient support. The Ontario government is particularly proud of its partnership with Osteoporosis Canada.

I would like to point out today in the gallery the presence of Mr. Charles Hain and Dr. Famida Jiwa, two of our partners from Osteoporosis Canada, and commend them for their tireless efforts with respect to patient health, advocacy and awareness. Thank you both very much for being with us today.

En travaillant ensemble sur le plan de la prévention, du diagnostic et des traitements, nous aiderons les Ontariens à demeurer indépendants et actifs jusqu'à un âge avancé. Pendant tout le mois de novembre, je vous encourage à promouvoir la santé des os en commençant par vous et votre famille.

If we coordinate our efforts and continue to educate Ontarians about the prevention of osteoporosis, we can dramatically reduce the number of people who will suffer from this terrible disease, now and into the future.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL
FISCAL POLICIES
POLITIQUES FISCALES
FÉDÉRALES-PROVINCIALES

Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic

renewal): I rise today to speak about an issue that affects everyone in this House; in fact, it affects all Ontarians and Canadians. I'm talking about the fiscal imbalance. This issue affects our patients, our students, our workers and our municipalities. Perhaps most importantly, it affects Ontario's families and their futures.

At the heart of this issue, and the main concern for us here in Ontario, is fairness—fairness for all Canadians, including the 39% who live in Ontario.

In June, members of this House voted unanimously in support of a resolution calling on the federal government to treat all Canadians fairly. Under the leadership of Premier McGuinty, we have done just that: We have taken Ontario's message for fairness to the federal government.

When we hosted the Strong Ontario Summit this past summer, experts and leaders from across the province told us to take this message one step further to ensure that all Ontarians understand how unfairness in our country's fiscal arrangements affects our daily lives.

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We're doing precisely that. Yesterday, the Premier announced fairness.ca, a new website designed to inform Ontarians about what the fiscal imbalance is, how it affects them, what they can do to help, and the steps our government is taking in urging the federal government to address this issue. We're encouraging Ontarians to speak out and work with us by urging the federal government to address this unfairness towards the people of Ontario.

People everywhere can go to fairness.ca to learn more about this important issue, and I urge all members of this House to do so. Ontario is only as strong as all of us who call this province home. Working together, we can fight for Ontario's fair share of funding from the federal government.

Les Ontariens et Ontariennes estiment qu'un Canadien est un Canadien, qu'une Canadienne est une Canadienne et ce, indépendamment du domicile, et que nous devrions tous et toutes être traités de façon équitable. Pour les soins de santé, l'éducation, la formation professionnelle et l'infrastructure, toute la population canadienne, y compris celle qui vit en Ontario mérite le même niveau de soutien de la part du gouvernement fédéral.

Compared to other provinces, Ontario receives \$86 dollars less per capita from the Canada health transfer and the Canada social transfer. This shortfall amounts to about \$1.1 billion each year that we should have to make available to our hospitals, our clinics, our colleges and our universities. An Ontarian with a bad hip is no less a Canadian than someone living in another province with a bad hip, yet the federal government provides Ontario with \$171 less for hip replacement than other provinces.

Un étudiant ou une étudiante de collège de l'Ontario n'est pas moins canadien ou canadienne qu'un étudiant ou qu'une étudiante de collège qui vit dans une autre province. Mais, le gouvernement fédéral offre à l'Ontario 112 \$ de moins par étudiant ou étudiante de collège qu'aux autres provinces.

On average, the federal government provides an unemployed worker in Ontario with \$684 less for skills training than it gives to an unemployed worker in another province. And through the employment insurance system, an unemployed worker in Ontario receives an average of \$3,640 less in EI benefits than unemployed workers in other provinces. In total, Ontario workers come up short by \$1.9 billion annually in EI benefits and training.

As Ontarians, we are all affected in some way by this unfairness. It's time to stand together as a province and get our fair share.

In the 21st century, we must invest in our people and their skills. That is how we compete in the global community. When the federal government gives less to the workers in Ontario and gives less to Ontarians for infrastructure, health care and education, it holds us back from our potential. This is simply unacceptable.

Ontarians are proud of their contributions to support public services in other provinces through the equalization program, which is designed to ensure all Canadians have access to reasonably comparable services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation. However, equalization has grown by over 30% in the last four years alone and is scheduled to grow at 3.5% per year well into the future. In fact, some provinces that receive equalization have higher fiscal capacity after federal transfers than Ontario, which does not receive, and has never received, equalization. This calls into question the legitimacy of the program, and this unfair treatment must stop.

Ontario doesn't want a special deal from the federal government. All we ask for is that the federal government treat us fairly.

I encourage all Ontarians, including all members on both sides of this House, to stand behind the Premier as he fights for fairness for all Ontarians.

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

FIRE SERVICES

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): It's a pleasure to follow the comments made by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. On behalf of John Tory and the PC caucus, I too would like to welcome the Ontario professional firefighters to Queen's Park on their lobby day.

I also want to congratulate and thank Bernard Moyle, the fire marshal for the province of Ontario, who has spent 16 years in that position. He's done an absolutely phenomenal job, and we wish him very well in his retirement. I know that he has one retirement home in the beautiful riding of Simcoe North, and we're pleased to see him in that area.

I'd also like to welcome Chief Patrick Burke from the Niagara fire service to the new position of fire marshal. I know he'll do an outstanding job.

Overall, though, I just want to say to all of the professional firefighters here today that it's a pleasure to have you with us, and we'd like to listen to your con-

cerns. I'd like to mention, in particular, Michael Gagnon, who's here from the Midland fire service, and I want to thank to Sudbury fire service for once again sending a calendar home to my wife; she does appreciate it each year.

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): In response to the minister's recognition of Bullying Awareness Week, isn't it sad that we have to have the Minister of Education rising in this House to give credit to Bullying Awareness Week? Why isn't the government doing something about it? In her own statement, she admits that bullying has increased 224% within the last year. You've done absolutely nothing about this.

I refer to a statement that I made in this House on May 16, 2006. In that statement, I refer to the fact that the previous two ministers did nothing about this issue. I challenged the former minister at the time to take up Lions Quest, which is a program developed by Lions Clubs across this province. They have tried to get an appointment, a meeting, with the two previous ministers of education. They're asking this minister for a meeting so they can talk about their program, which talks about how to deal with bullying. It was developed by the Lions Clubs in this province, highly successful, being used in York region and across the province. It is volunteer-driven, not a cost to the government.

Now what do we have? The minister standing up and saying she is going to have the ministry develop another program about bullying. Minister, deal with the facts. You have a problem with bullying. People across the province know there's a problem. You're not doing anything. I'm asking you, meet with the Lions Club, implement the Lions Quest program across the province, get the volunteers engaged and do something about the issue.

OSTEOPOROSIS

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton): I just want to read from the Ontario osteoporosis strategy, which is put out by the ministry. In 2001, the ministry established a committee, including the Osteoporosis Society of Canada and other stakeholders, to develop an action plan with "specific, feasible recommendations for actions to advance osteoporosis prevention and care." This strategy that we heard about today is based on that action plan. I just want to thank the minister for following the wonderful lead that the former government made in this area. I congratulate them on taking up the initiative and carrying it on.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): I'm pleased to respond to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Here we have another day and yet another Liberal web-

site being launched. We do look forward to seeing if it's done by Bensimon Byrne, for example, who have received a lot of business after having done the Liberal campaign commercials. I really do hope that this website, the fifth or sixth website, will be successful because, my goodness, Dalton McGuinty is running out of time. He has been Premier for some three and a half years and has not yet been successful in securing a better deal from Ottawa. And we hope he is successful. We hope the Premier is successful, but, my goodness, he's had a lot of troubles getting a better deal. He is hurting himself. The problem is that we have in the Premier the chief salesman for the province, who has a reputation for not keeping his word, for saying one thing and for doing another—we have, quite frankly, a salesman for this province who can't close a deal.

I hope this website works, because if he can't get it done, it's time for him to step aside and allow John Tory and the Ontario PCs to get a better deal for the province of Ontario.

1430

FIRE SERVICES

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): New Democrats are proud and pleased to join in paying tribute to the men and women of the Ontario fire service. These are brave, committed professional firefighters who protect lives on a daily basis, who risk their own on a daily basis and who do it with fearlessness, with selflessness and an incredibly high level of professionalism.

If we're going to pay tribute to these firefighters, let's not do it with hollow platitudes. If you want to pay tribute to Ontario's firefighters, then pass the NDP's Bill 111, the Bob Shaw act, the bill that Andrea Horwath, our WSIB critic, introduced and that received second reading approval by this Legislature. It's not going to stop firefighters from getting those horrible and deadly cancers as a result of rushing into burning buildings. It's not going to stop them from getting cancer because they're still going to do that job. But it will provide economic justice for them and their survivor families. You want to pay tribute—

Interjection: What about 206?

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Minister of Health.

Interjections.

The Speaker: I can wait. I need to be able to hear the member for Niagara Centre.

Mr. Kormos: You want to pay tribute? Provide economic justice to firefighters who are suffering and dying from cancer, leaving widows and widowers and children fearful for their economic future.

You want to provide justice? Then ensure that fire-fighting services across this province have adequate levels of minimum staffing and that their cash-strapped municipalities, whose taxpayers simply can't pay any more, receive the financial resources necessary to obtain

those levels of minimum staffing. That's how you pay tribute to firefighters.

Firefighters are less interested in plaques and pins than they are in being able to do their dangerous jobs with adequate resources and with the expectation that when they suffer illness and injury as a result of doing that job, as they inevitably will, there's going to be some economic support for them and their families.

I say to those firefighters that Bill 28, which this government has sat on for a year now, has finally been dragged back into this Legislature. Opposition members, both the official opposition and New Democrats, are going to guarantee that it gets through committee and gets third reading passage by December 14, and that the government isn't going to sit on it and allow it to mangle in some legislative orbit anymore. I pay tribute to those women and men, and New Democrats do it with meaningful impact and commitment.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): I'm pleased to respond to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. I want to provide some context to the minister's comments today. You see, Speaker, the McGuinty government promised \$300 million of new provincial funding for child care and has broken that promise. But if you listen to the McGuinty government now, it's the federal government's fault that the McGuinty government broke that promise.

The McGuinty government promised to fix the inadequate and flawed school funding formula, but they've broken that promise. And if you listen to the McGuinty government, they'd have you believe that that is the fault of the federal government today. The McGuinty government is raising university and college tuition fees through the roof, but they'd have you believe that that is the fault of the federal government.

The McGuinty government has broken the promise to reverse the downloading onto municipalities, but they would have you believe today that that broken promise is the fault of the federal government. Then there is the issue of affordable housing, the promise to build over 20,000 units of affordable housing—another promise which has been broken. But if you listen to the McGuinty government, they'd have people believe that that is the fault of the federal government as well.

Here is some other context. The McGuinty government in fact received money to reduce university and college tuition fees. Did they reduce the fees? No. They increased them. The McGuinty government received new federal money for affordable housing, hundreds of millions of dollars of it. Where is it? It's sitting in a bank account.

Here is the worst: The federal government contributes, through the national child benefit supplement, hundreds of millions of dollars to the poorest kids in Ontario and the McGuinty government claws—

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

The Speaker: Order. It's time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: This morning I participated in a news conference with the Leader of the Opposition, John Tory. The purpose was to announce our Wastebusters initiative and launch a new website, www.wastebusters.ca, and blow the lid off the McGuinty government's astounding waste.

The lack of respect for taxpayers demonstrated by this government is nothing short of scandalous. From the \$91 million to fire nurses, to the \$16 million to the "I won't raise your taxes" Liberal-friendly ad firm, to hundreds of thousands to redraw the provincial trillium, this government has time and time again broken its promise to provide better value for money, to manage prudently and to guarantee a better return on investment.

Will the Premier please tell us why he continues to break these promises?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I wish the member opposite and the leader of the official opposition the very best with this new adventure they are pursuing. We will remain focused very much on the people's interests. We have brought about a number of important changes that demonstrate our continuing respect for taxpayers' money. Let me just list some of those.

We have a new sunshine law that discloses salaries to include those people working at the OPG and Hydro One. We have given the Auditor General new power to audit hospitals, school boards and children's aid societies—the broader public sector. Through our new freedom of information legislation—that has been expanded to include Hydro One, OPG and universities. In terms of fiscal accountability, we now have new legislation to ensure that the Auditor General signs off on the province's books six months before an election so that no one ever again can hide a deficit. That is also a bill that was voted against—

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

Mr. Runciman: The word is "disrespect" not "respect." We have a 19% increase in people making over \$100,000 a year in the province of Ontario.

Ontarians work hard to make money. They pay their taxes and expect those taxes to be managed prudently. What they get instead from this government is money blown out the door at an astonishing clip.

We want Ontarians to tell us about examples they see by visiting our website at www.wastebusters.ca—examples like how this government spent \$2 million on

commercials that claim, "The doctor will see you now," while patients are languishing in hallways, stacking up in emergency rooms and waiting for hours in walk-in clinics because they can't get the care they need because the government is more concerned about dealing with a PR crisis than an ER crisis.

Premier, please tell us how this ad has increased in any way Ontarians' access to medically necessary services.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The member opposite doesn't believe we should be bringing to the attention of the people of Ontario the fact that we have a new website. The fact is, we are now closing in on the one million mark in terms of the number of Ontarians who have visited our website. One of the things they discover when they do so is that not only are health care wait times coming down, but we are giving them information about where the 10 fastest wait times are in Ontario, so that health care consumers, in a sense, now have a real choice in terms of whether they want to go to the local hospital or to one of the 10 fastest hospitals. That gives them new information, which was never before collected. We have now made it available to Ontarians. We're being open, public and transparent about that, and Ontarians are flocking to that website. I think that is a very strong demonstration of the fact that they appreciate receiving that kind of information.

The Speaker: Final supplementary.

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Mr. Runciman: I asked the Premier about a \$2-million ad. He might as well have burnt that \$2 million on the lawn of Queen's Park in terms of any benefit that patients across this province have received from it.

On November 1 of this year, the House debated a motion that stated that "the government should spend every single taxpayer dollar wisely and with respect for the taxpayers." Forty-eight Liberal MPPs stood and said no to the idea that taxpayer dollars should be treated with respect; 48 Liberal MPPs said they disagreed with their promises contained in the election platform on which they ran. This was to provide better value for money, to manage prudently, to guarantee a return on investment. So we know how the Liberal caucus feels, and it's that attitude that led us to establish the Wastebusters website, www.wastebusters.ca. Can the Premier tell us how he plans to start keeping those promises that he made to Ontarians during the last election?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Let me tell you about some of the other things we've done in the interest of Ontario taxpayers. We have banned taxpayer-funded partisan advertising. Now the Auditor General must approve all our ads. That was something that the party opposite voted against.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Erie–Lincoln will come to order. Order, Minister of Health Promotion; the member for Renfrew. And I won't warn the Minister for Economic Development and Trade again.

Premier?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: By the way, that piece of legislation which requires that all advertising be vetted by the Auditor General of course was not supported by the party opposite.

We also cancelled the previous government's Householder program; that saves us \$10 million. We have started doing more work in-house instead of farming the work out to outside consultants; that has saved us \$27 million so far. One very interesting idea that we put together is that shortly we'll begin to issue paperless pay stubs. We'll give notice to our public servants of the fact that they have received their pay online; that will save us almost \$600,000. We have a whole bunch of ideas that we have put together that are so far saving us over \$800 million.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. It's very interesting to hear him talk about the list that has saved \$800 million, and yet time after time when I've asked him and the Minister of Finance to actually publish the list of the \$800 million, there has never, ever, been any such list published.

You talked about some things you say you've done in the interest of Ontario taxpayers. Let me ask you about a few things that are not in the interest of Ontario taxpayers. You say you're managing money appropriately. We have a response to a freedom of information request indicating that your government, the McGuinty Liberal government, through the Ministry of Education, spent \$558,623 on the production of a television ad on student success. It specifically said, when they answered us, that that doesn't include the cost of the media buy. Based on the precedent that you've got for the health department, that's another \$2 million. So it's \$2.5 million you spent on your self-aggrandizing political propaganda you run on the air. Will you please tell us, in light of the fact that school boards are struggling, that classrooms are short of money: How did that \$2.5-million spending of the taxpayers' money help any schools or students in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): Although the leader of the official opposition was not here at the time, I'm sure that from time to time he would have looked at the mail that was received in his mailbox and he would have been subjected to the veritable deluge of partisan propaganda with the face of the then Premier of the province of Ontario, and many members of the cabinet as well were published in those publications. We have a different approach. It's not one that is supported by the Conservative Party, obviously. They don't believe that there should be any vetting of any kind of any advertising put out by the government of Ontario. We see things differently. That's why we have a new law in place. That's why we insist that all of our advertising be vetted and approved by the Auditor General. That, we think, is the appropriate thing to do, not only in the interest of the government but, more importantly, in the interest of the people of Ontario.

Mr. Tory: I think it is a disgrace that the Premier of this province hides behind the Auditor General in not answering a question. The one thing he didn't opine on, I'll say to the Premier, is he did not opine on whether it was right to spend \$558,000 of hard-earned taxpayers' money producing a television ad and then another \$2 million to put it on the air extolling your own virtues. He didn't say that.

It gets worse. When you were Leader of the Opposition, the Premier said, and I quote, "Our government will use consultants only when absolutely necessary and when there's nobody in the public service to do that work." This year, so far, consulting spending in the Ministry of Education is up, from 2003-04, 1,277%—hundreds of thousands of dollars being spent on consultants. How is that in the best interests of taxpayers? How is that doing what you said you would do?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I think that a lot of creativity, in every sense of the word, has gone on with this particular approach.

With respect to that particular education website, again we put Ontarians on notice about a new program. The leader of the official opposition and his party may not support the notion of ensuring that young people continue to learn until at least the age of 18, but we do. It's a new program that we're putting in place. We've almost tripled the visitors to our education website. It was 2.5 million in 2003. So far, it's up to 6.8 million this year alone. We are driving Ontarians in record numbers to a website to get all kinds of new and important information about how to ensure that young people continue to learn till the age of 18.

We understand the value of doing that in a knowledge-based economy. No, we will not apologize for ensuring that Ontarians are made aware of a new program designed to ensure that we provide more educational opportunities to young people.

Mr. Tory: The suggestion to the Premier is not that he apologize for that website or for that program; it's that he should consider apologizing for spending \$558,000 of the taxpayers' money on a television ad. It's an absolute scandal.

It doesn't end there. It's going to go on and there's going to be lots more coming into wastebusters.ca. But perhaps you could tell us how it is in the best interests of hard-working Ontario taxpayers, who are struggling to pay their taxes, people who are losing their jobs—105,000 manufacturing jobs lost on your watch—that the Ministry of Education in 2005-06 spent nearly \$1.2 million on hotels—not teachers, not classrooms, not computers, not supplies. That is as much as the government grant to the Northern District School Area Board. It's more than double the grant to the Asquith-Garvey District School Area Board. It would wipe out the whole shortfall in the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board.

What is this? It's government spending and largesse at its worst. It's a disgrace. What do you have to say about it—\$1.2 million on hotels for the Ministry of Education?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: A few things on that point: First of all, as somebody with a mortgage and three kids in university, I have some vague, passing acquaintance of what it means to have a substantial amount of money removed from my paycheque and sent to the government of the day for taxes. I understand that.

The second point is that the leader of the official opposition is somehow arguing that our bureaucrats here and anybody who's devoted to public education should hole up at Queen's Park or in the Mowat Block. We don't agree with that. There are thousands of schools around this province. Our responsibility is to get out there, speak with those people, find out what's happening on the front lines, work with them in a co-operative and collaborative way and improve the quality of public education for all our children. That's what we've done before and that's what we'll continue to do.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Order. Minister of Health. The member for Renfrew.

1450

COAL-FIRED GENERATING STATIONS

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): Premier, this is an op-ed column published before the last election. It's entitled "How Liberals Will Clean The Air," written by Dalton McGuinty. I've highlighted one line of it. Premier, could you please read the highlighted section?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I'm very interested in receiving the supplementary question.

Mr. Hampton: I'm shocked and surprised; it was only one line. Since the Premier doesn't want to read it, I'll read it for him. Dalton McGuinty said, "Under my plan, Ontario's dirty, coal-burning power plants will be shut down by 2007."

That was then. Three years later, Dalton McGuinty has scored a broken promise hat trick. He's broken the promise not once, not twice, but three times. Nanticoke, Ontario's biggest polluter, is still operating at full tilt, polluting our air and contributing greatly to climate change.

My question to the Premier is this: What's your deadline now for shutting down Nanticoke? Is it 2014? Later than 2014? When?

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy): This government sees as a noble goal cleaning up our environment, and we remain committed to closing the coal-fired plants and reducing the emissions associated with them.

Later today, if it hasn't already been released, the Ontario Power Authority will release a document giving us a proposed strategy, something we asked them for and something we think is appropriate. We're going to look at that and invite public discussion on it.

Make no mistake, the goal remains the same: Close coal, get ourselves out of dirty coal-fired generation, re-

specting the importance and reliability of electricity. We think that was then, and is now, an important public policy goal, and we're moving in every direction to achieve it. Emissions from those plants are down 17% already. We will continue on that path until our power system is cleaned right—

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

Mr. Hampton: I'm shocked and surprised. First, the Premier doesn't want to read his own quote, and then he doesn't want to answer a question on his own quote.

Before the last election, the former Conservative government promised to shut down Nanticoke by 2015. Here's what Dalton McGuinty said about that: "The [Conservative] government says it would like to shut down those plants by 2015. We [Liberals] say that 2015 is too late, that it's eight years too late. By 2007, we're going to have cleaner air in this province, come hell or high water."

Before the election, 2015 was eight years too late for Nanticoke. Now you're saying 2014 may be too soon. Premier, what happened to your promise?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: I'd like to remind the leader of the NDP about their campaign document. Here's what it said: "We will close ... Ontario's coal-fired generating stations by 2007." Then, in March 2004, he said, "You should close the worst one or the worst two," but that it's not realistic. Then he was in northern Ontario, and he said, "Keep the coal plants open." When he's in southern Ontario, he says, "Close the coal plants."

This government remains firm and committed to the goal of cleaning up our electricity supply. It is a challenging task. This government's moving in that direction. Emissions are down 17% from coal-fired generation to date. We will continue to move in the right direction, with or without that support. It's the appropriate public policy. It means cleaner, greener power. I wish they'd support us on things like greener—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question.

Mr. Hampton: To the Premier: I'm really shocked and surprised. First, the Premier won't read his own quote, then he won't answer the question, and now the Minister of Energy won't answer the question. So I'll try again.

Nanticoke is the single biggest polluter in Ontario and Canada's worst greenhouse gas emitter. If we want to clean up our air and get serious about addressing climate change, Nanticoke has to be shut down. The reality is this, Premier: Before the last election, you used kids with asthma, you used seniors with oxygen tanks and you used people worried about climate change as pawns in a quest to win votes. And all the time you had no plan, no plan whatsoever, to shut down Nanticoke. Premier, how could you do that?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: Unlike the member opposite, we believe reducing emissions associated with coal-fired generation is an important public health issue. That is why we are moving aggressively to close the plants. I'll

remind the member of what he said himself in that CBC radio interview: "You can't in the space of three years close all the coal-fired plants." Now, that was after he said he would do that. Then he sent a letter to the Premier, dated September 26, 2005: "Why not support spending money on implementing clean coal technology?" His critic says it doesn't work.

This is a challenging goal. We are moving towards it: a 17% reduction in the amount of coal-fired generation to date. The emissions related to coal are down, including CO₂. That is a bona fide public health policy, an environmental policy. We will continue—

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: I realize that shutting down Nanticoke is a big undertaking, but here is the reality under the McGuinty government: You are no closer to shutting down Nanticoke today than you were when the Premier made his promise. Many of your private gas plants are stalled. Some of your wind farms have been cancelled. Your sweetheart deal with Bruce Power could cost Ontario Hydro consumers \$460 million a year in penalty fees. And you're blowing \$40 on nuclear for every dollar you put into conservation and energy efficiency. I say the McGuinty government's talk on this is cheap.

My question to the Premier is this: When are you actually going to do something that could be legitimately described as action when it comes to shutting down Nanticoke?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: Well, let's just review what the member just said. I imagine he hasn't heard of the East-view landfill gas station—up and running since we took over; Glenn Miller hydro station up and running; Kingsbridge wind farm up and running; Hamilton digester gas up and running; Erie Shores wind up and running—1,350 megawatts of clean, renewable power online; Big Becky, the tunnel under Niagara Falls, under construction.

Unfortunately, your government didn't do these things when they should have been done 10 years ago, eight years ago. In three years, there are 3,000 megawatts of new power online, 10,000 additional units, \$15 billion dollars in investment, hundreds of new jobs. We're much closer today to closing Nanticoke than we would have been had this government not taken those steps. We will continue to aggressively pursue that agenda in as fast a time frame as we can—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Final supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: Here's the reality: Nanticoke produces as much pollution as 3.3 million cars in one year. It's Ontario's single largest source of smog-causing nitrogen oxide emissions, of greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change, and of mercury and sulphur dioxide. And it's a major contributor to the air pollution that kills 5,900 Ontarians a year, something the Ontario Medical Association calls a public health crisis. So I would assume, then, that the Premier can tell us, when will Nanticoke be shut down—2014? Later than 2014? When is the McGuinty government going to shut down the biggest single air polluter in the province, Nanticoke coal-fired station?

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Hon. Mr. Duncan: It is vitally important that as we move to that closure, we continue to reduce the emissions associated not just with Nanticoke but with all the coal-fired plants. The member is very careful with his question. He doesn't remind people that when he's up north, he says, "Keep the coal-fired plants open," and when he's down south, he says, "Close them." He says one thing in the north and one thing in the south. He opposed every one of our clean, green energy projects because they were private power. Well, yes they were. And do you know what? They're working and producing clean power that will give us the flexibility to close Nanticoke at an appropriate time, ensuring system reliability.

We acknowledge that this has been a difficult, challenging file. We remain committed to the eventual removal of all coal-fired generation in Ontario. We're going to continue reducing emissions as we move towards that goal, not only of NO_x and SO_x, but more importantly, CO₂, mercury and particulates, so that our air is cleaner, our environment is better and all Ontarians benefit from a healthier, cleaner environment and place to live. That's our goal; we're moving toward it.

The Speaker: New question. The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): My question is for the Premier. I'd like to read you a couple of quotes:

"We're going to shut down those dirty coal furnaces by 2007, no ifs, ands or buts."

"Under my plan, Ontario's dirty coal-burning power plants will be shut down by 2007."

Those quotes came from none other than yourself, Premier. You have now broken that promise not once, not twice, but three times. How could you be so completely wrong? You now trot out the OPA to say you plan to shut down coal-fired power by 2014. Premier, why would anyone believe a single word you say on this subject, or any other, for that matter? Isn't this just further proof that you will say anything, you will do anything, just to get a vote?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Again, to the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: This government remains committed to the goal of reducing emissions associated with coal-fired generation. But let me remind the member opposite of what happened to coal emissions under his government. Emissions from coal plants: SO₂, 51% increase; nitrous oxide, 25% increase; CO₂, 56% increase. Under this government, SO₂, down 28%; nitrous oxide, down 34%; CO₂, down 15%. We acknowledge the challenge associated with getting our coal-fired generating down. We acknowledge the difficulty. We remain committed to the goal. We've already had significant achievement. We're going to continue to move in that direction. It's the right thing for Ontario; it's the right thing for the people of Ontario.

Mr. Yakabuski: Premier, this is about your promise. This is about your credibility. You said that your coal shutdown policy was based on the best advice available

to you at that time. We know that advice never came from OPG, which operates the plants. We know it never came from the IMO. Premier, I asked your energy minister at estimates to give the names of those so-called experts who advised you on this policy. He told me at that time that he would supply me with those names. None came forward at estimates; they have not come forward since. I'm going to ask you today: Give us the names of those experts or plain and simple admit that your policy was just plain and simple made up, that you perpetrated on the people of the province of Ontario to get their vote, a big, fat lie.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I need the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke to withdraw.

Mr. Yakabuski: I withdraw that, Speaker.

The Speaker: Minister?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the member is right: We certainly didn't take advice from OPG when we got to office, because you decimated the company. You politicized it. We had to change the board. We had an energy system—

Interjections.

The Speaker: The member for Leeds–Grenville, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and the member for Simcoe–Grey need to all come to order.

Minister?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: We had an energy system that was on its knees and a public generator that was effectively bankrupt. We have moved cleanly and deliberately on the coal file in a prudent fashion to ensure system reliability. We look forward to the day when they're closed. We've laid out plans; we're putting out discussion papers for further input.

Again, I remind the member: SO₂ increase, 51% under your government; nitrous oxide increase, 25%; CO₂ increase, 56%. We've reduced all of them. We're continuing on that path in a way that ensures system reliability as we restore the damage that party did to Ontario's electricity sector.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Premier, Statistics Canada says that the value of manufacturing shipments from Ontario factories has now declined to the lowest level since the blackout of 2003. In just one month, Ontario's manufacturing shipments fell an astonishing 5%. Ontario's manufacturing recession is getting worse each month under the McGuinty government; 136,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs have been lost while your government has done virtually nothing.

Premier, when is the McGuinty government going to get off the sidelines and start doing something about the disastrous loss of manufacturing jobs in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I'm not sure where the leader of the NDP has been, but he cannot have been in

Ontario and he cannot have had the opportunity to observe the efforts we've been making in our government. Whether you're talking about the half-billion-dollar partnership we have with the auto sector, which he opposes; whether it is the half-billion-dollar partnership with the manufacturing sector, again, which he opposes; whether it's the \$900-million support, so far, for the forestry sector, which he opposes, we have done much to partner with Ontarians.

I can say this as well: Had you asked any economist three years ago what would happen to the Ontario economy if the dollar were to appreciate by 40% and the price of oil were to triple, I bet you that economists would have said that the Ontario economy would be suffering severe hardship. The fact of the matter is that those circumstances did obtain. What happened here in Ontario? Ontarians, working hard and demonstrating their entrepreneurialism, generated 250,000 net new jobs. That's the real story here in Ontario.

Mr. Hampton: The Premier believes that Wal-Mart jobs will replace good manufacturing jobs. I'm afraid, Premier, that's just not the case.

You talk about \$900 million for the forest sector. No one across northern Ontario has seen even a fraction of that amount from the McGuinty government.

You talk about the auto sector? The biggest decline is, in fact, happening in the auto manufacturing sector, which posted a decline of 8.2% in one month. Premier, you have to only pick up a paper anywhere in southern Ontario to see a list of auto parts plants that have closed or are closing.

My question again is this: When is the McGuinty government going to stop blaming this or blaming that, get off of the fence and start doing something about the disastrous loss of good-paying manufacturing jobs in Ontario?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The only blaming that's going on here is coming from the other side today.

The leader of the NDP may not be satisfied with the fact that, for the first time since the invention of the car, we are now, two years running, the number one auto producer in North America. He may not be satisfied with that, but we think all of the workers in the auto sector are.

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Beyond that, with our ReNew Ontario \$30-billion, five-year infrastructure plan, we are creating hundreds of thousands of jobs, to say nothing of our \$15-billion plan for energy. Today in Ontario, there are at least 100 hospital construction projects under way, there are 3,000 school repair, renovation or construction projects under way, there are countless kilometres of roads and bridges that are being built, to say nothing of all of the investment in new public transit. That is the result of the budgetary policy coming from this government and that will serve to help Ontario families in this period of more economic—

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

ELECTORAL REFORM
RÉFORME ÉLECTORALE

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a question to the minister of democratic renewal on election reform. Minister, I understand that the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform began its deliberations a number of weeks ago. From looking at their website at www.citizensassembly.gov.on.ca, I see that they have posted a number of dates and locations for public consultations. This is a great opportunity for all Ontarians to share their views on this important topic of election reform.

Minister, my question is the following: If my grandmother or my cousin had a great idea of how to make democracy and the election system more efficient and meaningful, could they enter this public consultation process easily? How difficult is it for ordinary citizens to participate in this reform?

Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal): I'd like to thank the member from Davenport for his question. I know that he believes very strongly in the work done by the citizens' assembly and its significance for the people of Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The member for Niagara Centre will come to order. I will not warn you again.

Minister.

Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to see the enthusiasm of the NDP for the citizens' assembly. We're advancing an ambitious democratic renewal agenda. We want to encourage many Ontarians to review our electoral system, and that is why we asked the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform to hold public consultations.

Le calendrier de consultation publique est affiché en ligne. Le site Web sera mis à jour au fur et à mesure que d'autres sites sont ajoutés. À ce jour, 37 sites ont été confirmés.

If Ontarians cannot attend, like your grandmother, but would like to express their views, online, fax and mail submissions are also welcome. The examination of Ontario's electoral system will re-engage voters and reduce voter cynicism. This government has taken an unprecedented step in empowering the citizens of this province and wants them to have the final say on any potential electoral—

The Speaker: Supplementary.

Mr. Ruprecht: The right to vote for one's representative came at a high price. Even in our own country, right here, it took over a hundred years for our electoral system to evolve so that all Canadians can vote and have a right the vote. Yet, two days ago, at this municipal election that we've just had, we had an abominable turnout. The voter turnout was less than 50%. Madam Minister, you need a plan. My question is the following: We want to engage as many Ontarians as possible,

including our young people. How do we go about that, and what are we doing to increase especially the number of youth engaged in this particular process?

Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni: Our government feels it's very important to engage the youth in this process, and that's why a Students' Assembly on Electoral Reform has been established, with one student from each of the 103 ridings. They're in the gallery today, and I thank them for the work they're about to do. They will spend this weekend learning and debating our current electoral system as well as others from around the world, and they will then make a recommendation to the Citizens' Assembly based on their values. This is an example of how we can engage the youth and work to increase their future participation in our democracy. I would like to thank them for their hard work. They're joining us today in a reception at 4 o'clock. I'd like to welcome everyone here to meet their students, the students who represent their ridings, and to encourage them on this very important democratic process.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington): My question is for the Minister of Tourism. I think he's perhaps just in the lobby. Okay; there's the Minister of Tourism.

My question concerns the western hemisphere travel initiative or passport issue. This program may soon require all travellers to carry a passport in order to cross the US border and enter into the United States. Tourism operators, including the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association, have expressed great interest in this issue. Many believe that the passport requirement, if implemented, would have severe negative impacts on Ontario tourism.

Almost six months ago, this House unanimously passed a resolution stating that the passport issue would cause significant and unnecessary damage to tourism and trade in both countries. Our leader, John Tory, initiated the resolution and all parties in this House endorsed the call for action. Will the minister inform the House, since that resolution passed six months ago, what specific actions he has undertaken to address this pending crisis in Ontario tourism?

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): You know how the government says, "I'm glad you asked that question"? I'm actually glad you asked that question, because you have identified an issue which, as you know, the province of Ontario has taken a leadership position on in terms of raising the issue.

You will recall that initially the federal government said—the Prime Minister was at a conference in Cancun, and he said, "Folks, get used to it. Get ready; it's a done deal." The province of Ontario said, "We don't believe that is the case. We should continue to fight this." As you will know, the Premier and I went to Washington to lobby on behalf of the position of the province of Ontario that this would be disastrous for us. We have had on-going meetings with representatives in the United States

Congress, representatives of the administration in the United States, those who are involved in state Legislatures, governors of the various jurisdictions that are near the border and people who are interested in tourism and on an ongoing basis have made that case. I have been in discussion personally with a senator in the United States who took a lead on this issue and had a positive effect. So we've enlisted allies on the US side and we're in a much better position today than when we were going to throw in the towel a while ago.

Mr. Arnott: The minister does not fully appreciate the gravity of this situation. Among the travelling public, there continues to be a great deal of confusion about the passport issue as to when they are going to need a passport or be turned back at the border. We do know that the passport requirement begins to kick in in less than two months, starting with air travellers entering the United States. But the provincial government has done next to nothing to clarify this for the travelling public.

Last Wednesday, during constituency week, I attended an important briefing on the passport issue at the US consulate just down University Avenue. Ministry of Tourism staff were there. A senior State Department official told us that notwithstanding the extension to the passport requirement for land crossings to June 2009, the administration hopes to implement it sooner than that, as soon as logistically possible. I've arranged for a meeting this Friday with the new US Consul General, Mr. John Nay, to discuss the passport issue and Ontario tourism. Will the minister join me for that meeting and work with me to help find solutions so that the deepening crisis in tourism can be reversed?

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I don't want to interfere with the member's individual meeting. I know that he may have some confidential matters to discuss with that individual at this time. But let me tell you, if you want to listen only to what the US administration is saying on this and not to what the United States Congress is saying, that's fine. I know the administration's position. The administration can't wait to implement this, and time after time they've said that. I have said to the US ambassador to Canada that that is not acceptable for the people of Ontario and the people of Canada. I will not engage in crackpot realism which says the inevitable is what the administration wants, when I know in the system of the United States government, the Congress has a big say in this. The Congress implemented a 17-month delay so that they could look at alternatives. We have allies in state Legislatures and in Congress across the United States, if not in the administration. The federal government can deal with the administration as they see fit and will do so. I am pleased now that the federal government has joined us publicly in the position—

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

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FIREFIGHTERS

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): My question is for the Premier. Professional firefighters are here from

across Ontario on their annual conference and Queen's Park lobby day. They're united in calling for presumptive legislation for firefighters as described in my Bill 111, which people will remember was supported by all parties at second reading about a month ago.

Presumptive legislation means that firefighters and their families would no longer suffer the indignity and devastation of having their compensation claims for workplace occupational diseases denied at the WSIB. Science unequivocally links certain cancers to firefighters' exposure to toxins and chemicals that they face on the job in their daily work.

Premier, will you and your government clear the way, for Bill 111 or an identical bill under your own pen, clear the way to ensure that this legislation goes forward before the end of your mandate?

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

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): I thank the member for her question and thank her, as well, for her advocacy on behalf of all the firefighters and their families who are here. As a government, we certainly extend our condolences to those family members who have lost loved ones as a result of cancers within the workplace. We respect their hard work and dedication. Since we've taken office, we have had a very good working relationship with the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association. I think we've demonstrated on a number of fronts how we've been able to move forward on initiatives that were long outstanding with them.

The issue of presumptive legislation is not something new in this province. There have been ongoing discussions, and we are engaged in serious discussions with the Ontario professional firefighters and the WSIB, because this is a very complex issue. It is an important issue. At the same time—the member would like to think that there's a very simple fix to this—it is important that as we move forward, we get this legislation and make sure it is the right legislation. We're going to continue to engage and work with the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association and the WSIB to get it right as we move forward.

Ms. Horwath: I appreciate that response, but firefighters will be telling all members today that Bill 111 is getting it right. It is exactly what they want to see in terms of legislation and it's what needs to happen in the province of Ontario to give them justice for their occupational diseases. It has the support of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, some 40 municipalities, including every single major city in the province of Ontario, as well as many editorial boards of newspapers. Our firefighters have broad public support for this cause, and everybody in this Legislature knows it.

Firefighters are here in the galleries today, as we've already acknowledged and recognized. What we need to hear and what they need to hear from the government is a simple yes to Bill 111. Are you going to say yes to Bill 111? Will you guarantee that we'll see presumptive

legislation in the province of Ontario like so many other provinces already have? All we need to hear is a simple yes.

Hon. Mr. Peters: As a government, we support the concept of presumptive legislation but, at the same time, we want to make sure we get the legislation right. That's why I asked my parliamentary assistant, the member from Thornhill, to undertake a comprehensive review of what other jurisdictions are doing. That report was completed and presented to me. That report is now part of the ongoing discussions with the Ontario professional firefighters and that will make the basis of that discussion.

As well, I welcome the member's further comments. That report is available on the Ministry of Labour's website, and I would appreciate any comments that she may have in that regard. We value the hard work of our professional firefighters. We're going to continue to work with them. As well, I point out that it is not something that we alone can do. We need to work with the firefighters and the WSIB. We're going to work with all those individuals to ensure that this is the best legislation.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek): My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Minister, as you're well aware, the area I represent, Stoney Creek, hosts many, many visitors, hundreds and thousands of visitors every year to our museums, our wineries and the wonderful Niagara Escarpment. We're also in an area where many hundreds and thousands of buses and visitors transit the highway going from Toronto into the Niagara region to visit all the amenities there. We have a lot of people coming from the United States past our door and going off to Toronto.

This is all good. It's all good for tourism and it is all good for the economy, but there is a downside. One of the reasons I actually ran for election and ran with this party is concern for the environment. There is an impact on the environment with all this traffic, especially the larger vehicles, and I would like to know what is being done to address this issue.

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Transportation): I would like to thank the member for her unwavering commitment not only to the environment, but to her riding and to the arts and culture of this province. I want to tell not only the member, but the other honourable members of the House, about something very exciting that occurred this week. I was proud to stand with our partners in the Ontario Motor Coach Association when they unveiled the 2007 engine. Actually, they are ahead of the game. The legislation requires them to have something by next January. They have gone way out on a limb, and gone out first and foremost. In fact, industry reports indicate that the new engine will use ultra-low-sulphur diesel fuel, which will cut particulate matter emissions by 90%. Nitrous oxide emissions will be cut by 50% from the level of four years ago.

Already, they're making the switch to the new ultra-low-sulphur fuel as of this month. We're pleased to be a part of what they consider a sustainable approach to dealing with clean air in this province.

Ms. Mossop: This is all good news. I also am appreciative that our government has moved forward with the ethanol initiative as well, because that will cut emissions tremendously. But we're still dealing with a lot of the volume—a lot of volume. If you have ever travelled that area—quite frankly, what I do when I have an event in my riding where a cabinet minister is coming down for a visit, is ensure that we always get those cabinet ministers travelling down for their visit during rush hour so that they can experience the parking lot called the QEW that commuters in my area have to experience day in and day out. Cobwebs sort of form on the front of the car sometimes while you're waiting to move forward about 10 feet. That creates an additional problem for our environment because the cars are just idling and filling up the air. So I also need to know from you what we're doing, as a government, to clear up that parking lot and get things moving.

Hon. Mrs. Cansfield: There's no question that what the member is talking about is the use of sustainability as part of planning, using your highways differently, integrating the concept of sustainability into the planning, and that's exactly what we're doing.

Let me tell you about some of the activities. Within my own ministry, all our activity and operation has been improved to reduce overall energy consumption. By 2010, the province will have provided \$1.6 billion in gas tax money to Ontario municipalities. We have established the Greater Toronto Transit Authority to take a region-wide approach to transit and to transportation. We're really interested in alternative fuels, and we have developed the greater Toronto transportation fare card, which will enable people to move back and forth with ease in the transit system. We have invested \$110 million in HOV—high-occupancy vehicle—lanes where 10,000 to 15,000 cars every day take a commuter with them to and from work, which makes a difference in the congestion in our highways.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): I have a question to the Premier. I would like to call your attention to James Wallace's recent Osprey column, entitled "Triple Whammy... Property Assessments in 2008." After question period, the assembly will be voting on your time allocation motion that shuts down debate on the bill that Mr. Wallace references in his column. As you know, schedule A results in three years of assessments hitting seniors and working families all at once, conveniently after the next provincial election. Premier, why is it that neither your Minister of Finance nor his parliamentary assistant even mentioned this provision of the bill during debate? What is the McGuinty government trying to hide?

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Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I know this is something that the member opposite has a particular interest in, but it is without foundation.

To repeat something that's been stated in here so many times now, we are working as hard as we can to clean up the mess created by the former government when it comes to property tax assessments. It's not the kind of thing that we can clean up overnight. It's the kind of thing that took a lot of time to create by way of a mess. What we have committed to doing is getting the best possible advice that we can, taking the necessary and appropriate time to ensure that we come up with some kind of solution that will in fact be both meaningful and helpful to Ontario homeowners in particular. So we're going to take the necessary time to get it right.

Again, I just don't understand where the member opposite is coming from when he says that somehow there's some kind of a conspiracy, some kind of a hidden plot here to wreak havoc on the people of Ontario.

Mr. Hudak: I'd encourage the Premier to read his own legislation. Bill 51 resets the date for property taxes after the next election. We'll see an assessment time from January 1, 2008, reset from January 1, 2005. This is three years of assessment increases all coming down on the backs of working families and seniors, conveniently after the next election. I can't believe you don't know that's in your legislation. Maybe the Premier is simply in denial and is willing to say anything or do anything to get re-elected, including denying this provision of his legislation. I refer him to schedule A of Bill 151. In fact, not a single member of the Liberal caucus—not the Premier, not the finance minister, not the PA, not a single Liberal member—refers to this section of the bill, a triple whammy of property assessments happening after the next election.

Premier, please tell me you've made a drafting error. Please tell me you're not trying to hide another big tax increase until after the next election. Please tell me that you've actually read your bill.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The member opposite is telling us that there is a conspiracy afoot here for all to see and it's related to a provision found in the bill itself.

We have heard the public's concerns about the assessment system. We have done a few things that are helpful, in addition to the fact that we're taking a serious look at this and reviewing it now. We've already increased the property tax credit for seniors from \$500 to \$625. That's an increase of 25%. The party opposite voted against that. And last year we granted MPAC more time to conduct assessments and allow the public more time to appeal assessments.

I think, as Dr. Phil says, the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. If Ontarians want to know what we're going to do with respect to this particular issue, they should look at what we've already done for seniors, they should look at the effort we've made to work with MPAC to give them more time to address

these issues, and they should look at our commitment to work with Ontarians to clean up the mess left by previous government.

PAPER MILL

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): My question is to the Premier. The community of Iroquois Falls is very concerned about Abitibi Consolidated's proposal to sever its hydroelectric dams from its forest products company in Iroquois Falls. Mill workers in Iroquois Falls and community members are looking around the province at what's happening in other paper mills, where they've had to buy their electricity from the grid and are in pretty dire straits as a result when it comes to their economic situation because of electricity prices.

I have a simple question: Are you prepared to tell Abitibi-Price no to severing those power dams to make sure that electricity generated by those dams continues going at the rate it is to that particular mill?

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

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): I appreciate the question from the member. This is a local issue for me, one that I've certainly kept on top of and have been speaking to the company about.

I must say to the member, quite frankly, that this issue doesn't concern me at all. The papermaking facility in Iroquois Falls is one of the best in the world. It is a very sustainable operation. It's got some of the best workers in the world in that particular area making high-quality paper. Their markets are sound. It's a very efficient operation. The company is obviously just trying to increase its cash flow so that they can invest more in their facilities right across Canada, especially in Ontario. We're seeing those investments coming forward, and I think it's a very positive move on their behalf.

Mr. Bisson: You should be concerned, because what it means is, if Abitibi decides in the end to either spin off those power dams to sell their electricity on the market or become exporters themselves of the electricity, that mill is going to go down. The community needs to know that they have a champion. They look at you and they're not seeing it.

When we were in government the same proposal was made, and our government said no and stopped the severance of that dam. We ask you again: Are you prepared to do what we did back in the early 1990s, making sure that Abitibi doesn't become an exporter of electricity and continues to be a producer of paper in the community of Iroquois Falls?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: Again I'd say to the member that we feel that for our companies to be strong, they have to examine every business transaction and process of raising their revenues that they can, and to develop a revenue stream from the hydro side of the company strengthens the company. A stronger company means more jobs in

northern Ontario, and we think that's very important. We want to encourage all our companies—as we are, all of them—to generate as much electricity as possible. We're encouraging our other companies to get into the business, to get into cogen to further enhance their water power facilities if they can, Espanola being one example where there is potential.

We want to work with the companies. We want the companies to be strong. We want to make sure that they exercise all the possibilities they have in order to be sustainable.

PETITIONS

HIGHWAY 417

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas modern highways are the economic lifelines to communities across Ontario and crucial to the growth of Ontario's economy; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has been dealing with the planning and design of the extension of Highway 417 for several years; and

“Whereas the previous Conservative government followed through with their commitment to extend Highway 417 to Arnprior; and

“Whereas Highway 417/17 is part of the Trans-Canada Highway system; and

“Whereas local municipal governments, the county of Renfrew and MPP John Yakabuski have continued to press the Liberal government on this issue;

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

“That the Liberal government move as swiftly as possible to approve the extension of Highway 417 through Arnprior to Renfrew and beyond and that this be included in their next five-year plan.”

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

TUITION

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): My petition reads, “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario,” from the University of Toronto Students' Administrative Council.

“Whereas the Ontario Liberal government cancelled the tuition fee freeze after only two years and approved fee increases of up to 36% over the next four years; and

“Whereas tuition fees in Ontario have increased by more than four times the rate of inflation over the past 15 years; and

“Whereas a majority of Ontarians oppose tuition fee increases and support greater public funding for colleges and universities; and

“Whereas improvements to student financial assistance are undermined by fee increases; and

“Whereas the Ontario government's recent increase to student loan limits is set to push student debt to approximately \$28,000 for a four-year program; and

“Whereas per student investment in Ontario still lags significantly behind the vast majority of jurisdictions in North America;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, support the Canadian Federation of Students' call to stop tuition fee hikes and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“—reduce tuition fees to 2004 levels for all students in Ontario and implement an immediate tuition fee freeze;

“—increase public funding for post-secondary education to promote access and quality;

“—expand access to financial aid in Ontario, especially for part-time students; and

“—double the number of upfront, need-based grants for Ontario students.”

I'm in agreement with the petition and would affix my signature thereto.

FAIR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONS

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas foreign-trained professionals are being denied recognition of foreign credentials and international work experience, preventing them from finding employment in their chosen fields and denying them the opportunity to fully realize their potential, it is necessary that Bill 124, the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, be passed as quickly as possible to address this growing social issue;

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

“That Bill 124, the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, be passed as quickly as possible to help foreign-trained professionals work in their chosen fields.”

I have the signatures of approximately 30 people here and I'll be adding my signature to that petition.

1540

PROSTATE CANCER

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): I'm pleased to have this chance to present a petition from the riding of Durham which reads as follows:

“Whereas prostate specific antigen (PSA) tests are frequently used to screen patients for prostate conditions, including cancer; and

“Whereas there is currently a double standard because men usually pay to have a PSA test as part of a routine medical examination, while women have all cancer screening tests covered by OHIP;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, urge the” McGuinty government “to review its policy on funding PSA testing for men with a view to including this as a service wholly covered by OHIP.”

I'm pleased to endorse that, present it to Andrew from Scarborough East, and sign it on behalf of my constituents.

FRAIS DE SCOLARITÉ

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–Baie James): J'ai une pétition ici de la part des étudiants de l'Université Laurentienne qui dit :

« Attendu que le gouvernement libéral de l'Ontario a annulé le gel de frais de scolarité après deux ans seulement et a autorisé des hausses de frais de scolarité qui, dans certains cas, s'élèvent jusqu'à 36 % sur les quatre prochaines années;

« Attendu que les frais de scolarité en Ontario ont augmenté de plus de quatre fois le taux d'inflation depuis les 15 dernières années;

« Attendu que la majorité des Ontariens et des Ontariennes s'opposent aux hausses des frais de scolarité et sont pour l'augmentation du financement public accordé aux collèges et universités; et

« Attendu que les améliorations apportées à l'aide financière aux étudiants sont amoindries par les hausses des frais de scolarité;

« Attendu que la hausse récente par le gouvernement de l'Ontario des limites d'emprunt entraînera une augmentation de l'endettement étudiant à près de 28 000 \$ pour un programme d'études de quatre ans; et

« Attendu que l'investissement par étudiant en Ontario est encore très loin derrière comparativement à la grande majorité des juridictions en Amérique du Nord;

« Par conséquent, nous, les soussignés et soussignées, appuyons les revendications de la Fédération canadienne des étudiantes et étudiants en faveur de l'arrêt des hausses des frais de scolarité et demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« (1) de réduire les frais de scolarité aux niveaux de 2004 pour tous les étudiants et étudiantes de l'Ontario et de mettre en oeuvre un gel des frais de scolarité;

« (2) d'augmenter les dépenses publiques pour l'éducation postsecondaire pour promouvoir l'accès et la qualité; et

« (3) d'améliorer l'accès à l'aide financière aux études en Ontario, surtout pour les étudiants et étudiantes à temps partiel; et

« (4) de doubler le nombre de bourses initiales accordées en fonction du besoin pour les étudiants et étudiantes de l'Ontario. »

Je signe cette pétition de la part de M^{me} Martel.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I have a petition today dealing with 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, professional

and managerial 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, will affix my signature to it, and give it to our new page here, Julian.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have more petitions to do with Hydro One forestry services in Parry Sound–Muskoka.

“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, affix my signature, and give it to page Daniel.

FAIR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale–High Park): I have a petition on Bill 124.

“To the Legislature of Ontario:

“Whereas internationally educated professionals could make much greater contributions to Canada's society and economy than they are currently allowed to make;

"Whereas a lack of fair and timely recognition of their credentials is a key element in preventing them from making that contribution;

"Whereas this lack of recognition imposes unfair and unnecessary burdens on these new Canadians and their families;

"Whereas Bill 124, the" so-called "Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, will not, as written, provide the access to credentials recognition needed by internationally educated professionals;

"Whereas the Legislature needs to substantially strengthen this bill;

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

"To amend the bill in these eight areas:

"(1) Establish independent regulatory appeal tribunals to hear appeals to rejection of registration in a professional body, these tribunals to be adequately resourced for high-quality reviews in a timely way.

"(2) Provide legal and professional advice to new Canadians seeking recognition of credentials. This includes provision of trained advocates, without charge to applicants....

"(3) Name the regulated professions that are covered by the act in the act and give authority to allow the adding of more regulated professions in future.

"(4) Fully establish a fair registration practices code in the legislation.

"(5) Establish a department within the access centre established by the act which will evaluate the equivalence of standards between regulatory bodies and educational institutions in different countries and in Ontario. This data will be provided to regulatory bodies to assist them in determining equivalence of credentials.

"(6) Give the minister, upon recommendation from the fairness commissioner, power to eliminate registration practices that are contrary to the fair registration practices code.

"(7) The fairness commissioner to report annually to the Legislature on the impact of this legislation on the employment of internationally educated professionals and to report on the success rate of internationally educated professionals applying for certification.

"(8) The fairness commissioner to be appointed by the Legislature."

I agree with this petition and affix my signature thereto.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Mr. Bruce Crozier (Essex): Thanks to the Newcomer Women's Services of Toronto, I have this very positive petition on access to trades and professions in Ontario directed 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, professional and managerial 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."

In support, I sign this petition.

HEALTH PREMIUMS

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas, according to the Department of National Defence, there are over 30,000 serving military personnel calling Ontario home; and

"Whereas, according to the most recent census data, there are more than 1.6 million senior citizens over the age of 65 living in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario plans on eliminating this illegitimate tax for all Ontarians after it forms the government in 2007; and

"Whereas, as an interim measure, the illegitimate health tax should be removed from those who protect Canada and those who have built Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, call on the government of Ontario to immediately eliminate the illegitimate health tax, beginning with serving military personnel and senior citizens."

I have also signed this.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a petition that has to do with access to trades and professions in Ontario. It's addressed to the Parliament of Ontario, and 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, professional and managerial 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.”

Since I agree with this petition, I am delighted to sign it and send it over to you with page Or.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2006 (NO. 2)

LOI DE 2006 SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES (NO 2)

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 1, 2006, on the motion for second reading of Bill 151, An Act to enact various 2006 Budget measures and to enact, amend or repeal various Acts / Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant diverses mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2006 et édictant, modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to the order of the House dated yesterday, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Sorbara has moved second reading of Bill 151, An Act to enact various 2006 Budget measures and to enact, amend or repeal various Acts.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1554 to 1604.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time.

Ayes

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Balkissoon, Bas | Duncan, Dwight | Parsons, Ernie |
| Bartolucci, Rick | Flynn, Kevin Daniel | Patten, Richard |
| Bentley, Christopher | Gerretsen, John | Peters, Steve |
| Berardinetti, Lorenzo | Hoy, Pat | Phillips, Gerry |
| Bradley, James J. | Jeffrey, Linda | Qaadri, Shafiq |
| Broten, Laurel C. | Kwinter, Monte | Ramal, Khalil |
| Brownell, Jim | Leal, Jeff | Ramsay, David |
| Bryant, Michael | Levac, Dave | Ruprecht, Tony |
| Cansfield, Donna H. | Marsales, Judy | Sandals, Liz |
| Caplan, David | Matthews, Deborah | Smith, Monique |
| Colle, Mike | McMeekin, Ted | Smitherman, George |
| Crozier, Bruce | McNeely, Phil | Sorbara, Gregory S. |
| Delaney, Bob | Meilleur, Madeleine | Takhar, Harinder S. |
| Dhillon, Vic | Milloy, John | Watson, Jim |
| Di Cocco, Caroline | Mitchell, Carol | Wilkinson, John |
| Dombrowsky, Leona | Mossop, Jennifer F. | Wynne, Kathleen O. |
| Duguid, Brad | Oraziotti, David | Zimmer, David |

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time.

Nays

| | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Barrett, Toby | Kormos, Peter | Scott, Laurie |
| Bisson, Gilles | MacLeod, Lisa | Sterling, Norman W. |
| Chudleigh, Ted | Marchese, Rosario | Tabuns, Peter |
| DiNovo, Cheri | Miller, Norm | Tory, John |
| Dunlop, Garfield | Munro, Julia | Wilson, Jim |
| Elliott, Christine | Murdoch, Bill | Witmer, Elizabeth |
| Hardeman, Ernie | O’Toole, John | Yakabuski, John |
| Hudak, Tim | Prue, Michael | |
| Klees, Frank | Runciman, Robert W. | |

The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 51; the nays are 25.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of House dated November 14, 2006, the bill is ordered referred to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs.

PUBLIC SERVICE OF ONTARIO STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2006 LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT DES LOIS AYANT TRAIT À LA FONCTION PUBLIQUE DE L’ONTARIO

Mr. Phillips moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 158, An Act to revise legislation relating to the public service of Ontario by repealing the Public Service Act, enacting the Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006 and the Ontario Provincial Police Collective Bargaining Act, 2006 and making complementary amendments to various Acts and by amending various Acts in respect of the successor rights of certain public servants / Projet de loi 158, Loi visant à réviser des lois ayant trait à la fonction publique de l’Ontario en abrogeant la Loi sur la fonction publique, en édictant la Loi de 2006 sur la fonction publique de l’Ontario et la Loi de 2006 sur la négociation collective relative à la Police provinciale de l’Ontario, en apportant des modifications complémentaires à diverses lois et en modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la succession aux qualités pour certains fonctionnaires.

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

Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services): I should inform the House that I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, Mr. Vic Dhillon, the MPP for Brampton West–Mississauga.

I'm pleased to begin debate for second reading of Bill 158, the Public Service of Ontario Statute Law Amendment Act. I think all three parties would agree that Ontario has been well served by a public service with an outstanding track record, and the Ontario public service has been recognized internationally many times. On November 2, we took an important step by introducing legislation that will bring even greater transparency and accountability to a public service already known, as I said earlier, for its professionalism and unfailing dedication in serving the people of this province. The current public service legislation has undergone only minor revisions over the past few decades, and really has not been significantly changed since its creation. The legislation we've introduced takes us, dare I say, into the 21st century and will serve as a foundation for a modern public service.

1610

The public service in Ontario is held in high esteem worldwide for its professionalism, its excellence and the dedication that it brings to serving the people of Ontario. However, we do believe it's important to reinforce our ability to meet public expectations for transparency, accountability and professionalism, while at the same time providing important safeguards and protections for our public servants should they need them. The legislation includes a new statement of purpose, which I frankly think is important. I think it will foster a greater common understanding of the role of this fundamental democratic institution that we call our public service. The legislation provides the tools to ensure that we achieve that purpose.

The legislation would, if passed, help ensure that the public service is effective in serving the public, the government and the Legislature. It will ensure that the public service in Ontario is accountable, ethical, non-partisan and professional. It will provide a clear framework for the administration, the leadership and the management of our public service of Ontario. It will clarify the rights and duties of public servants concerning ethical conduct. The legislation, if passed, will clarify conflict-of-interest rules for current and former public service employees. It will clarify the political rights and restrictions for all public servants. It will establish clear accountabilities for oversight. It will enhance our strong ethical and management framework for all public servants. It will deliver on our commitment to put whistle-blowing protection in place for all public servants and it will restore successor rights for Ontario government employees.

We've consulted extensively on the proposed legislation—with current and former ministry executives, with government agencies, with our bargaining partners and with members of all three parties here in the Legislature. I'm pleased to report that the feedback from the con-

sultations was positive and constructive. We had a lot of involvement, and I appreciate that.

Underpinning the important provisions I have referenced is the need for a strong administrative foundation for public service. This act, in my mind, sets the framework for how our public service manages the affairs of the public service. If passed, the legislation will strengthen human resource management and administration by establishing clear accountability, introducing modern language. As I mentioned earlier, the act has not been updated for some time. In my opinion, and I think you'll find this as you get into the bill, it establishes clear and modern language.

Responsibilities related to human resource matters will be clarified for the two prime responsibilities, Management Board of Cabinet and the Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission will be given all human resource management authorities, with the power to delegate, and will have responsibility for approving government-wide—or enterprise-wide, to use the jargon—and also cluster-specific human resource policies. Cabinet will continue to be responsible for all fiscal decisions. Deputy ministers will be responsible for ministry staff, agency chairs will be responsible for staff in their agencies and ministers will be responsible for ministerial staff.

As I mentioned earlier, a key objective of this proposed legislation is to provide public servants with important safeguards and protections needed to do their job. Again, as I said in my first comments, I think we're fortunate in this province to have a very professional public service that, day in and day out, does a great job. But every once in a while there may be a need for someone to have whistle-blowing authority if something has gone wrong, to make sure that we have in place an appropriate mechanism so that they are allowed, without fear of reprisal, to bring that forward.

We are, in this legislation, providing our public servants with the ability, should the need arise, to disclose alleged serious wrongdoing without fear of reprisal. It would give an independent officer of the Legislature—the Integrity Commissioner—the authority to investigate and publicly report on serious allegations of wrongdoing, and it would improve upon legislative changes that were introduced in 1993 but actually never proclaimed. Not everybody perhaps realizes it, but in our existing Public Service Act, there were whistle-blowing provisions put in there in 1993 but never proclaimed. This will allow us to move forward with whistle-blowing. All employees and appointees of Ontario government ministries and agencies would be able to disclose a serious wrongdoing without fear or threat of reprisal. "Wrongdoing" includes contravention of a federal or provincial act or regulation; an act or omission that creates a grave danger to life, health, safety or the environment; gross mismanagement; or directing or counselling a person to commit a wrongdoing that falls into these categories.

The proposed disclosure process would be straightforward and would ensure that allegations of wrongdoing

are addressed in a timely manner. A public servant who wants to disclose a wrongdoing would be able to report the information to an internal officer designated by the Public Service Commission. The designate would have a responsibility to investigate and report his or her findings to the discloser. Importantly, if the discloser is not satisfied with the report back, he or she could take the matter to the Integrity Commissioner. Also, a public servant would have the option of making the disclosure directly to the Integrity Commissioner if he or she believes that an internal disclosure would be inappropriate. In the case of an emergency or an urgent matter, the Integrity Commissioner can deal with the matter quickly.

As I mentioned earlier, there are protections in here against reprisals. The proposed legislation would prohibit anyone from taking an action that negatively affects the employment or working conditions of an employee because he or she has disclosed a wrongdoing. Public servants would be entitled to make a complaint about a reprisal or a threat of reprisal to a grievance board and have the matter addressed. At a hearing on the complaint, the onus will be on the employer to demonstrate that no reprisal was taken. If a ruling finds the reprisal was taken, the person responsible for the reprisal would face disciplinary action, including being charged with an offence.

We consulted broadly on this piece of legislation and we've had, I think, good feedback on it. I will say that there was a debate on which officer of the Legislature would be appropriate, the Ombudsman or the Integrity Commissioner. We felt—and I've considered this carefully—that the appropriate officer is the Integrity Commissioner. I think there is a well-developed process which the Integrity Commissioner has. They are investigating serious allegations that require the kind of balanced process that our Integrity Commissioner deals with when they are dealing with integrity matters.

The Ombudsman is an option. The challenge that I felt was there is that often the Ombudsman's role is to, on behalf of the public, take public concerns about the service that's been provided by the public service and initiate action to correct it. I can see that if it was the Ombudsman who had responsibility here, there is the potential for conflict, where the whistle-blower is essentially looking to the Ombudsman for redress and the Ombudsman is kind of on one side of the issue. On balance, I believe the Integrity Commissioner is the appropriate model to be able to put in place the right process for dealing with the serious matters of whistle-blowing.

I know that it will be important that the Office of the Integrity Commissioner has the necessary resources to deal with it. That has to be a given. We have some experience with this in that, if you recall, when we introduced the Government Advertising Act, we provided the Auditor General with the responsibility for dealing with it. That was a brand new responsibility. The Auditor General at the time wanted assurance that they would have the resources for dealing with it, and we, the government, made sure that happened, in conjunction

with the Legislature, obviously, which makes that decision.

1620

I want to turn to political rights. It's vitally important that public servants, like all citizens, have the freedom to express their fundamental democratic right to participate in political activity. It's also important for public servants to be aware of their rights and obligations so that they can exercise their political activity rights while respecting the important non-partisan nature of our public service. I think the bill provides the appropriate balance for that. If passed, the legislation will bring greater clarity to the rules, whom they apply to, so public servants will know very clearly what they can and cannot do related to their own political involvement inside and outside of work. It will also balance the need to preserve a non-partisan, neutral public service with an individual's right to participate in political activity.

The proposed legislation maintains essentially the same rights and restrictions to political activity as the current Public Service Act. It also amends categories of public servants for the purpose of political activity and describes the rights and restrictions that apply to employees in these categories. It expands the rules to all government agencies so that all public servants are held to the same standards.

The next area I want to talk about is the conflict-of-interest provisions. The framework we are proposing for conflict of interest will reinforce the confidence that the public have that decisions are made with the interest of the province and the people of Ontario first and foremost. If passed, the legislation will reinforce the government's strong culture of ethics and clarify the lines of accountability for ministry staff, agency staff and staff in the minister's office. The proposed legislation provides regulation-making authority to the Lieutenant Governor in Council to establish conflict-of-interest rules for public servants and former public servants who either worked in a ministry or worked in a minister's office.

The proposed legislation would apply to agencies classified under the Management Board of Cabinet agency establishment and accountability directive. The act would create the role of an ethics executive. Every public servant would have someone to consult for advice and for direction. The heads of ministries and agencies would be accountable for their respective staff and responsible for ensuring in-service and post-service conflict-of-interest rules. The Integrity Commissioner would be the ethics executive for current and former staff and ministers' offices. Agencies will be permitted to create their own conflict-of-interest rules as long as those rules are consistent with standards required of ministries and approved by an independent conflict-of-interest commission, and to establish in-service and post-service rules.

It is our intent to put in regulation the current regulations in that, in my opinion, in the three years we've been in government and the previous years with the previous government, I think they have been working quite well.

I want to turn now to the Ontario Provincial Police Collective Bargaining Act and to welcome Karl Walsh, who is the president of the Ontario Provincial Police Association. As I've said publicly, he represents his members very well, very firmly, but as with the other leadership and the people who represent employees, always with an overarching concern, first and foremost, for serving the public well.

We are moving to further modernize our public service by giving clarity to how we bargain contracts with the Ontario Provincial Police. If passed, the legislation will move collective bargaining provisions, essentially unchanged, into a new stand-alone statute, the Ontario Provincial Police Collective Bargaining Act, and make it consistent with collective bargaining provisions for other public service bargaining units that are in statutes other than the Public Service Act. We've consulted broadly with the OPPA, and I'm pleased that they've indicated their support for this. As I say, it essentially ensures that our valued OPP have the same rights in statutes as our other collective bargaining agencies.

I'd like to talk now about successor rights. Virtually all unionized workers in Ontario in the private and public sector have successor rights, all except Ontario government employees. Again, I'd repeat that: All private sector and all public sector, except the Ontario government, employees have successor rights. Ontario has a public service that's second to none. It's only fair, in our opinion, that our public servants have the same successor rights as people working in the private sector. Under the new legislation, public sector employees will again have the same rights enjoyed by workers in the private sector. If passed, the legislation will restore balance and confidence to Ontario's labour relations regime and provide the same rights for our employees as private sector and broader public sector employees have.

If a government undertaking is transferred to, for example, a municipal government or a non-government organization, affected public servants would continue to keep their benefits and their rights under the existing collective agreement to the same extent as private sector employees in a sale situation.

Bill 158, which we're debating here, is a key component of the McGuinty government's effort to modernize our government. It builds on several other important initiatives: I talked earlier about the legislation dealing with advertising; the amendments to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to include universities, Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation; the inclusion of the financial results of hospitals, school boards and colleges of applied arts and technology in the provincial budget; and the expanded authority for the Auditor General to carry out value-for-money audits of organizations receiving government funds to deliver front-line services.

This legislation would update and clarify responsibilities in many areas so that the fundamental principles of public service—accountability, competency, non-partisanship and professionalism—are clearly and firmly

identified and supported. That's why I'm calling on all members of this Legislature to support this legislation.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): Mr. Speaker, he will be sharing his time—

The Acting Speaker: I'm sorry. I apologize. I didn't see anyone standing up.

Hon. Mr. Phillips: I'm sharing my time.

The Acting Speaker: The parliamentary assistant, the member for Brampton West—Mississauga.

Mr. Vic Dhillon (Brampton West—Mississauga): It's an honour for me to speak today, with Minister Phillips, and lead off debate on this very important piece of legislation. Bill 158, the Public Service of Ontario Statute Law Amendment Act, demonstrates our government's commitment to the people who work in public service and to the people of this province.

As you may remember, it was our Premier who, in his inaugural address, brought attention to the paramount work done by public servants all over this province and the importance for government to work as a team with our public servants. It was our Premier who, when he was sworn in, personally wrote to Ontario public servants to acknowledge the professionalism and dedication they bring to their work and to encourage them to continue in their pursuit of excellence in public service. To this day, our commitment to the intrinsic value of public service remains unchanged, and that's what this new legislation is all about: demonstrating our commitment to the people who dedicate their careers to public service in Ontario and, ultimately, to the people of Ontario.

As you know, the Public Service Act, which was originally introduced in 1878, has not substantially changed in more than 100 years. This is, frankly, not the kind of legislation governments spend much time on, given the countless pressing issues that usually take up legislative agendas. Yet, with the global trend that has brought administrations into the 21st century, a thorough overhaul of the Public Service Act was long overdue.

In its 2005 budget paper, *Investing in People*, our government stated that it intended to update legislation governing the public service to embed the principles of accountability, transparency and delivery of results as the next step in modernizing government. Then, on February 2, 2006, Premier McGuinty publicly stated that, as part of the program to introduce more accountability into government, he had asked the secretary of the cabinet to review and make recommendations about potential amendments to the Public Service Act. Finally, the 2006 budget stated that consultations on a new Public Service Act were under way. This initiative, it said, seeks to embed in legislation the fundamental principles of public service—accountability, merit, non-partisanship and professionalism—and to provide a strong ethical framework for public servants.

1630

As you know, extensive consultations were held in preparation of the proposed legislation. Numerous parties

were invited to provide comments and input on proposed legislative changes. Much of that input is reflected in the proposed legislation.

Stakeholders were provided with a first consultation paper outlining topics for discussion at the beginning of March 2006. In-person consultations led by the public service legislation project, Ministry of Government Services, took place during March, April and May 2006.

The second consultation paper was distributed to the stakeholders at the end of June. Stakeholders included bargaining agencies, which includes tribunals, advisory bodies and statutory corporations, government ministries, various public service councils and selected academics, former senior public servants and other experts.

We're modernizing public service legislation to help ensure that the public service continues to be accountable, ethical, non-partisan and professional, while providing the safeguards and protection that public servants need to carry out their functions.

Whistle-blower protection has sat on the books for more than 10 years, unproclaimed by previous governments. Our government is delivering on its commitment to put whistle-blower protection in place for all public servants. The provisions introduced in 1993 were based on best practices at the time and do not meet today's standards for transparency and accountability. The proposed legislation is much stronger, in that it establishes a more modern and effective framework for disclosure, with clear procedures and accountabilities.

For example, the current unproclaimed provisions do not provide the power for independent investigations of allegations of serious wrongdoing. The proposed legislation gives power and authority to an independent officer of the Legislature, the Integrity Commissioner, to investigate and publicly report on allegations of wrongdoing. Public servants would also have the option of making a disclosure directly to the Integrity Commissioner if they believe that internal disclosure would be inappropriate.

In addition, the proposed legislation would prohibit anyone from taking an action that negatively affects the employment or working conditions of an employee because he or she has disclosed a wrongdoing. Public servants would be entitled to make a complaint about a reprisal or threat of reprisal to a grievance board and have the matter addressed. At a hearing on the complaint, the onus would be on the employer to demonstrate that no reprisal was taken. If a ruling finds that a reprisal was taken, the person responsible for the reprisal would face disciplinary actions and could be charged with an offence.

Bill 158 also addresses political activity rights and restrictions for all servants. For instance, there's a need—

Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale–High Park): On a point of order, Ms. Speaker: Call for a quorum.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Is there a quorum present?

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Todd Decker): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Clerk-at-the-Table: A quorum is now present.

The Acting Speaker: The member from Brampton has the floor.

Mr. Dhillon: Bill 158 also addresses political activity rights and restrictions for all public servants. For instance, there's a need to ensure that restrictions on political activity are applied in a fair and justifiable manner.

In addition, we have to ensure that as this complex organization changes over time, we have the flexibility to identify classes of positions that warrant higher restrictions, which we cannot do right now.

Under the proposed legislation, specific categories would clearly set out what public servants and cannot do. Flexibility to add staff to the specially restricted group, if necessary, would enable us to support and respect the objectives of a non-partisan public service.

The proposed legislation also contains conflict-of-interest provisions. The intent of these provisions would be to enhance the ethical framework of the public service. Currently, there's a need to ensure that the same principles and rules apply consistently across the public service. For instance, current rules do not apply to all 350 agencies or to agency appointees. This legislation would give agencies the ability to establish their own rules, subject to approval by the conflict of interest commissioner. The commissioner would ensure that agency rules are consistent with or more stringent than public service standards.

The proposed legislation would also make clear that ministers, deputy ministers and agency chairs or another senior official in the agency are responsible for the promotion of ethical conduct in their offices and for ensuring their staff are familiar with the conflict-of-interest rules that apply to them.

This new legislation is very much part of our government's efforts to modernize its operations and restore fairness and balance to labour relations in Ontario. In fact, one of the cornerstones of this legislation is to restore successor rights for Ontario government employees, a public commitment that the Premier made. As you know, successor rights had been removed under the previous government, which means that without successor rights, when a government function was transferred—for example, to a municipal government or a non-governmental organization—the affected employees were no longer represented by their union and their collective bargaining rights ended. If the employees wished to keep the union, the union would have had to seek again to represent the bargaining unit and attempt to negotiate a first contract with the new employer.

Under the new legislation, if a government undertaking is transferred, the affected employees would continue to have collective bargaining rights and be represented by the same bargaining agent. That's why restoring successor rights for crown employees and giving public servants the same rights enjoyed by private sector and broader public sector employees is the right thing to do.

This proposed legislation is an expression of what public service stands for: accountability, non-partisanship, competency and professionalism. Its intention is to support and maintain a high standard of integrity for public servants while providing important protections that public servants need to deliver high-quality services to Ontario.

For this reason, I call on all members to support this important legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): I am looking forward, in a few moments, to speaking on this bill. It is rather a large bill. As I said before, it's a bill that for the most part—I think just dealing with one of the issues, a substantive issue is the whistle-blower protection. Certainly as a government under John Tory, we'd be supportive of protecting persons. Mr. Cutler from Ottawa, who ran as a candidate for Stephen Harper federally, was the premier whistle-blower in Ottawa when he blew the whistle on the Liberals' shenanigans around the ad scam. So, there's the contradiction when you're dealing with a government that's closing the door, you might say, after the horse has been out, running around. Certainly federally, that's the record of the Liberal government.

1640

I don't want to cast aspersions on the current government because that part of it—clearly our critic Joe Tascona made it in his responding remarks on first reading to state that we'd be supportive of that particular section of the bill. Clearly, there's a wish here to make sure that we go out for hearings on this bill. This is just the start of the second reading, so I've taken some deliberate notes while Minister Phillips was speaking and I'll try to respond to those in a general sense because I'm not the critic, on a very technical bill—142 pages. There are a number of schedules in this bill as well, so it's worth pondering.

I do have some questions on—I would say, hoping that Minister Phillips responds; I have a lot of respect for his work—section 146 and the Integrity Commissioner's role versus the Ombudsman's role. I'm kind of drawn into it a bit. I'd like to expand on that, on the Integrity Commissioner's most recent ruling on sub judice, but I'll leave that to Minister Phillips's response.

Ms. DiNovo: I'm delighted to speak the first volley on this bill. I guess I'm well suited to speak about ethics, coming from the other side of the House. I remember a certain by-election campaign where a smear campaign was let loose upon myself. It was traced back to the very office of this minister, Mr. Phillips, where an aide was reprimanded over it. So yes, it's about time that this government brought in a bill dealing with ethics. It's a little bit like the fox talking about ethics in the henhouse. We would love to see whistle-blower protection. We would love to see successor rights. We would, in the New Democratic Party, of course, and we proposed this—it took them three years to bring this in. In a sense, I wish that this bill had been in place during that by-

election. Perhaps I would have had some protection and perhaps other people would have some protection when government employees engaged in that kind of smear campaign while sitting at their desks in this very House. Perhaps you would have some chance, then, to challenge that. Perhaps they would have some chance to challenge that.

Of course, like all Liberal bills, it lacks teeth. So we would like to, in the New Democratic Party, give it some teeth. We would like to talk about the fact that there are no funding guarantees here. I'd also be very interested in talking about the role of the Ombudsman versus the Integrity Commissioner and how those two roles might be devised and who should really be enacting this, where should the final accountability lie. We have an excellent Ombudsman, and one would query why the Ombudsman wouldn't be the last person of recourse to whom a complaint might go. So I look forward to speaking about that and speaking about all things. Of course, as always, we support collective bargaining rights and we support the rights of those in collective bargaining units, including the OPP and OPSEU.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): I'm pleased to have an opportunity to say a few words about the bill today, Bill 158. What's important about this bill, An Act to revise legislation relating to the public service of Ontario, and it does repealing of other acts and makes other amendments to various public service acts—the key to this is that our government is committed to respecting the values of the public service and what they bring to government. This legislation helps to ensure that the public service will continue to be accountable, ethical, non-partisan and professional, as the minister and the parliamentary assistant indicated earlier.

What I like about this bill especially is that we have consulted extensively with bargaining agents, current and former ministry executives, government agencies and members of all parties, and the feedback was positive and constructive. In looking at this bill and in just researching a little bit, what I find interesting is that this bill has not been significantly changed since it was first created. I think that was back in, if I'm not mistaken, 1878. So it is high time to make these changes and to bring this into the 21st century.

The whistle-blowing provisions: The other members have spoken about the importance of that and providing protection to public servants, and even the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, who said, "One government after another didn't do it. I think it is high time that it is being done and I'm glad that they're doing it." That was in the Toronto Star on Friday, November 3.

Previous governments didn't do it. They failed to proclaim it. I'm glad to see this go forward. I'm in support.

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): I would like to come back to the importance of whistle-blower legislation. I think that in the complex form of government we have today, where you have thousands of people who make up the public service, this is an important piece of security for individuals. I know that certainly stories and

things like that come back to people such as I, as an MPP. Obviously, they're not substantiated; you can't do anything about them. It seems to me, though, that it speaks to the frustration that individuals may have, feeling that there isn't an avenue for being able to speak up.

I'm not familiar with the details of the previous piece of legislation, although I too was rather surprised that it would go through the whole legislative process. You would think that if there was something wrong with it, that that would have been exposed much earlier instead of simply never proclaiming it. I'm sure that the minister will enlighten us as to the changes that are proposed in this piece of legislation that would find support.

Federally, we know that the work of the whistleblower in what led to the Gomery inquiry and things like that demonstrates the importance of being able to have legislation that would safeguard those who uncover something that, frankly, needs to be uncovered.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Hon. Mr. Phillips: I'm responding to the questions and comments, Mr. Speaker. I believe we've had four, and—

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry. I've just arrived in the chair, and I'm trying to catch up.

Minister, the floor is yours.

Hon. Mr. Phillips: I want to thank the members for Durham, Parkdale-High Park, Scarborough Southwest and York North.

I think all four commented on whistle-blowing. I just want to say that my experience with the public service is that it's an overwhelming group of people who do good work. You go out in your community and you're at some volunteer group: "Where do you work?" "I work for the Ontario public service." That's what makes up the overwhelming majority of our 65,000 people. I'm always conscious, when we're talking about conflict and whistle-blowing and whatnot, to not let that cloud the overwhelming good work that they all do.

On whistle-blowing, the member for York North asked, "Why wasn't it proclaimed?" Let me say to you, if you examine it, this is a stronger piece of whistle-blowing than what's in the current legislation. The current legislation was passed by the NDP, actually, in 1993 and never proclaimed. Then it sat for, dare I say, eight years with the previous government, not proclaimed. I'm not sure why they didn't do that. But if you look at it, it was not an officer of the Legislature who was due to deal with this, and there wasn't the authority to investigate wrongdoing, which we're providing in our bill. I would argue, if you do the research of the two, that we've substantially strengthened whistle-blowing.

It's for those rare cases where there is significant wrongdoing, as I said earlier. If you look at it, it's for violating acts, it's for gross mismanagement, it's for where you're putting someone's health or the environment at risk. I'm actually quite proud of the whistle-blowing proposal here. I think it's very workable, it en-

ures that people can come forward directly to the Integrity Commissioner, if they will, and it protects against reprisals. I look forward to debate now, and I'll be listening carefully.

1650

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. O'Toole: First, it's my privilege to seek unanimous consent, as our critic is absent today, to stand down his opening.

Hon. Mr. Phillips: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: The member has asked that the opposition leadoff be stood down, and it is agreed.

Further debate?

Mr. O'Toole: As much as I'd like to have had the hour myself, Mr. Tascona will, I'm sure, bring more substance to the discussion than I.

I want to start by saying that over the years, the few times I have been here, I have watched and listened to the work that Mr. Phillips has done, and in fact he's a fair-minded person. I would start with that understanding right from the beginning. I listened to his remarks, and he did bring up a few things. It's kind of a technical bill. Some of it is kind of payback and some of it is trying to fix things in a more open and transparent way, and that we would be supportive of.

That's where you get to the, I guess, interpretation. That's why public hearings are so important, to clarify the roles of certain officers of the Legislature, one of them being the Integrity Commissioner. You then run into the more assertive role of the current Ombudsman. He's taking an interest in the children's aid society and other issues—a very progressive individual who interprets his role as an officer of the Legislature in a certain way. There's some independence in that role too as the Ombudsman. But I also look at the auditor for the province of Ontario, a person I have a lot of respect for, and his predecessor, Erik Peters, as well made great comment.

There's a case where the auditors, if you really want to draw it to a case, independently and with the integrity of their profession, as well as their duties and responsibilities as defined under their relationship with the government as officers of the Legislature, go about dutifully auditing these various procedures and the compliance thereof with the legislative regulations etc. and point out whether it's in energy or whether it's in transportation or whether it's in a myriad of areas where they comment annually, and bring it to the attention of the government, and the government quite often doesn't follow through. This is where you wonder how futile this whole process might end up being when you have the whistle-blower provisions going to a poorly resourced area such as the Integrity Commissioner's.

Just recently the Integrity Commissioner has ruled on a couple of things. One he ruled on was the pay scale, and I'm going to stand down my remarks for a few minutes because the minister—only kidding. I'd like him to hear because he'll probably give me some wise advice. The Integrity Commissioner did just recently make a

declaration. Let's go down sequentially here. The Integrity Commissioner, Mr. Coulter Osborne, a revered former member of the bench and the courts, first of all said that—I'll be quite frank—the MPPs should be paid a certain amount on their remuneration etc. Independently he consulted and made his recommendations. He just ignored whether the Conservatives or the Liberals, or for that matter the NDP, disagreed with his findings. Independently it wasn't going to ingratiate him in any way by saying that they should be paid appropriately or whatever, and a comparator group. He even made that recommendation.

Even some time after that, they talked about the issue of members of provincial Parliament's mileage entitlement. We get 34 cents a kilometre or something. I think the issue came up because our pay today is \$88,000, I think, something like that, and there is no pension or anything like that. So there were some things that were being looked at, and the Integrity Commissioner, as an independent officer of the court, has made these kinds of observations. Has the government listened? That's the point I'm making here. The answer to that is that no, they haven't.

The more recent ruling of the Integrity Commissioner is something that Mr. Runciman, our member from—I'll look up his riding, and I should know that because he's our House leader—Leeds-Grenville, has taken issue with it. That's the Integrity Commissioner's recent ruling on the sub judice convention, and that is the role of the MPP and their privileges, within the Legislature or outside the Legislature, commenting on issues that are of a legal nature. I hope that clarifies what that is. What Mr. Runciman is saying—he takes exception to this and wants a clarification. I think the Speaker or somebody will rule on it. I'm not sure who's going to rule on it, actually; it will probably be the Speaker. Claude DesRosiers is not the Clerk anymore, so it could be other members of the table staff; I'm not sure. But Mr. Runciman said to me that now the general public has more freedom to comment than the MPP does. We are elected and we should be accountable for questions and comments with respect to issues before the courts or legal interpretation of issues, but I think we also have a right, but also the responsibility, to be appropriately observant of what the rules of procedure are. It says we're going to be the only jurisdiction in the world with this restriction on our ability to comment.

This all ties in under the whistle-blower provisions here in the Legislature, as I will be referring to them, and that section under the whistle-blower—as I said, I want to maybe regroup and reformat my comments here. That, to me, is the best place to start, because under this particular bill, there are two things: the section dealing with the whistle-blowers, dealt with around section 140 in the bill. The other section of the bill—let me review it here for the members. There are four separate sections to the bill that I've seen—again, I'm not the critic, so I just have very brief notes on it—one being the whistle-blower issue, and the second being the re-enactment of the Ontario police bargaining agent act. There are some

subsections of that. There's schedule C, to accommodate amendments that must be made to other acts as a result of the new Public Service of Ontario Act. Schedule D deals exclusively with amendments related to reinstating the successor rights provisions from the public service, removed in 1995.

So as you can see, a lot of it is something that the general public listening today may not—these comments in the Legislature today are to draw on those stakeholders, both in the public sector and indeed the private sector, to make sure that all Ontarians are treated equally. I think everyone would agree with that. I don't see a difference there at all. I would say that as I continue on the whistle-blower part—some comments have been made. It is probably the area—you wonder why the NDP legislation on whistle-blower protection in 1993 was never proclaimed. You have to ask yourself why. One of the most obvious questions would be, what's the mechanism for managing those complaints—validating them, first of all? Somebody is upset with the boss etc. So if you look into the regulation section of the bill, you'll see that it is quite prescriptive. It is my understanding that it will be quite prescriptive in what constitutes protection under the whistle-blower provisions. Those are substantive reasons that you want to have public hearings on such an important and necessary change.

As we all know, the recent Gomery inquiry in Ottawa is a perfect example of the individual who blew the whistle on the federal Liberal government—I don't want to confuse it with the Dalton McGuinty Liberals; they've only had three years, so they haven't started to fatten the calf just yet. But the issue here, quite frankly, is that the Gomery inquiry spent millions of dollars, published litanies of commentaries from different legal and ethical people, and the poor fellow who blew the whistle was not protected. That is simply wrong. His name was—the whistle-blower fellow in Ottawa.

Mrs. Munro: Allan Cutler.

1700

Mr. O'Toole: Allan Cutler; you're right. I should know that, and I had said it earlier. It just temporarily slipped my mind. Allan is the person who should have been protected.

This is where you get down into the bill itself. You need to define a process. Now, it should be noted that in section 146 they actually are assigning this new, important responsibility to the Integrity Commissioner. The Integrity Commissioner's office is up on Bloor Street. I think there are three or four people who work there. One kind of looks after the security systems, another person kind of runs the office, and the other person is the Integrity Commissioner himself. There are very few people working there, let's put it that way. How are they going to deal with this very important and new priority that has been given to them without the resources?

Yet, if you look clearly, there are other existing officers of the Legislature who do have resources, one being the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is supposed to be the problem solver, at least for things that are not

before the courts. They are not able to deal with things that are being dealt with by some dispute resolution mechanism, i.e., the courts. The other one, as I commented earlier, is the Auditor General, Mr. McCarter. The annual report is there, from all these officers. Give them a few more staff to comment on what constitutes a violation under this new whistle-blower provision. So we do need hearings on that particular section for sure.

But do you really need that? If I really draw this thing into the currency of today, today our leader, John Tory, and Bob Runciman had a great meeting with the media and the people of Ontario right over here on Bay Street. They launched a campaign, a campaign to stop government waste. It should not just be a privilege, it should be a duty to stop government waste. This isn't like General Motors or Stelco; this is public money. Every single cent and every single dollar that's spent or taken in, whether it's the health tax or whether it's waste in spending, is taxpayers' money—hard-working families, right out of the jeans of Mr. or Mrs. Working Person in Ontario. So there's an inherent necessity for accountability and transparency here.

If people want to speak to me directly or to John Tory directly, I'm going to give you a place to go. We're not going to create a new bureaucracy. We're going to say www.wastebusters.ca. The conception here is that we've got a crack group of people who are going to follow up on these complaints, and we're going to bring them to this Legislature and ask Mr. McGuinty for an explanation.

Just one example that came to my attention recently: An individual in Ontario received a cheque in the mail for 30 cents; I think it was from Hydro One—30 cents. Do you know how much it would have cost to produce that cheque? The stamp alone on the cheque would have been worth probably a dollar or close to it; the envelope, the computer—that's just one example.

Interjection.

Mr. O'Toole: One of the members on the other side is asking for more examples. These are just ones that I'm aware of. Mr. Tory commented today, and I think this tells the story in itself. To the viewers of Ontario, imagine this: We don't need to have whistle-blowers; we need the people of Ontario to watch this government that would say anything to get elected. Now, \$559,000 was spent creating a partisan TV ad on education; half a million dollars was spent for one of their fundraising teams to create a partisan ad on education. That would have been enough money to hire a couple of teachers or teaching assistants or special ed people or to help some of those autistic families in Ontario. That's what's missing here. That's what's missing.

The consultant fees for the Ministry of Education—this is another one. I know they're trying to improve education. That's something that has been worked on. David Cooke, when he was the Minister of Education for the NDP, tried to improve education. So there's a lot of work that remains to be done..

The spending on consultants in the Ministry of Education alone—this is frightening—has gone up 1,277%.

Imagine the amount of money that could have gone towards children with special needs or English as a second language. In the Ministry of Education, \$1.2 million was spent on hotel rooms—\$1.2 million—and they've only been in for three years. Man, when you start looking at wastebusters.ca, let us know what you know, and we will not necessarily need to enact this portion of the—

Interjection.

Mr. O'Toole: One of the ones you need to be aware of—the government will say anything or promise anything to get elected, get your vote or just to convince you at the door; it's "Yes" to everything. On Highway 407, they promised during the election that they were going to roll back the tolls. They've spent millions of dollars in court. Ask yourself: Are the tolls any lower?

Another one—these are just ones without any script here that are so obvious.

Autism: They promised, in a letter from Dalton McGuinty with his signature on it, that they were going to help those parents. Have they helped you? They've spent millions fighting you in court.

I think the list could go on. In fact, I have a few more points, and some of the members keep encouraging me to bring these points to your attention, so I may just do that. I think that would be important, that we let people know that we support the whistle-blower provision in the bill because we know there will be things found, and these things that are found should be brought to the attention of the public and solved.

But how do you create relevancy for this issue? Just over the past week, all members of the Legislature—in the brief time I have—met with members of the long-term-care community. This is a bill that's before the Legislature, Bill 140. The bill, quite frankly, in one line says it does this: It eliminates a number of beds, the B- and C-type facilities, and has no provision creating new beds in it for long-term-care patients. This is an aging population. We know from the baby boom issue and the demographics that we need more of them, not fewer of them. That bill doesn't fulfill any commitment they made during the election.

If you want a whistle-blower, take some of their election promises and let's just have a scorecard of how they're doing. That doesn't take a great bureaucracy. Let's say, "This is what they promised; this is what they did." I think that's fair. I think that's fair to anyone.

I want to put on the record—because we don't get the time sometimes to extend our congratulations to the members of municipal government who are going to be working with us as partners over the next three or four years. I know many of them, and I have the greatest respect for them. First of all, Gerri Lynn O'Connor, who's the outgoing mayor of Uxbridge and has been serving the public for about 30 years in a variety of forms in elected office, has been replaced by Mayor Bob Shepherd. The regional councillor is Howie Herrema. His father was a regional chair of Durham region—a wonderful family.

Ward 1 is Bev Northeast. Ward 2 is Ted Eng—a great agricultural leader, former leader of the Durham Region Federation of Agriculture. Ward 3 is Pat Mikuse. Ward 4 is Jack Ballinger. Ward 5 is Gordon Highet.

In the boards of education, Joe Allin in the public board and Kathy LeFort in the separate board, round out those people representing that area.

Congratulations to each of them, and thank you to those who didn't succeed in their bid for office but did let their names stand, because that's true accountability.

I also want to go to Scugog, where we have Marilyn Pearce returning. We have Jim McMillen, who's a regional councillor. Cecil Lamrock is new; Bobbie Drew, Lynn Philip Hodgson, Blair Martyn and Georgia Brock. Most of them were re-elected or acclaimed.

Congratulations also to a brand new mayor in Clarington, Mayor-Elect Jim Abernethy. Mary Novak is returning as a regional councillor, Charlie Trim is a regional councillor, Gord Robinson, Adrian Foster, Ron Hooper and Willy Woo; and the school trustees in Clarington are Steve Cooke, who's a new member, and Cathy Abraham. In the separate board are Maureen Day and Granville Anderson. I forgot to mention the school trustees in the north part of Durham, which would be Steve Martin and Kathy LeFort, who is representing Scugog as well as Uxbridge.

I would say that the public sector should be held accountable, but this bill only goes partway.

1710

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Ms. DiNovo: I thought I would take just a couple of minutes to walk through a bit of the history of the bill. As Mr. Phillips said, yes, it's true that the NDP government first passed this legislation in 1993, and that included whistle-blower protection as part IV of the Ontario Public Service Act. Unfortunately, they didn't have time during their mandate to actually pass that bill into law. Ironically, yes, in 2000, Dalton McGuinty, then-Leader of the Opposition, called on the government to take the law off the shelf and proclaim it. Now we are three very long years later and finally it's coming to the floor. So we applaud, of course, as I said before, the fact that there are whistle-blower and successor rights.

I just wanted to walk through a little bit of what my colleague Mr. O'Toole was speaking about: the ad scam and whistle-blowing and why this whistle-blowing protection is so absolutely essential. This was the ad scam controversy. Allan Cutler—he was federal, of course—was a procurement officer with the public works department and he refused to go along with improper procurement practices and, as a result, suffered retaliation from management over the course of many years without any protection. He lodged a complaint, which prompted a department audit of the advertising and public opinion division, but by the time the audit was underway, Cutler was transferred to the technical and special services division of public works.

During the sponsorship scandal investigations, Cutler, we remember, tabled an inch-thick document which

contained meticulous notes, memos and his own diary detailing all the ways in which those rules were broken. The subsequent reality was, of course, what we know is the Gomery inquiry, and he was eventually vindicated. So it's a very classic example of why we need whistle-blower protection and, of course, why we need successor rights. I look forward to talking about those, because remember what our brothers and sisters in OPSEU went through; it cost thousands of OPSEU members their jobs in the last regime. I'll speak more about that later.

Hon. Mr. Phillips: A comment on the member for Durham's comments, just on the whistle-blowing part, because he spent a fair bit of time on it. I just want to acknowledge someone called Gary Gannage. Gary is the president of our second-largest bargaining agent. It's called AMAPCEO and it's a lot of our management people. What he said about it is, "We believe the Ontario whistle-blower legislation, if enacted, will be the strongest in Canada and will serve as an effective accountability mechanism for the citizens of this province."

I want to commend Gary Gannage. I talked to him probably a day after I became the minister. The first thing I think he told me about was, "We've got to find a way to move forward on whistle-blowing." He, on behalf of his organization, has been deeply involved in this. Just for the Legislature and the public, I would say that a big part of their concern is around reprisals and making sure that people feel comfortable. Built into the legislation, we'll find as we get into the debate, are some real protections on reprisals, ensuring that, as I said in my remarks, that it is up to the employer, not the employee, to demonstrate that they haven't taken a reprisal rather than the employee proving they had taken a reprisal, if you follow my logic. If it's proven that there were reprisals, it can be an offence.

I just wanted to reassure the public who are watching this that I think the needs for whistle-blowing will be, I hope, few and far between; but, if need be, it's there. The union that has put this as a high priority call it the strongest whistle-blowing legislation in Canada.

The member for High Park said that they only had two years to proclaim it and couldn't find the time to proclaim it, and I appreciate that. It does take a few hours to get things proclaimed, and it's unfortunate it couldn't be done.

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe): I want to take this chance, before I comment on the member who was speaking a few minutes ago, to send congratulations to all the people who got elected in the city of London, from the mayor, to the board of control, to the city councillors. It's a rewarding job, and it's a privilege to get the job of serving the people of Ontario and serving the people of the city of London.

I was listening to a number of people speaking before me about the very important piece of legislation before us here. It's important to establish some kind of mechanism to protect the people of Ontario and also to protect the civil servants who serve the people of Ontario. I want to commend the minister for bringing this issue forward.

Hopefully, he'll get support from all members of the House, because it's about time.

As the leader of the opposition, John Tory, said to the *Toronto Star*, it's about time some government, some leadership, took the initiative and did it, because it's important to the people of Ontario to have a civil service accountable for the job, not using authority according to ethnic background or religion or political affiliation or any other position, just their position to serve the people of Ontario and to protect the civil servants who give their skills, talent, education and time to serve the people of Ontario. This will create balance.

The member was talking a few minutes ago about accountability. We now have an accountable government. We have a government that looks after the people of Ontario, but the minister thinks carefully before he moves in order to protect the public service. It's about time; that's why I'm supporting this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

There being no further questions and comment, the member for Durham has two minutes to respond.

Mr. O'Toole: I appreciate all the members who commented. I just want to put on the record, Minister, I appreciate your listening and responding.

I'm just going to get a couple more lists that are important, on the need for the public to keep a close eye on this thing. Just think of the last month. On November 1, we had an opposition day to draw to people's attention an on-going concern, an undercurrent of concern, the \$6 million they spent to remove the C from the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Commission. They just took the C off the end—\$6 million.

There was \$219,000 spent, that we know of, to re-design the Ontario trillium that has served this province for years and decades; \$20 million to quietly give raises to specific appointees to government agencies and boards; \$2 million in inaccurate partisan advertising about health care and how to improve it—call your doctor; \$91 million to fire nurses; \$90 million to close or consolidate community care access centers; \$16 million for Dalton McGuinty's "I won't raise your taxes" Liberal ad agency; \$2 million for the new local health integrated network offices, the LHINs; and \$55 million, so far, on Caledonia. The list goes on. Dial in now: www.whistleblower.ca.

There's more to be done on this bill. It's just the start of building true accountability into the public service as well as to the publicly elected persons who serve you in the province of Ontario.

I know that the successor rights issue will come up. But I think it's important to quote—Mr. Phillips did have a quote; I have one as well from the public service. The public service employee he mentioned said that they were happy that they honoured the agreement to bring in the successor, because it would ensure security in the public service. I have no problem with that, as that is a right that's negotiated, and that's the government's role, to negotiate—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): I want to say that you don't know how much I was looking forward to speaking on this very legislation.

Mr. O'Toole: How much? Tell us.

Mr. Bisson: I've been looking forward to it for about five minutes.

I want to put a couple of comments on the record. I appreciate that the minister is here in order to hear our comments. That is appreciated, because hopefully some of our comments will be taken into effect once we actually get into the legislation, as far as making any amendments that may happen, or may not happen, when we get to second reading.

1720

I just want to say that we generally agree with the direction you're going in with the bill. I think we all recognize that there are a number of key things we need to deal with in this bill, one of them being the whole issue of whistle-blower protection. As in any democracy, there are examples in all levels of government across this country—municipal, provincial or federal—where people may have done something wrong or decisions were not made in good faith, and we need to make sure that we give civil servants the opportunity to be protected and to feel they are protected in the event that wrongdoing is happening.

Imagine, for example, what happened in the whole « commandite » scandal—how do you say « commandite » in English?—the sponsorship scandal. There's a prime example, and probably the worst example, of how government can go awry. I think it would have been helpful in that case to have whistle-blower protection for the civil servants who may have seen what was going on. Certainly there had to be people within the federal civil service who were writing the cheques, who saw the applications coming in, who saw the information, who may have suspected what was going on but were basically worried about saying something because at the end of the day they all understand that they work for a deputy minister or a particular manager of a branch, and if they do go out and say something or make public information about what has happened, they may get themselves in trouble.

But there's also another reason. Civil servants are professionals. They understand their role. The role of the civil servant is to carry out the decisions of government. Governments may come and governments may go, but the civil service will normally remain, and the civil service is there to serve the decisions that a government makes.

For example, here in Ontario there were 40 long, dark years of Conservative government, and the civil service got used to a certain way of doing things. Then, over a period of 10 or 15 years, successive governments—a New Democratic government, a Conservative government and now a Liberal government—came into power that did things differently than the former—

Interruption.

Mr. Bisson: Somebody forgot to turn off their cell-phone. There we go. Ah, he's been pointed out, and the Sergeant at Arms is running across as we speak.

Anyway, I was just saying that that is a good example of a professional civil service. They were there, they were used to doing things in a certain way for those 40 long, dark years of Conservative government, and when new governments were elected—first Mr. Peterson, then Mr. Rae, then Mr. Harris and now back to the Liberals under Mr. McGuinty—they were able to adjust how they do things and recognize that while they may have certain political leanings and certain philosophies, that is not their job. Their job is not to second-guess the government's decision but to carry it out. But there's a fine line, and it is a line we have to be mindful of and deal with in the legislation.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, may I say that we are standing down our lead? I thought that was already agreed to. Unanimous consent that we stand down our lead?

The Deputy Speaker: That had not been requested, but we can back up a little bit here. It is agreed that the lead will be stood down, and we'll fix the clock.

Mr. Bisson: the people are professional civil servants, and they know how to run the clock on the table, Speaker.

So the fine line becomes the professional civil service being able to do their jobs, and they may have a certain philosophy, but there's a fine line as to where they see wrongdoing. It's one thing for a civil servant to disagree with a government's decision. A good example of that is what happened during the Tory years under Mike Harris. I'm sure there were many civil servants who were aghast at some of the decisions that government made, but they had a professional responsibility to carry out the decisions of that government. And so long as those decisions and those actions they were carrying out as civil servants were within the law, they had an obligation to follow the direction of the government, and do so professionally.

But what happens when a civil servant sees something that is outside the law or something that is suspect? That's also one of the reasons we have civil servants. They're there to keep an eye on that and to have the ability to raise that issue, firstly with their supervisor and their manager up the chain, but if nothing happens, to find other ways to get other people on the outside to know about it so that the alarm bell can be rung and we can actually investigate to find out if there's wrongdoing.

After all, this is not our money. How many billions of dollars are there in our provincial budget? Somewhere around \$87 billion? The \$87 billion we have in our provincial budget isn't the property of the government of Ontario; it's the property of the people of Ontario. We're only charged as legislators and as parties for about a four-year term to deal with how we appropriate the dollars within those taxes we collect, which is the budget of Ontario. So we need to make sure that the taxpayer is well served in how those monies are utilized, making sure that no abuses are going on. That is one of the principles that most of us in this Legislature, I would

hope, would support. It's certainly something we supported when we were in government and took a number of steps to deal with in order to give civil servants some ability to scrutinize the actions of the government within the confines of their responsibilities as civil servants.

I say again, it's really a fine line, because civil servants are in a bit of a tough position sometimes. As I said, they have to carry out the wishes of a government they may not agree with and can't work against, because they're charged in their responsibilities as an employee to follow that out, but we need to give them the right to say, "Okay, this crosses the line, and we need somebody else to take a look at it." One of the mechanisms to do that is to create an office of complaints—that's part of what we're talking about in this legislation; I forget what we're calling it—so that some of these issues can be raised internally, first of all, with their own ministry supervisors and up the chain of command in the ministry, but that they have some bureau they can go to without having to run to the Toronto Sun, the Toronto Star or wherever it might be to ring the alarm bells.

I think this is why, for example, we have the Office of the Ombudsman. Mr. Marin, who is our Ombudsman now, has been exemplary in his work, which is to look at government decisions and policies and how they're applied to try to ascertain if the government is living within the confines of the intent of the law they would have passed. I think we would all agree that we've seen our Ombudsman do some very good work in looking at the shortcomings of public policy in this province, policies created by either New Democrats, Conservatives or Liberals, and giving the public an opportunity to bring complaints when policy is wrong.

We need to give civil servants that same kind of right. That's how I equate it. You need an ombudsman within the government to allow civil servants to raise those issues in some way so that there is a mechanism by which we can investigate possible wrongdoings. I'll go back to the Gomery affair, the « commandite »—what was that called again?

Interjection.

Mr. Bisson: The sponsorship scandal. I can never think of the term in English. Don't ask me why. It comes from watching the French newscast for so long and talking about « commandite ».

I think it's the worst example of the excesses that can happen in government, but it's also the best example of how an office of complaint or an ombudsman within government could have been there in the event that staffers or civil servants within those ministries affected felt their concerns were not being taken seriously. They could have gone to the office of an internal ombudsman of some type to deal with lodging a complaint, knowing that somebody who's neutral and has some authority would go back and investigate those complaints. We support that concept, and we look forward to work on committee that will allow us to look at that issue a little bit more closely and to see if this legislation of some 100-odd pages actually achieves what we want in the end.

I'm going to talk to that point in a second, but I also want to get to the other issue in this bill, which is one of extending political rights to public servants. There was a time in this province where we restricted pretty well all civil servants from being involved in the political process. I always felt at the time—this is before my time in politics, and I still feel like this today—that that was wrong. I understand there are certain people we have to have restrictions on because of the very nature of the job they do, and I think arguments could be made for some of them. For example, I certainly don't think you want the deputy minister of a department running out and being the champion of whatever political party on whatever issue. I think that runs against the responsibility of an ADM. But certainly most of the people who work within the civil service—and police officers, firefighters and others, I would argue—should have the political right that all other workers in this province have. They are workers, in the end, and I believe that as workers and citizens of the province, they need to be afforded the same political rights as other workers. It is important that people not only get an opportunity to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the government every four years and to vote for the candidate of his or her choice, but it's also important to give people the right to be involved in the process. What happens if I happen to be a civil servant who wants to be involved in the local riding association in whatever riding I happen to live in? People have those political rights, and we should extend the ability for those workers within the ministries and agencies of the provincial government to do so.

1730

Now, there are a lot of rights that are presently afforded, and I don't want to approach this debate from the perspective of saying, "Hey, civil servants don't have a political right," because in fact we extended many of those rights in about 1991 or 1992 through reforms to the Public Service Act that were done at the time by Minister Frances Lankin. I remember that legislation coming forward in this House that afforded for the first time in the provincial government's history the right of civil servants to be involved in the political process. For example, my brother-in-law, who worked for the assessment office of the day—he's now retired—didn't have the right to put a political sign on his front lawn. It would have been a split household, which is a funny story, but nonetheless—

Interjection.

Mr. Bisson: He supported me. So people who worked at the assessment office and others didn't have the right to put a political sign out on the lawn, and I think that is unfair to citizens of the province who are engaged in the decision-making of who they think should be their representative at Queen's Park or Ottawa or whatever it might be. I think we need to afford workers of all levels an ability to be involved in the political process, because it is by involvement of citizens within that process that we're able to make the system better. How we develop better policy and how we make better government is by

having as many people as we can involved in the process who bring expertise and are able to basically affect the decision-making and affect the direction of a political party so that eventually those issues and those ideas get dealt with at the legislative level when their political parties are elected. I think that is a very important fact that we need to get into.

But I want to end, in the last five or six minutes that I have, on this point, and that is the entire process by which we come to the issue of developing legislation. You've heard me say this before. I think it's rather unfortunate that the process that we have in this House—and it is becoming increasingly difficult—is that ministers of the crown are given the mandate by the Premier to develop legislation. Legislation is tabled in the House. Most members, government as well as opposition, don't have a chance to read all of the legislation in detail, but we have such a rushed process of passing legislation that I think we give a disservice to the quality of the product we produce when we finally come back at third reading with a final version of the law that we're working on.

A couple of things have to happen. I believe there should be a fulsome debate at second reading, to the extent necessary. In some cases that might be a couple of sessional days because only two or three members in each political party have something to say on a particular piece of legislation. But we need to ensure and give members adequate time to be able to reflect on legislation and bring forward the views that they have and those of the citizens they represent at second reading.

But here's the kicker. We are short-shrifting, in my view, the role of committees. I think committees are the places where most of the good work of this Legislature can be done, and what ends up happening far too often, because we are in haste to pass legislation through, is that we don't take the time in committee that we need. I think sometimes bills have to be out there for a longer period of time just for the public to get their heads around them. I can think of a number of times when people all of a sudden have heard that a particular bill has passed and are either in favour or opposed or have a view one way or another, and it's passed third reading. Because they've only now seen it on the radar screen, they say, "Well, how come I never got a chance to say anything?" My answer to them is that governments are in haste to pass legislation.

Typically now, what happens is that a bill is introduced in the fall session, and by the end of the fall session it becomes law, and the government says, "Look how efficient we are." That was the argument the Conservatives would make. They would say, "Are we ever efficient in how we pass legislation." Well, it's not efficiency. Democracy is not about, you know—what's the old saying? It's not about making sausage. It's all about taking the time to have public debate on issues so that we are able to bring to this place the voices and thoughts of those people we represent.

There are some bills, I will agree, that can pass through this House quickly. They're bills that are fairly

straightforward, that are not complicated. They are not too technical and they deal with a particular issue that we can all understand and we can move on quickly. But sometimes bills—and I would say this is an example; another one is the long-term-care act that we presently have before the House as well—are fairly technical. We're all saying we agree with what is in Bill 158. Well, I don't know if we're all saying that, but some of us are saying we agree with the principles of what's in Bill 158. But let's be real. The bill in itself is 142 pages long. How many pieces of legislation is it amending? It's amending, I believe, about four or five different pieces of legislation. It's a very technical bill. I think it's unfair to the citizens to have a process that is rushed to pass such a bill through the House. I believe that bills like this should be given the time for public comment. And so what if we don't get our bill in the fall session? We'll get it in the spring session. It'll get passed. In the grand scheme of things, this Legislature has been around for over 100 years. What's another six months with one piece of legislation?

I really believe that one of the things we have to do is to be proactive in reaching out to the public and saying to those people affected by a particular law, "What do you think? This is your Legislature. How can we deal with this in a way that at the end of the day achieves the goals that we set as a government?" I say "we" for the Liberals—I'm not a Liberal. But government would say, if I were on the government side of the bench, that the government has the will to do it, that we do good work of making sure that what's in the bill actually does what it is you want to do.

We shouldn't be too hurried to pass legislation through this House when it comes to technical bills like this. I don't argue for a second that we need to hold up second reading for long periods of time, but we should ensure that members have adequate time to comment at second reading and that they're able to do that, that we don't try to cut short the debate time. But more importantly, put the bill out there at committee and inform citizens, by being proactive, that this bill is before whatever committee. "If you have an interest in commenting on this bill or giving us ideas, please get back to us. There will be committee hearings sometime in the winter intersession." That way, at least people are able to comment.

I know what's going to happen now, if we go out. We'll put something on the website, we'll put something in the papers, and we'll say to people, "By five days from now you have to tell us if you have an issue with this bill. Please call and let us know that you want to present." By the time somebody finds out, it might be on day four or five of the notice period, and then they've got to read the bill, and it's 142 pages long. All of a sudden they say, "Yes, I would like to make a presentation," but you're way past the deadline by which you're supposed to submit that you do want to make a presentation. I think we need to have longer periods of time where bills that are more technical in nature are out there so that the public has adequate time to be able to comment.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you and hope that the minister takes those comments into consideration.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Hon. Mr. Phillips: I did listen carefully. On the political process, for the member from Timmins—James Bay, about six or eight months ago we prepared a discussion paper which we did send to all three parties to get feedback. I think we got some feedback from both parties. We've been trying, through this process, to allow lots of input into it. This is an important piece of legislation, so it's not urgent to get it passed quickly.

On political rights, I think you'll find as you get into the bill—and by the way, I would say that we've had very good co-operation with our bargaining agents, the people who represent a large part of the 65,000 people who work for the public service. The political rights have been, if anything, expanded somewhat from where they are currently, so I don't think we're restricting any political rights. I think we've broadened the categories for more participation.

It does speak to the first point you made, which is that governments do change here. When you're in government, you don't like that thought, but that's democracy. The consistency is our public service—our non-partisan, professional, competent public service. Since I've been here—Liberal, NDP, Conservative and Liberal—we've all benefited from inheriting a first-class public service. So the member is right. The incoming government relies on our public service to implement the duly elected agenda that people have voted for. We live in a democracy; people have voted for a government. The public service has that responsibility. But I'm hopeful that this legislation also ensures that where there's gross mismanagement, breaking laws, endangering health or other serious matters, there is whistle-blowing protection within this legislation.

1740

Mr. O'Toole: The member from Timmins—James Bay is always able to comment, and rather insightfully, because he has been here 15 years or more and has served, I believe, as a union steward in his former life. So you pay close attention to rights, and it's good that you do. The minister's response is extremely important.

I would put on the record that this is the comment from Gary Gannage that we received, and it reads as follows: "AMAPCEO"—that's the Association of Management, Administrative and Professional Crown Employees of Ontario—"is ... very pleased that the government has fulfilled its commitment"—its promise—"to restore successor rights to Ontario civil servants, which will ensure that our members whose jobs are divested in the future can take the protections of their collective agreement with them to their new employer"—dealing with outsourcing and that.

It is controversial; there's no question of that. I just want to be on the record that this was a commitment, I think, as part of getting an agreement with them to tacitly support Bill 158. The whistle-blower provision—what

protection and what is the role of the union in ensuring that protection?

Now we're into the mechanics of the bill itself. As with many of the bills, this government has taken on a new tone as of today. We had time allocation and we forced through a very deliberate budget bill, and they're now getting impatient because they're running out of time to bring things to fruition in their term—all the promises that aren't going to be kept. So there are deals being made, and I think this is why public hearings will clear the air on this, to make sure that all taxpayers of Ontario—civil servants and private sector and all—will be treated fairly. That's all we want: for people to have access to fairness.

Ms. DiNovo: I also second Mr. Bisson and the suggestion that we really do need some time to hear from stakeholders here. Personally, I would love to hear from OPSEU members, I'd love to hear from Ontario Provincial Police members about this bill and have them engaged in lively debate so that we can carry their voice forward and make whatever amendments, in committee of course, that they would want to see made.

I also hearken back again to my own experience in ethics during that by-election in Parkdale–High Park. I have to say that there were some Liberals during that campaign who came forward and expressed to me their grief. They were appalled at the way some of the members of, in this case, the civil service, the government team, were acting during that campaign. They wished they could go to the press and speak out about that kind of, might I say, American style of campaigning, of smearing and of attacking someone's integrity in a community rather than dealing with the issues. So I would be very interested in hearing from the minister who is proposing this bill, who was very right to reprimand the person in his office who engaged in that activity—I would like to hear how one would use this bill to make it possible for Liberals within the caucus and the party to actually have a voice about the way campaigns are operated. Of course, I would like to see redress in my own instance; possibly an apology. There's lots of time still in the session for that. So it would be interesting to see some ethical redress and how that would go, how it would look, how it would be enacted, how one would go about getting that. Again, this is the minister who brought in this bill that has to do with ethics. I'd like to see the actual mechanics and I'd like to see ethical action coming out of this bill in my own case.

Mr. Ramal: I was listening to the member from Timmins–James Bay speaking for 15 minutes about the importance of the bill, the importance of the civil servants to be in a good position. I listened to him when he was talking about civil servants under the Conservative regime, how much they suffered—and badly suffered, I guess. I was one of them; back then I used to work for the government, and I know how many of my colleagues were complaining all the time. They didn't know if they'd have a job—or they didn't have a job.

There was a lot of pressure. Also, hopefully he'll be convinced by the response from the minister when he was talking about how we didn't want to rush any piece of legislation. We want to make sure that the bill goes in the right way, the right passage.

I want to listen to the people of Ontario. Since I got elected in 2003, I have served on many different committees. I want to listen to all the people all the time. We didn't force any bill. That's why we believe strongly that we have to listen to the people of Ontario; we have to listen to all the stakeholders; we have to listen to all the people involved in any piece of legislation.

I had the chance to serve this morning under Bill 124. We heard so many stakeholders who came forward and commended the government for the great job they're doing and also because we listen to them. This bill is a great indication of our listening to the people.

As has been mentioned, this act has never been touched since 1878. Nobody touched it. So many governments tried and then did nothing with it until Minister Gerry Phillips took the leadership and brought it forward and wants to deal with it in a professional manner. We listened for six months to the people. We went to all the parties and asked them what they think is the best way to deliver. That's why we're debating this legislation here in the House. Today we listen to you, as members of the third party, we listen to the Conservatives and we also want to go to committee to listen to many people to get it right.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Member for Timmins–James Bay, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. Bisson: I was just trying to talk to my Conservative friends because I remember us, as a government, changing this act, to my good friend from whatever riding it is, I'm sorry.

Mr. Ramal: London–Fanshawe.

Mr. Bisson: London–Fanshawe: The Public Service Act wasn't changed only in 1878. Just think, it's so much fun coming to this place. The other day when we were in question period, the Attorney General got up and said, "This is the biggest change to democracy since 1347," and, as government, likes to lean back over the years and talk about how these are earth-shattering changes and tries to pile them up against what happened in history.

I just say, listen, let's be real here. This act has been changed at least twice since I've been here. This will be the third time I've seen this act changed. I saw it changed by us, I saw it changed by the Tories and now I'm seeing it changed by you. So this is not earth-shattering.

In my comments, to the minister across the way, I wasn't disagreeing with you. I agree with the concept. My point is that we need to take proper time at committee, and I think you understand where I'm coming from, to make sure that we canvass properly those people who will be affected by this bill. To say, "Let's put a posting on the Ontario legislative website and put advertising in the Toronto Star, the Sun and wherever else and five days or 10 days later people can write to us"—I think people who are affected by this bill have to have a

chance to take a look at it. That's why I would argue that, although you did do some consultation before drafting this bill, and I acknowledge that, we need to give those people who will be affected the opportunity to read it, take a look at it and come back to us in the intersession and say, "We may only need a day. We may need five days. It depends on how many people want to come forward, so that we can make sure to get it right." You know as well as I do—you've been here longer than me—how often we have tried, with good intentions, to change bills and have ended up falling short because we haven't taken the time to do it right. That's what my comments were all about.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate.

Mr. Berardinetti: I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this bill for a few minutes. Bill 158, An Act to revise legislation related to the public service of Ontario, repeals the Public Service Act and makes various other amendments to acts regarding the rights of certain public servants.

I want to start off by saying that the date—I think it was 1878—is important because, since then, successive governments have tried in this chamber or in the province to change the provisions regarding public servants, and what has happened is that it's gone through the regular first reading, second reading and third reading but it has not been proclaimed, and a bill doesn't become law until it's proclaimed. At least that's my understanding of how it works, and that is through the Lieutenant Governor's office, and "proclamation" means that it becomes law.

When the NDP were in power, they did discuss this bill. I wasn't here at the time. They did bring it forward and wanted to make changes but it was not proclaimed. We are determined to proclaim this bill and make it law. First reading of the bill occurred on November 2. We're beginning second reading, I believe, today—the date is November 15, if the calendar there is correct—and we'll move into committee, I'm sure. I certainly do not dispute the fact that we need to take this to committee for further consultation and tweaking and changes. Finally, it will come forward for third reading. After that, hopefully, we'll see proclamation take place. That is the expectation that we have here in government, that this becomes law, and with that, we have a strengthening of the rights that are provided, especially for public servants, in areas such as whistle-blowing where they feel that there's some wrongdoing but are afraid to report that wrongdoing and want to be protected. There are provisions in this bill here, as I read through it, that protect public servants who come forward and want to bring forward some kind of abuse or concern they have with what's happening in their department or their division or whatever part of the public service they work in.

1750

In my three years in this government, I've seen that we do hold our public servants in high regard, and we hold in respect the work that they do. That is clear in the various legislation and the comments made by the various ministers. Especially, our Premier values and we all

value the high work of our public servants. We want to provide them with the best working environment possible. We respect the work they do and we want to make sure that they have the protection they need to do their job properly. If one public servant is doing their work properly but sees that another one is not doing their work or perhaps is taking on a second job or is not doing the job they're supposed to be doing and wants to report that for the benefit of everyone in the department, then that person can do that. They can do it safely. We want to make sure that that's done to protect those public servants who want to do that.

Again—this was mentioned earlier—we've had several different groups and organizations come forward and say that this is the right thing to do. We know that this is the right direction to go; it's strong. The Leader of the Opposition, John Tory, is quoted as saying, "One government after another didn't do it. I think it is high time that it is being done and I'm glad that they're doing it." That was in the *Toronto Star*, Friday, November 3, page A7. So even the Leader of the Opposition has acknowledged that this is a good thing and that it's the right thing to, to try to strengthen the whistle-blowing legislation, as we call it, or whistle-blower legislation, that's contained in this bill.

I'm also happy that we consulted with bargaining agents, current and former ministry executives, government agencies and members of all parties and that the feedback was positive and constructive. It doesn't mean that we put this bill into effect immediately. We still need to debate it here in the Legislature, send it off to committee, hear from more people who want to speak to this bill—maybe they have something they want to say about this bill that we don't know—make the necessary changes at committee, bring it back for third reading, incorporate those changes in that committee and hopefully proclaim it afterwards. So I think that this is the right direction and we should move on this in a quick but thorough fashion so that all those who are interested in saying something about the Public Service of Ontario Statute Law Amendment Act, this bill, 158, will have a chance to do so.

We're proposing to strengthen our public service legislation, and it's based on the fundamental principles of accountability, competency, non-partisanship and professionalism. We're committed to fairness and balance in labour relations. The public service of Ontario is held in high esteem here in the Legislature, as I said earlier, but I think throughout this country and perhaps throughout the world. We know that the people who work for us, the people who work for the people of Ontario, the vast majority of them do an excellent job and do their very best to serve the people of Ontario. We want to make sure that this continues to exist.

We're delivering on another promise: We're delivering on our commitment to put whistle-blower protection in place. Our proposed rules are stronger than those proposed previously because they give authority to an independent officer, the Integrity Commissioner, to in-

investigate allegations of wrongdoing. So if a public servant wants to complain and goes to their superior or someone within their division or their section and feels uncomfortable there or does not want to go that route, the Integrity Commissioner can come into the picture and deal with that problem.

The act ensures that the employees of Ontario—the ministries and agencies—have the ability to disclose a serious wrongdoing without fear of threat or reprisal, because a lot of people would be afraid—I can see why—to go forward and complain about somebody else. They would fear, “You know what? If I complain about this person not doing their job, somebody else is going to do something to me.” We’ve put provisions in here to protect those individuals who want to come forward to speak about any wrongdoings. I think this is extremely positive.

Also, in the area of conflict of interest, this bill reinforces public confidence that decisions are made in the public interest. It ensures that ministries and agencies have a clear and consistent standard of integrity. The bill provides additional powers, duties and functions to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. It preserves agency independence by permitting agencies to create their own conflict-of-interest rules, subject to approval by the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, ensuring consistency with conflict-of-interest rules for ministries and other agencies. You want to make sure that people are not in positions of conflict of interest, and that power is given to various agencies to ensure that the conflict-of-interest guidelines are being followed.

We also established the role of an ethics executive, a senior official in a ministry or agency who provides advice and direction about conflict of interest to public

servants and who refers the matter to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. Having this ethics executive is very important because things become more and more complicated. There are so many more rules in place, and sometimes, inadvertently, people may not know what is right or what is wrong in a certain situation—whether they can go out and work on an election campaign or take on a second job or do something else, while they remain as a second—

Mr. O’Toole: On a point of order, Speaker: I believe a quorum may not be present.

The Deputy Speaker: Is a quorum present?

The Clerk-at-the-Table: A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Clerk-at-the-Table: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Scarborough Southwest, you have about one minute.

Mr. Berardinetti: I didn’t realize my speech was so boring. Maybe I drew everybody out of the Legislature. Jeez, you know, I feel bad. It was one of my rare opportunities to get up and speak for a good 15 minutes, and everyone disappears.

Applause.

Mr. Berardinetti: Thank you. Should I start from the beginning?

Interjections.

Mr. Berardinetti: No? Okay. Mr. Speaker, I think it’s close to 6 o’clock right now, and I’ll stop my comments there.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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 déléguée 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 déléguée 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.

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