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Honourable Michael A. Brown

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 14 December 2006

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 14 décembre 2006

*The House met at 1000.  
Prayers.*

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### CO-OPERATIVES

**Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot):** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should commit to the promotion, development and support of the co-operative model of business as one that should be replicated to provide stronger communities, increased social responsibility and continued economic growth, and that the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade commit to investigating the establishment of a co-operative secretariat to support the co-operative model of business.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. McMeekin has moved private member's notice of motion number 33.

Pursuant to standing order 96, Mr. McMeekin, you have up to 10 minutes.

**Mr. McMeekin:** I want to begin by sharing a bit of how I came to this place and this resolution today. I grew up on Hamilton Mountain, and not a lot of farming occurred in the area of West 16th Street. When my wife set up a medical practice out in Flamborough, I of course went with her and, as fate would have it, became the mayor of the good town of Flamborough and was introduced to a whole new way of life, largely agricultural.

I once offered one of my new-found friends in Flamborough some time to help him bring in his crop, and he, knowing my experience and expertise, was wise enough to say, "No, thanks." In any event, I discovered quickly that if one owes constituents nothing else, you certainly owe them the requirement that you listen, learn and then act, based on what you have heard and learned. I can attest that there's much in the agricultural, rural community that people who are involved in agricultural industries for a living can teach, and certainly much that this representative has learned and continues to need to learn. Farmers are wonderful mentors and instructors, not only about their industry but about life and about how to make your way through the world.

I discovered fairly quickly that we have much in common: a belief in hard work and in fairness, a passion for community and the need to celebrate our successes while

we share one another's burdens. I discovered, too, the importance of agricultural education. In fact, I carry around in the trunk of my car the curriculum developed by the OMAFRA group, and any time I get a chance to visit a school, I try to inflict the curriculum material on those who have a responsibility to educate our young people.

I discovered that farmers not only feed cities, they nurture minds with their creative, entrepreneurial ways. I have also discovered from experience that innovative ideas and innovative agricultural industries don't just happen; they require careful thought and can be best tackled together.

I want to quote from a letter from the local federation of agriculture in Hamilton-Wentworth. This was addressed to me: "Local farmers are looking to our political leaders to work together with us to develop conditions that will attract investment and create a favourable economic setting in rural Ontario. In order to sustain vibrant communities and a vibrant agricultural industry, we want and need you to consider the benefits and the damage that your decisions can create for the Ontario farmer and rural communities when setting policies, developing programs and making decisions."

Today more than ever, those who are going to succeed in our rapidly changing global economy are those who are prepared to ask three questions: "Why?" "What if?" and "Why not?" No approach, from my experience, is more helpful in this regard than the co-operative association model of economic development.

Co-operatives are characterized by voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; member participation, both financially and in terms of time commitment; autonomy and independence; an orientation toward education, training and information-sharing; a willingness to co-operate and to network in the interest of the common good; and, of course, most importantly, a real concern for community.

In Ontario, co-operatives are everywhere. They're in the agri-food sector, the finance sector, health care sector, housing, elder care, energy—like Positive Power, a local award-winning co-operative in my beloved Flamborough with which I have some connection; child care and elsewhere.

The co-op sector itself is enormous. There are some 2.3 million Ontarians who are members of a co-operative. There are some 1,900 co-operatives in Ontario, second only to Quebec, and these co-operatives control over \$19 billion in assets in Ontario and over \$100 bil-

lion nationwide. In Ontario, there are over 9,000 persons who are employed directly through co-operatives.

Examples of successful co-ops include the CUMIS Group, insurance; the Co-operators Group, the largest Canadian-owned multi-product insurance company, with assets in excess of \$6 billion; Gay Lea Foods, a leader in the dairy industry in Ontario and Canada; GROWMARK Inc.; the co-operative housing federation of Canada—and the list goes on and on.

Ontario farmers are and have always been at the forefront of the “new generation” co-operative movement. The goal is simple, as espoused quite articulately by the Christian Farmers and others, and that is to find ways to attempt to retain ownership and control of their products beyond the farm gate and to invest in ventures that bring added value to those products. The model offers farmers the opportunity to join together to move up the value chain and to capture additional value-added profits from the processing, packaging, marketing and shipping of their agricultural products.

#### 1010

Ethanol is a good example—some of the ethanol co-operatives that have evolved. I’ve discovered recently from doing some research that there’s actually a fuel out there called E-85 that burns 85% ethanol and only 15% gas. Can you imagine a day not too far away when we’ll be growing all of our fuel? That’s an exciting prospect. It occurs to me that with the hybrid cars and the flex-fuel vehicles that will be needed for this E-85 gas, the co-operative secretariat that I’m proposing today could very well, in the context of policy initiatives, look at perhaps granting tax credits to those who want to invest in building E-85 stations as well as direct tax incentives for those who purchase and use E-85 gas.

But enough asides. I’ve lost one of my speakers, so I may have a couple of extra minutes, and I thought I’d ramble a bit and give a specific example. Enough background and statistical baffle-gab. What is this really all about? I want to get into that.

While Ontario co-operatives have a proud past and a very bright and promising future, this will only happen if the sector and governments are able to find ways to take collaborative action together. This is something that was clearly outlined in the Ontario Co-operative Association’s recent white paper entitled *Capturing Co-Operative Opportunities*.

I believe there’s a need to encourage an economic secretariat to focus on the affirmation, encouragement and nurturing of the co-operative approach to economic development, supported with information, research and the sharing of expertise. I believe that through a dedicated and integrated structure, supported by government, we can provide both a better focus and a more cohesive voice within government with respect to this important area. I have had conversations with the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. She’s quite keen to explore this, so that’s helpful to know.

The federal government already has a co-operative secretariat—it was started in 1987—which is really doing

some really important things. I’ll take a couple of minutes a bit later, but I just want to take a second to acknowledge Teena Shah, who is with us. Maybe Teena could stand up. Teena is a graduate student from Wilfrid Laurier who has been doing some research. And there are special guests here today from the Ontario Co-operative Association: Denyse Guy, Martin von Wuthenau, Jennifer Heneberry, Harvey Cooper, Elizabeth Record, Carolyn Lemon, Cathy Lang, Cynthia Stuart, Melinda Zytaruk and Joseph Zebrowski. I want to welcome them this morning as well. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** This is an interesting motion. It talks about the co-operative movement, which, I guess, has a somewhat checkered history. You can look at the agricultural sector and can see a large number of co-ops that have developed over the years. Personally, I’m a member of one of them, so guess I can’t be too hard on co-ops. Some of them have grown to be extremely large. Gay Lea Foods, for instance, as the member mentioned, is a large and very successful co-op owned by the Dairy Farmers of Ontario. I think that part of the success of Gay Lea Foods must lie in the fact that they have a very good management structure.

Obviously, when you’re a member of a co-op, you take great interest in it and perhaps you might even want to get somewhat involved in the running of the plant. You can imagine that a general manager or a president of Gay Lea Foods answering to a large number of dairy farmers who have their own particular way of thinking would be a very untenable situation. I think we can all imagine that that situation wouldn’t last very long and that either the management structure would have to be set up and changed or the company would no longer exist. Given that Gay Lea Foods has a long and proud history in the dairy industry in Ontario, and having branched out somewhat from the dairy industry as well, they obviously have a management system that allows for the independence of management to conduct their business on a very businesslike schedule.

I don’t think it really matters very much how the ownership of the company is structured. I think what matters is that the company has good management, that it’s well motivated, that it understands its marketplace and that it conducts itself on a very businesslike basis. The success of Gay Lea Foods and other co-ops would be based on the fact that they run their businesses extremely well, not on the fact that they are a co-operative. Being a co-operative is incidental to their success, I would suggest.

One of the other large co-ops in the food business in Ontario is the BC Tree Fruits co-operative, which markets most of the BC apples that are grown in the Okanagan Valley, mostly around Kelowna and Penticton. We see those apples in the chain stores—mostly Red Delicious, Golden Delicious and Spartan apples; I think those are three principal varieties that they market here, although they do grow many other varieties in BC. But watching that marketplace grow up, rise and fall has impacted the management of BC Tree Fruits over time.

I remember, probably back in the 1970s, I think the chap's name was Ian Greenwood, who was the general manager of BC Tree Fruits. One year they had a bad crop, and another year, Washington state, which grows about 10 or 15 times as many apples as BC, had a bumper crop and BC had a minor crop, and of course the marketplace was poor that year, to say the least. They weren't getting the return from their fruit because Washington state was in surplus and that was driving the prices down. Poor Ian Greenwood suffered the fate of a poor marketplace and was let go, through no fault of his own.

I always felt that Ian was one of the best marketers in the area. I know that several packing houses in Ontario tried to hire him as soon as word got out that he was dismissed, but he decided not to move to Ontario. He loved the Okanagan—having visited the Okanagan, I can understand that love—and he got another job in a related field out there. But it was because he worked for a co-operative and a lot of people were dissatisfied with the marketplace and perhaps didn't have the intimate knowledge of what that marketplace was doing and how it got in the situation it was in that was the reason for his demise, which was too bad.

BC Tree Fruits also expanded, as a co-operative, into the processing business, and owns Sunripe Foods. Sunripe Foods started out processing apple juice and has now gone into a broad range of foods—primarily juices, but other foods as well—and marketed those very successfully. I think that part of the success of Sunripe Foods is that it is once removed from the co-op. It is an independent business, run on a very professional basis. It has a sales force across Canada and in export around the world. It's a very successful organization, but its structure is once removed from the co-op that manages BC Tree Fruits, and I think that has a lot to do with its success. The quality of people who are involved in running any business is what contributes to its success, not necessarily the structure in which it organizes.

Another chap I remember from BC Tree Fruits, one of their marketing specialists—I guess he was a broker in Toronto—was Dave Austin, who marketed BC Tree Fruits in the 1960s and 1970s and, I think, even back in the 1950s. Again, he was a very, very high-quality food broker in Toronto. I don't think Dave is with us anymore; he was old when I knew him. But he was a wonderful, high-quality person who represented a very high-quality product, and I think sometimes those two things do go hand in hand.

#### 1020

The United Co-operatives of Ontario operated in the farming community in Ontario, and I think they did fairly well over a long period of time. I'm not sure when they started. I think they started somewhere in the 1940s, but through the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s and into the 1970s they expanded and did very well. It was a place where farmers, particularly grain farmers, could buy their seed in the spring and deliver their crops in the fall. They could buy their fertilizers. Any profit that accrued to the individual co-op they were doing business with was split

between the farmers on a proportionate basis if they were members.

It grew and expanded and did very well, until they got into some problems of expanding into areas that they perhaps were not as aware of, that they didn't have the basis of knowledge in. They did some of the things that many companies do; they didn't keep their costs under control and eventually declared bankruptcy, went into receivership. That was a huge blow to a lot of farmers around Ontario, and it happened in the late 1970s, early 1980s, I believe. But I don't think their demise was because they were a co-operative; I think their demise was because of the situation that they found themselves in and because the business environment that they were in just wasn't a very healthy one, and they weren't very well prepared to withstand the particular situation that they found themselves in. That could have happened to a business structured on a share basis, an independent proprietorship, a partnership or a co-operative. It didn't really matter that it was structured as a co-op.

Federated Co-ops is a co-op that operates in the three Prairie provinces, and it's interesting that they developed and have great success on the Prairies, because the Prairies are a unique part of Canada. We talk about small-town Ontario; small-town Canada exists on the Prairies. Those are very small towns, and they don't have the infrastructure and they don't have the size, I guess, to warrant many of the services that might otherwise be provided in a larger place, so the co-ops came along. In a very small town in Saskatchewan, you might find a co-op store where you could buy food, for instance, a grocery store; you could buy all the materials that you might need for your farm—fertilizers, tools and equipment; you could bring your crop into the co-op when you harvested it. There was a travel agency corner in some of those stores, and if you wanted to book a trip somewhere, they would supply you with that service. There were insurance facilities where you could buy your insurance. But it was a co-operative that was based on the fact that these very, very small towns couldn't have the services that people would need, and they would have to drive great distances to get some of them. Again, that was very successful.

I used to sell to Federated Co-ops when I was a salesman in a different life, and they were always very aggressive salesmen and always very good, very fair, but they wanted the best price. They were very aggressive in that way, and I think that's just a trait of a successful company. So dealing with Federated Co-ops or dealing with Safeway, which is another large chain that operates in the Prairies, in the larger centres, there was very little difference between the two. Safeway was one of the best-run chain stores in Canada at that time, and the co-ops were also extremely good and very, very competitive.

So it wasn't the fact that they were structured as a co-op. They could have been structured as a small business; they could have been structured as a partnership or a single proprietorship. The co-op nature of the business didn't give them any advantage, so I'm not sure how this resolution is going to improve the lot of Ontarians.

Another example of a co-op is the TREC WindShare co-op. Most of us in this place are familiar with the wind turbine that generates electricity that's located on the grounds of the Canadian National Exhibition, the CNE, down by the lake. That's a turbine that generates electricity. I think it generates about 750 kilowatts per hour when it runs, and it runs sporadically. It only runs when the Ontario power generators are buying electricity at high prices, because I think they can only afford to run that windmill when prices are above 11 cents a kilowatt hour or somewhere in that ballpark. They can only afford to run it when prices are above that rate, which only happens during peak periods, and only happens during those peak periods when there's peak demand. We're having a warm fall, a warm December. There isn't a huge demand for electricity, either for heating or cooling, and I've noticed in the last several weeks that that wind turbine has been turning very sporadically; in fact, it has hardly been turning at all.

One of the things that this resolution is trying to develop—it wants a co-operative secretariat or it's suggesting that the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade advise the government on whether or not we should have a co-operative secretariat very similar to what the federal government has. In reading how this Co-operatives Secretariat works, what its premise is and what its job is—for instance, it says, “Ensure that the needs of the co-operative sector are taken into account by the federal government, especially in the development of policies and programs.”

It sounds to me as though this secretariat is an inside lobbyist. When the government brings in bills that are going to affect the private sector, private sector associations or private sector companies go and talk to the government and indicate to them how this is going to impact their business, whether it's going to be good or whether it's going to be bad, whether it's going to be more costly or whether it's going to save them money. They bring that knowledge to the government, and people refer to that as lobbying tactics.

In the case of co-operatives, the federal government has its own in-house lobbyist in the Co-operatives Secretariat. I really don't understand why, as a member of the public, I should pay taxes to supply the federal government with an in-house lobbyist when the private sector does it out of its pockets. The co-operative sector, at least federally—this motion is to encourage the provincial government to do it provincially, to have an in-house lobbyist that I pay for out of my pocket with my tax dollars. For that reason, I question whether this is a bill that we should be supporting in this House.

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I'm delighted to join in this debate and support our colleague Mr. Ted McMeekin in his resolution. What does Mr. McMeekin actually want? He says that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should commit to promote, basically, the co-operative model of business. It's simply to promote. It doesn't say we're going to pass anything into law; it simply says to promote this type of co-

operative model of business in Ontario. Then he goes on to say, “That the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade commit to investigating the establishment of a co-operative secretariat.”

I know this will be unanimously voted on today, because it is a step in the right direction. The co-op movement in Canada has a long history, as all of us know, especially those in the gallery today who are supporting this bill and who are really in support of the co-op movement.

**1030**

Most people who are in the big cities may not understand the full impact of what a co-operative actually is. I know that when I go to Sutton, Ontario, I see the co-op sign. In Toronto I don't see very many co-op signs, but since I have an understanding from Saskatchewan, Alberta, BC and Quebec in a different life that I had previously—if I had enough time to discuss this—I am somewhat familiar with the co-op movement. But for most of us in the cities, these signs simply indicate it's a different kind of business. Well, this business was established as a co-op movement, as the member from Halton so eloquently indicated, as a self-help organization, mostly and ubiquitously established in the Prairies.

When I got my honours BA from Laurentian University, I had the pleasure to go out and work every summer at a different place in Canada. So the first time I really came in contact with this co-op movement was in a one-grain-elevator town in Saskatchewan: population, seven farms; nearest post office, 25 miles away on a dusty road—Stoughton, Saskatchewan. Did they have a co-op? They did. As was indicated previously, this co-op in Stoughton, Saskatchewan, had everything in it. But, my friends, I tell you this: It wasn't just Estevan and Stoughton or a town just south of Regina near the US border where one of the famous politicians of Canada comes from, and I know the member from the NDP will know where he came from. Where did he actually come from?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins—James Bay):** Who?

**Mr. Ruprecht:** Well, who is your most important—

**Mr. Bisson:** Tommy.

**Mr. Ruprecht:** That's right: Mr. Douglas. Where did he come from?

**Mr. Bisson:** Weyburn.

**Mr. Ruprecht:** Weyburn, Saskatchewan. Did Weyburn have a co-op? Of course Weyburn had a co-op. Every small town in Saskatchewan and almost every small town in Alberta has a co-op. Whether you go to Fort Assiniboine, Alberta, near the Athabasca River, very far away from Edmonton, north of Edmonton, every small town has a co-op. That was the only way they could help each other, whether they started an insurance business or whether they started a business that had to do with finances, like a credit union.

Not to get off my topic, I had the pleasure, by the way, two days ago to speak at the newly founded—actually, I should say the newly established—offices of the Portuguese credit union in Toronto. They were already 40 years old when 24 Portuguese people came together and

said, "We're going to start this credit union because we have to help each other in Canada. We don't speak the language. We have a few dollars. We want to have credit, we go to the banks, and guess what?" The banks would not give new immigrants any credit in 1966 when they first began this co-op movement in terms of the financial sector. So they had to get together. In a way they were forced to get together—and I'm glad Peter just arrived, because he was there too. We were looking at the walls of this credit union, and guess what we saw on the walls at the credit union. We saw Vasco da Gama, the great explorer, and Cabrillo, the other great explorer, taking these small ships all over the world. For them, my friends, that was very fitting, because these photos and these paintings indicated that they too were on a journey, but this journey was in Canada, a new country. This journey was to establish a new financial sector. That was also not a sure thing, just like Cabrillo and Vasco da Gama when they crossed the seas to find new countries and new places and new continents. They too were finding a new beginning in Canada, a new financial establishment. They weren't sure what was happening here. They were just taking baby steps to begin, to start, as all immigrants had to do. But they had the wisdom in 1966 to say, "Let's get together, because we can't buy a new house, we can't get a mortgage, we can't get insurance."

So I was really surprised when the member from Halton indicated how great the co-op movement was and how it should be supported by all of us, but then he said he wasn't sure because he thought the co-op secretariat would be an in-house—what did he call it?

**Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot):** Lobbyist.

**Mr. Ruprecht:** An in-house lobbyist. Let's get one thing straight. That is, first, the federal government does have a secretariat that helps the co-op movement throughout many industries. That's very important, obviously. I'm not sure that I would go as far as to say that this is nothing else but a glorified lobby group. The co-op movement, by its very design, by its very foundation, is organized to help its members. Consequently, it has policy implications that go much beyond the bottom line of looking at the dollars. So while most businesses are interested and while most businesses are looking at the bottom line—that's the most important aspect in the end—there are policy implications for co-ops that are much more important and go beyond the bottom line, because they are social implications. If Portuguese seniors and Portuguese explorers in the beginning, coming into Canada, were looking only at the bottom line alone, they would not get out and try to help each other. The whole co-op movement is organized to help each other. In Toronto, we have co-ops in housing too. We have housing co-ops here, and that is very important.

I could go on, and I have a much greater say in all of this because I have some experience in all of these other provinces where this co-op movement was established, really, and where it flourishes. But today I'm supporting Mr. Ted McMeekin in his desire to explore the possibil-

ity of establishing the secretariat, because it is very important for the future of the co-op movement.

**Mr. Bisson:** Good day, everybody. Good morning. How are we all doing?

Why did I start the debate with "Good day"? I've never done that before.

I just want to say that obviously the New Democratic Party caucus will be supporting this motion. This is something that's very in keeping with what a lot of people in society, let alone New Democrats, think is important in regard to giving an alternate way of doing things on the economic front in our local communities. In some communities, this is a good option and in fact I think would be a good option in all communities, depending on how we go at it.

I want to say—and I hate to use the members' time to criticize this government, but I have to, because this motion speaks directly to the problem that we're having in many places across Ontario, but specifically where I come from, Timmins–James Bay. It has always been that people, especially in northern Ontario—I always relate northern Ontario to sort of like the Saskatchewan of Ontario, in the sense that people there understand that government, at the end of the day, could be part of the solution. People in northern Ontario look at government differently than they do in other parts of the province, understanding that if the government is not at the able working with them in order to find solutions to their problems—either economic problems or infrastructure problems or whatever they are—it's just not going to happen. I think this particular motion speaks to that, and I just want to go down that road for a bit.

We have been undergoing—and members will not be surprised that I'll talk about forestry yet again. We have had this mixed blessing in northern Ontario. In the community I come from, Timmins, and Sudbury and others, we have a boom in mining. Gold prices are up; base metal prices are up; the mining sector is very active. The first diamond project to be going into production is in my riding, in Attawapiskat, and it's going to spend over \$1 billion to develop that project. There are literally hundreds of people working on that directly in the mining site. Many First Nations people have got work through that and many people in Timmins and the area communities are feeding the work that is going on up in James Bay. At the same time, mining projects all across the north are basically a great place right now to be looking for work because the mining sector is doing quite well.

However, as we know, things are not always well. In this particular case, the forestry sector has basically fallen flat. There are a whole bunch of problems, and I will argue that some of them are in our control and some are not. But the ones that are in our control, the issues that we could do in order to assist the forestry sector to restructure, are not being done by this government. The government has taken the position that they are going to pursue a laissez-faire economic strategy, and whatever happens at the end, when it comes to the forestry sector and how things shake down, is just naturally the way things have to go.

**1040**

This motion basically contradicts that, and that's why I want to support this as a second point. I truly believe, because it's been done before, that many of the mill closures that we've seen in northern Ontario, in places like Opatatika, Smooth Rock Falls, Timmins, Thunder Bay—and the list goes on—could have been averted and completely stopped if the government had chosen to be a little bit more co-operative in its work with those northern communities to find solutions.

Are there tough challenges? The answer is yes. There's no question there are things happening in the industry that make it very challenging for the industry to stay viable. But are there things that we can do provincially to help overcome those difficulties? The answer to that is yes. That is why many people in northern Ontario are as mad as heck at the McGuinty government, and specifically Mr. Ramsay, for not rising to the challenge of working with communities.

I want to use a couple of examples. The first one is Opatatika. Opatatika had a sawmill that was owned by Tembec, which operated with about 100 people all told, management and staff. In a small community of 900 people, when the only employer in town shuts down, it's a pretty tough thing to take. Here's the irony. This particular sawmill was making money, but from a corporate perspective, the company that owns it, Tembec, said—and I'll just make up a number—"We have 10 sawmills. If we can make the same amount or more by operating with eight or seven sawmills, our shareholders will get more money."

I understand why Frank Dottori and the board of Tembec made the decision to shut down Kirkland Lake, Chapleau and Opatatika. I don't support it, but I understand it. From a business perspective, they said, "If the government is willing to allow us to take the timber that is normally allocated to these mills, move it somewhere else and have larger supermills, we can make more money, and we will do that." The government was complicit in that decision.

If the government of the day, in this case the McGuinty government and the Minister of Natural Resources, Mr. Ramsay, had only said, "Tembec, we understand you're having a tough time. You want to close down Kirkland Lake, Chapleau and Opatatika, fine. That's a corporate decision that you have to make. We're telling you two things: We're prepared to work with you to keep them open, but if you ultimately decide to close them, by the way, the rights on the wood are not going to get transferred. It belongs to the community." That's a co-operative model that we should be following. If the government, Mr. Ramsay and Mr. McGuinty, had done that, I guarantee you that Opatatika, Kirkland Lake and Chapleau would not have shut down, because they were profitable mills. It was a question of how much profit and how much money the corporation wants to make—which speaks to this motion.

We understand. I'm not going to stand here as a New Democrat and say, "Oh, the private sector is bad, and

these corporations are evil." That's not the point. They march to a different drummer. They march to the instructions of their shareholders, the people on the board. They're there to maximize return on investment. That's what drives them. But that may not necessarily be good for the people who live in our communities, especially in small-town Ontario.

When you have large, multinational companies or, in some cases, large Canadian companies that are making decisions that are going to affect the wherewithal when it comes to the economics of a community in a negative way, as we did with Opatatika, I argue that it is the responsibility of the government of Ontario to step in and say, "That's fine. You want to make a corporate decision to close down, that's your decision. We can't stop you. But there are some things we're going to do, and one of them is"—in that case, the government should have said, "We will not allow you to take the wood from the Opatatika mill, the Chapleau mill and the Kirkland Lake mill and transfer it to other mills within your operation so you can maximize return." I will tell you, if we had done that, they would never have shut those mills down, or they would have sold them off and we would have been able to spin them off into a new company, and those people would still be working.

This motion speaks to that to a degree, because what you're saying in your motion is what we've been calling for for a long time for northern Ontario—not just Gilles Bisson and Howard Hampton as New Democrats but community leaders, Liberals and Conservatives alike, who say, "We need to have the government be there as a player when these decisions are made by corporations that are going to impact negatively on our communities, to have the wherewithal within the government to do the things that have to be done to save them."

Another example is the community of Smooth Rock Falls. I've got to say, it's heart-wrenching. We've had an employer in that town—originally it was Abitibi that was there for years. It's a kraft mill, about 700 tonnes a day, employees, with staff, about 300-odd people, and ancillary jobs, probably 400. The only employer in town—gone, closed. Again, it's a question of the company saying, "We can't make enough money." In the case of Smooth Rock Falls, depending on who you talk to, some corporate people would say, "Oh, we're losing money," but then when you talk to them privately it was, "Well, we're not making cash. We're not losing money, but we're not making as much money as we need, and we need cash to pay off our debts. We see this as a drain because we have to make investments in that mill, and we're not going to use the cash to invest in that mill to keep it going."

If the government of the day—in this case Mr. Ramsay and Mr. McGuinty—had rolled up their sleeves and done what this member calls for, which is to have a co-operative approach to how we deal with that for Smooth Rock Falls, the mayor—at that time it was Réjeanne Demeules—and her council, the local union, the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union, the com-

munity economic development people and others could have sat down with Tembec to figure out how we rise to the challenge of keeping that mill open.

But at the end of the day, if Tembec still made the decision that, "We're going to close," as they did, the government had to be in a position to say, "All right, you've made a corporate decision. We need to make a public decision, and that decision is, all of the wood allocations to that mill are going nowhere else but to that mill. We're going to make it known that if anyone wants to buy this mill, the chips that are allocated to that mill from trees that are cut in different forests, which are allocated by minister's directive, will still be available to that mill. We are not going to allow you to spin off the hydroelectric dam on that river."

Imagine if Tembec decides to spin off the dam or go into the energy business themselves. They will be effectively taking one of the natural resources of that community, which is cheap electrical power, away from the possibility of keeping that mill open. We all know what electricity costs in the province. There's a dam sitting there that has specifically been built in order to furnish electricity to that mill, and if the government allows Tembec—and my suspicion is that they will, in the end—to either keep selling electricity into the grid at a premium, because the price of electricity is high, or to spin it off in some way, you're effectively closing the door on the possibility of that mill reopening.

I'm saying this publicly, and I know Tembec will read this and they'll get mad at me, but I'm here to represent the people who live in my community. I say it here: If, at the end of the day, we were to go to Tembec and say, "There are environmental considerations to the decommissioning of that mill. We are going to go through it with a fine-toothed comb and, Tembec, if you want to close down, there's going to be a cost of closure," it would set the conditions such that the company would have to make a decision. They would have to be much more co-operative in their approach to the community, the workers and the province, and say, "Okay, we're going to close down because we don't have any money, but we're not going to stand in the way of transferring this mill over to somebody else and allowing somebody else to buy it."

Is it possible? You're tootin' right it's possible. We did it before. I remember Kapuskasing, just up the highway, an hour's drive from Smooth Rock Falls, in 1992. The owner of that mill at that date was making a similar decision. He was going to idle two of the paper machines on that mill and bring it down to what they called the Darwin plan. It would have put hundreds of people out of work. It would have decimated the community of Kapuskasing. But at the end of the day, the community, the union and the government of the day—the New Democrats, in that case—positioned the company in such a way that they had to sell the mill at a reasonable rate to the workers. The workers effectively took control of that mill. As it turned out, Tembec ended up becoming the newly created company as a result of those actions.

But it was because the government was prepared to be a player. It was because, when the community came to the government and said, "We don't accept the mill closure in our community; it is our only employer in town"—it would be like walking into Oshawa and saying, "All of the car plants are closing down," and the government saying, "Oh well, that's laissez-faire economics. Whatever happens, happens." We didn't accept that, and as a result we restructured it, the employees took it over, they ran the company and for 10 years were quite successful and are still making money today. We did it in Atikokan; we did it in Thunder Bay; we did it in Sault Ste. Marie on two occasions—at Algoma Steel and at St. Marys Paper; and with the Algoma Central Railway we did a different thing. It wasn't worker ownership, but that a different issue.

My point is, the member is right. We can use the office of government—or the instrument of government, I should say—in a way that is positive for the people we represent. And government, at the end of the day, must always do what is right, not only for the shareholders of the company, because we have to be mindful of that, but ultimately for the people who live in the community. When the shareholders' principles and values get in the way and hurt a community and its members, that's where government has to stand and say, "Enough of that game."

I want to just digress a little bit to the other part of this, which is economic development, because that's really what this is all about. I was absolutely shocked when I set up a meeting with a company in Hearst called LacWood. LacWood has a state-of-the-art plant where they make furniture for Ikea. They make shelving units for Ikea, and that's their customer.

We had a meeting with Ikea where they were asking, "What kinds of things can the government do to help us expand and look at new markets, all of that kind of stuff?" I said, "Let's set up a meeting with economic development and trade." I was astounded, when we sat down with economic development and trade, to see that they didn't have programs to support employers like that to be able to expand their markets. There was nobody within the ministry to look at what markets are out there and what is possible as far as value-added products in northern Ontario. They just didn't do it. Their strategy, they told us, was the big automakers. That was their whole strategy. I say, that's great for the auto sector; that's wonderful. I think the auto sector should get all the support it wants. But darn it, there are a hell of a lot more people in this economy than just the auto sector. Forestry is one of the most important industries in Ontario, not just northern Ontario. It's one of the largest exporters. As far as our GDP, it's one of the biggest players in our economy. So I was shocked to see that the ministry did not have people working there who are at the disposal of entrepreneurs wanting to do value-added projects in northern Ontario and helping them identify where the markets are.

**1050**

Clearly, part of the problem we have with value-added, amongst others, is that somebody is going to have

a great idea to transform a piece of wood or a rock or whatever into some value-added product, somebody who knows how to do it well and is probably very good at managing their business, but what they don't have many times is the ability to identify where they're going to sell their product. It seems to me that this motion would, to a certain extent, advance that, that at least we could put people in place at economic development and trade to say, "Hang on, LacWood. We're going to work with you and see where there are other markets that you can sell your product so that you can grow and expand or so that maybe somebody else can get into the business." That's how you grow an economy.

The one thing I want to end on is that what really disappoints me with this government, above all, is their approach to how they've dealt with economic development and forestry in northern Ontario. The Premier has said it. Basically, the long and the short of his debate, if you close your eyes and listen carefully—he sounds like Mike Harris—he's saying, "It's laissez-faire economics. At the end of the day, what happens is going to happen." For us in northern Ontario, that's a non-starter.

So I will support this, along with other New Democrats. We think it's a step in the right direction. I'm glad we at least convinced somebody to do the right thing. He has convinced himself; I won't take the credit for that, because obviously this is something he cares about. But when a member of the government is prepared to stand up and say, "We're going to do something positive," I think it's incumbent upon us in the opposition to support it and give it our wholehearted support.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** It's a pleasure for me to take a few minutes to get on the record and support the resolution this morning from my colleague the member from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot.

Mr. McMeekin is a man who certainly employs the spirit of co-operation in his role as an MPP. I had the opportunity to be in his riding a few short weeks ago, an opportunity to discuss another issue related to source water protection. What struck me that morning, being with Mr. McMeekin and his friends, was the co-operation, bringing together people to deal with an issue, to discuss an issue and, ultimately, to come up with some ideas that might make the topic we were discussing that day—source water protection—more effective, more meaningful and more practical for a group that would be dealing with that issue. That's the co-operative spirit that Mr. McMeekin brings as an MPP in representing his riding so very well.

I just want to have an opportunity to reflect on some of the comments in this very fine document. It's a white paper on co-operative development in Ontario. The second paragraph down says, "While it is a highly effective type of business enterprise, a co-operative is different from other business models. Formed by its members to meet their specific needs, a co-operative, by its very structure, has social and public policy goals in addition to financial goals. For a co-op, there is always more than one bottom line." I think that's a very important philosophical underpinning for co-ops in Ontario.

On page 2 it says, "Public/co-operative partnerships can be an effective alternative social services delivery model, helping government to maximize returns on precious taxpayer dollars"—and I know the member is always concerned about getting a return from our precious taxpayer dollars. "In health and housing, for instance, studies show that co-operatives can deliver services at a lower cost than the private sector. Ontario co-operatives are also active in a number of other areas that are ripe for public partnership, including home care, child care, elder care, education, renewable energy, aboriginal business, rural development and sustainability, community economic development, and financial services in small communities."

I'll just talk for a moment about a real-life example from my community in Peterborough. In 1960 there were 4,800 employees at Canadian General Electric in Peterborough. Many of them, just post-war, were young families wanting to build new homes, wanting to renovate existing homes, perhaps take out a loan to buy that first new car. At that time, they looked at the chartered banks that were charging interest rates which for some of them were difficult to meet. So they formed a credit union in Peterborough called Cangeco, which, when you look at that, is the short form of Canadian General Electric Co. They put together this Cangeco Credit Union in 1960. It was an opportunity for just ordinary workers to sit on the board. It was an opportunity for just ordinary workers to learn about board governance. It was about opportunities for ordinary workers to develop operating policies. Those skills that were learned in those early days in the 1960s—learning about how to operate on a board, how to establish operating policies, how to market a product to employees—were really a learning experience for those individuals, who took those skills back into the General Electric plant and used them to further advance their career at GE. They also took those skills and were able to apply them to organizations outside the working environment, those organizations in a community where those skills to sit on volunteer boards are really required.

Under that, Cangeco existed until the 1980s, when it went larger than just serving Canadian General Electric employees and went to the broader public. It developed into what it is today, Kawartha Credit Union, with several branches throughout east-central Ontario. I know there's one in Lindsay, and there are several other branches serving east-central Ontario. It's certainly an opportunity to provide loans and other services that have that individual kind of personal service that people sometimes don't get in the large multinational corporations and the large banks.

There's also a personal connection to this. My wife's grandfather, Emmett McGerrity, worked for the United Co-operatives of Ontario for many years. I'm sorry my friend from Durham isn't here this morning. My wife's grandfather actually set up the United Co-operative in Ontario, which indeed is in the riding of my friend from Durham.

Another local example I'd like to talk about was the Greenhill co-op, which established itself in Peterborough right after the Second World War. It was an opportunity for a group of citizens to come forward where they would make a pledge: after they had spent their daytime hours working in various manufacturers in Peterborough, they would sign on to build homes. So every evening, after they finished their day's work, they would spend many hours building homes, and again on the weekends. The Greenhill co-op was a subdivision of about 30 homes. It took about five or six years to completely build that subdivision, but it was done on the co-operative basis, and after six years, 25 to 30 families indeed had their homes.

So this is a motion that needs our support. I commend the member for bringing it forward today.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr. McMeekin, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. McMeekin:** I want to thank the members from Halton, Peterborough, Davenport and Timmins–James Bay for their assistance this morning.

The whole co-operative economic movement is a community-based movement that calls for the investment of time and energy and resources, where people literally attempt to achieve together what they are unlikely, perhaps, to be able to achieve apart. It's my sense, as a government and as a member of this people's place, that we ought to be unabashed partisans of that kind of entrepreneurial pioneer spirit. When communities want to come together to achieve what they can't achieve apart, I think we need to celebrate that. We need to find whatever ways we can to help them pool their expertise, to acquire the added value that so often can be clearly shown to come in the whole fair trade movement, in some of the eco-friendly, cutting-edge technologies, and to stand with our First Nations in our isolated rural communities, as the member from Timmins–James Bay alluded to. I think that's really important work. We need to find creative ways to do that. To be useful at all on a good day, the government has to find ways to do that. We ought not to be in any way ashamed of that.

**1100**

I'm proud of the folks who are involved in the Ontario Co-operative Association, who every day get up and work hard at building stronger, healthier, more caring and compassionate communities, and of the students who come and do work at my office to help us pull this together. We need this. We need ways to stickhandle important issues between ministries. The minister is onsite. I say, let's get on with it.

#### WEARING OF HELMETS

**Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario:

Recognize the safety benefits of wearing an approved helmet by those using bicycles, in-line skates, skateboards, scooters and similar devices;

Acknowledge that the original intent of legislative changes made by this Legislature to Ontario's Highway

Traffic Act in 1993 was that all cyclists should wear an approved helmet regardless of age;

Make helmet use mandatory for all cyclists in Ontario by repealing the regulation which exempts cyclists over the age of 18 from these legislative changes;

Explore legislative measures to make helmet use mandatory for those using other muscular-powered devices such as in-line skates, skateboards and scooters;

Take into account those who cannot wear a helmet because to do so would interfere with his or her religious beliefs or practices;

Instruct the Ministry of Health Promotion, in conjunction with the Ministry of Transportation and other relevant ministries and stakeholders, to develop a comprehensive education and safety campaign aimed at encouraging helmet use by those using bicycles, in-line skates, skateboards, scooters and similar devices; and

Ensure that any safety campaign also address broader safety issues related to bicycles, in-line skates, skateboards, scooters and similar devices, including the role and responsibility of communities in ensuring the safety of all those using such devices, as well as the special responsibility of motorists to ensure the safety of cyclists and others on our roadways.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Milloy has moved private member's notice of motion number 24. Pursuant to standing order 96, Mr. Milloy, you have up to 10 minutes. The floor is yours.

**Mr. Milloy:** I acknowledge from the outset the length of my motion that's presented here today. What I'd like to do is maybe boil it down to one sentence, and that is asking this House, through this motion, to acknowledge the fact that wearing a properly worn helmet that meets safety requirements can reduce injuries and even save lives in Ontario.

I think this a proposition that most of us in the House understand. There has been extensive scientific research done by leading experts in the field. At the same time, I think all of us would acknowledge that sometimes what speaks louder than data is the experience of individuals, of people who have been involved in serious accidents and, because they were wearing a helmet, were able to avoid death or avoid an injury that might have been much more serious.

Today I'm very honoured to have a number of proponents here at Queen's Park who represent both of these propositions: those who have done data and research studies as well as those who have experienced tragic falls.

As you can see, I have a great group here on both sides of the House. So with time limitations, I'd just like to acknowledge a handful: first of all, Dr. Charles Tator, head of ThinkFirst Foundation of Canada and one of Canada's leading neurosurgeons, who spoke eloquently this morning about the scientific and medical reasons for wearing helmets; also Dr. Alison Macpherson, a researcher at York University who has written extensively on this topic.

I'd also like to acknowledge a number of survivors who this morning shared their stories with great courage:

April Ferguson, a young woman who experienced an accident several years ago; Barrie Faulkner, a gentleman who experienced an accident just over a year ago; and Shelley Gauthier, who was involved in an accident in 2001—all of them bicycling accidents. The fact that they were wearing helmets, all of them stated very clearly today, is the reason they're alive.

The data are clear. Studies have shown that wearing a helmet can lessen the likelihood of a head injury by 85% and a brain injury by up to 88%. Although in a sense we're here today to talk about helmets, I'd also argue that we're here today to talk about human nature, that unfortunate belief we all have that we're somehow a little immortal, that all of us are a little too lucky or too smart or too fortunate to be involved in an accident. Yet we all know that isn't the case. The simple fact is that it could happen to any of us, and the results could be disastrous.

This Legislature, as the motion points out, made a very important first step in 1993. It passed a motion that was put forward by former MPP Dianne Cunningham from the London area. What that bill said was that everyone in Ontario who's riding a bicycle should have to wear a helmet. One of the strange twists of fate: The government brought forward regulations to enforce the provisions of that bill, and in those regulations exempted everyone over the age of 18. So in effect, the law as it stands in Ontario only deals with children and youth.

Don't get me wrong: This was an important first step, and studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of this law in reducing brain injuries and head injuries for children. But at the same time, studies have shown that it hasn't had a similar effect on adults, who don't have to wear helmets. In fact, a recent study by Dr. Macpherson, whom I just mentioned, showed that the rate of adults who are going to our emergency departments with head injuries as a result of cycling accidents is in fact on the increase. So only half of our work is done, and I think there's an obligation on this Legislature and on this government to continue it by making sure that all cyclists in the province have to wear helmets. Accidents don't discriminate on the basis of age. I'm not sure why our laws should.

There's something more than just the safety of adults. There's the fact that adults serve as examples to children, especially their own children. There's also the simple fact of stating the values of our society. If we believe that safety is important, if we believe that all of us have an obligation to take reasonable measures to ensure our safety, then enshrining that in law is a statement of our values and helps when we're educating all people, especially young people.

Mr. Speaker, as you may be aware—I believe you were in the chair—a little over two years ago I brought forward a private member's bill, Bill 129, which asked the government to enshrine obligatory helmet use, for cyclists and also for in-line skates and skateboards, in law. That bill passed second reading and languished on the order paper, as so many do. But at the same time, there were some technical problems that were brought to

my attention about its relationship to the Highway Traffic Act and scope and so forth. So what I've decided to do today is bring forward a motion as opposed to a bill. What this motion would do is address these issues in a broader way and put the onus on the government, in a sense, to deal with some of the technical matters.

First, I'm calling upon the government to remove this exemption that exists in regulation and make it mandatory for all cyclists to wear helmets.

Second, I'm asking them to explore the possibility of legislating mandatory helmet use for other, similar devices such as skateboards, rollerblades and scooters. Here again, the statistics bear out the need for this sort of legislation. I checked in a recent year, I think it was a year or two ago, and there were 8,000 young people brought to Ontario's emergency departments with emergencies from this type of activity, and of those, over 1,000 had head injuries—certainly a call for some action in this area.

#### 1110

The final part of the motion that I presented today deals with the whole issue of education. One thing I've discovered over the last two years in my discussions with various groups and organizations that have supported this bill and been involved in cycling is that helmet use has to be seen as part of a larger picture. The simple fact is that we all have to ensure that we have safety on our roadways, that we have safety when we're cycling, when we're rollerblading, when we're skateboarding. That involves helmets, but it also involves making motorists aware of their obligations, making everyone aware of their obligations to follow the laws of the land when it comes to the Highway Traffic Act and other provisions and bylaws. So what the final part of my motion does is call on the government to educate people, first about the important need for helmets when you are involved in these activities, but second of all, about their obligations and responsibilities to move forward.

Specifically, I have asked that the Ministry of Health Promotion, which has a great interest in accident prevention, take leadership on this, along with the Ministry of Transportation. I believe that for a law to be effective, individuals have to understand the reasoning behind it. At the same time, I believe that for an education campaign to be important, it has to have a bit of teeth that the type of legal imperative we're calling for today would give it.

I think the combination of legislation and education will go a long way to creating the type of society where none of us will get on a bicycle or put on a pair of rollerblades or a skateboard without wearing a helmet automatically. All of us know about the experience of seat belts. I'm old enough, unfortunately, to remember a time when seat belts weren't mandatory in the province and certainly not many people wore them. Now we drive 20 feet in a parking lot and it's automatic. So the hope of this motion is to create this sort of culture of safety, because at the end, it's about the individual.

It's about people like April Ferguson, who spoke today in very courageous terms about how she was setting

out a few weeks before her wedding and was involved in a serious accident, but because she wore a helmet, she was here today to tell the story. It's about Barrie Faulkner, a gentleman who was riding on a very quiet road in his community, one where he said there's hardly any traffic, and due to a mishap, he was involved in a crash involving his head. He was thought for the first few minutes to be dead. In fact, he survived and is making tremendous progress. As he spoke this morning at the press conference, it was because he was wearing a helmet. It's people like Shelley Gauthier, who was also here with us today at Queen's Park, who was involved in an accident on a bike trail and, again, because she was wearing a helmet, she's here today to share her story with us.

That's what it's about: It's about the personal stories, as well as the survivors and the people I've brought forward today. I also have representatives of numerous groups who work with people who have had brain injuries—safety advocates—and they can tell you of countless situations and countless instances where people have been spared tragedy because they've been wearing a helmet; and unfortunately the inverse, where tragedy has struck families, has struck individuals because people weren't wearing a helmet.

I was at a recent conference and, at the end of the day, someone stood up and very passionately spoke out saying, "It's only a helmet." And it is only a helmet. It's a small thing to ask to make people safe, to make sure that our province moves forward as a place where safety is paramount.

*Interruption.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would ask our guests to remain quiet but enjoy the proceedings. Further debate?

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** I certainly do appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the debate brought forward this morning, to speak to the motion from the member for Kitchener Centre which focuses on the importance of the issue of approved safety helmets for cyclists, in-line skaters, skateboarders, scooters and similar devices. We support the intent of the resolution brought forward by my colleague from Kitchener Centre and especially the development of this comprehensive education and safety campaign aspect of the resolution.

I welcome the members from the gallery, too. Your enthusiasm is great. We just have some rules in here where you can't applaud, but we appreciate your enthusiasm and all the contributions you've certainly made to the development of this resolution. Especially, a thank you to the survivors, who experienced it first-hand and saw something they could do so it didn't happen to other people. So I appreciate the contributions and the time you have given the member for Kitchener Centre.

As it currently exists, people 18 and under are required to wear safety helmets and adults are encouraged to consider wearing helmets, so the education aspect of this resolution is very important. With the younger generation, with my nieces, when we go horseback riding,

sometimes I don't necessarily reach for my helmet first thing. Theirs are on, and they tell me that I can't go out unless I put my helmet on. So the younger generation is getting some form of education and they share it with the older group—as I say, myself.

It has been mentioned, and I also want to mention, that the PC member of provincial Parliament Dianne Cunningham should be recognized and credited for bringing in the Ontario helmets law through her private member's bill many years ago when she was a member of the third party of this Legislature. I want to thank her for her past work. It makes good sense. I recognize the member for putting forward that we should be enhancing this, especially the education aspect.

Head injury does not discriminate on the basis of age. When we see the police reports we get on our computers and if there's been a cyclist accident with a van or some accident, it's usually people over 18 who have been involved in those accidents, whether cycling to work or not.

The member mentioned the need to work with different ministries, the Ministry of Health Promotion "in conjunction with the Ministry of Transportation and other ministries and stakeholders to develop a comprehensive education and safety campaign aimed at encouraging helmet use by those using bicycles, in-line skates, skateboarders, scooters and similar devices."

British Columbia, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island have legislation requiring all cyclists to wear helmets. There is some research here that says a properly fitted helmet helps protect the head by absorbing the force from a crash or a fall and decreases the risk of serious head injury by as much as 85% and brain injury by as much as 88%. Brain injury is the most common cause of death among cyclists, skateboarders etc. Approximately 50% of cycling injuries involve adults. Only 42% of cyclists in Toronto wear a helmet. That's surprising to me, but that's educating us as we discuss this private member's resolution this morning. A survey in 2002 by Safe Kids Canada found that 79% of Canadian parents support helmet legislation for both adults and children.

In my other profession, before I entered the Legislature, I spent over 20 years being a registered nurse in various settings, but a good portion was in intensive care in Lindsay at Ross Memorial Hospital. In the riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, in all its aspects, more and more cyclists are seen up there as more people are encouraged and as more trails are developed. I've seen countless people come in with head injuries from their different sports—just an accident that happened. You don't plan for accidents, but it's the type of thing where you should plan for the worst and hope for the best. It's a sad thing that these patients suffered injuries that could have been prevented if they had been wearing a safety helmet.

It mentions the seat belt law when it first came in, the restrictions and the pushback on that, and now it's such a reflex, as the member mentioned. You put it on in the parking lot before you leave to go onto the road. That

type of education campaign is what we need. I just got a police report in from Durham about an accident that happened yesterday with a cyclist and a van and the injuries that occurred.

It's also important to note that in many cases where injuries occur it's not because of anything wrong, where the victim wasn't paying attention. It happens: busy lives, we're in our cars, things happen.

It's interesting and somewhat ironic how often I see in-line skaters, cyclists and skateboarders wearing all the protective gear besides the helmets: the elbow pads, the kneepads and wrist protectors. Sometimes you see all the gear on the lower parts of the body and they miss the helmet. Sometimes they're not thinking. That is going back to the education component.

**1120**

Every jurisdiction where this type of legislation exists has shown a reduction in serious head injuries in children, young people and adults. Anything we can do to keep Ontarians safer, we need to consider in this Legislature and to educate as many people as we can. It's important that we strike the proper balance that ensures safety but also limits the level of government intrusion in people's lives. You do hear of some pushback.

We got an e-mail from a gentleman in British Columbia, where the law is in but is enforced arbitrarily. He's saying that it depends where you are. In Victoria, it's enforced. The cruisers were pulling him over. He didn't know why the cruisers were pulling him over. It was because he wasn't wearing a helmet. In Vancouver, it's not enforced as strictly. A key part is how we're going to enforce it. Will it be enforced equally across the province? All these things need to be considered.

We're hoping this moves forward. I know it was brought forward before. What's the next stage? Let's get it to committee. Let's get some feedback. How can we equally enforce it across the province? As I said, some examples have come in. Member from Kitchener Centre, we're getting examples from British Columbia, so people are paying attention all across Canada to your resolution here this morning. When you said "a culture of safety," it's an appropriate phrase to use. The how-to is always a hard question, but we can all work together on it, and I'm sure we will.

I appreciate the opportunity of speaking to this bill this morning. Another of my colleagues would like to speak to it later too. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I appreciate the opportunity to support our colleague from Kitchener Centre in terms of the helmet law. The member's motion, while significant and long, essentially boils down to the fact that we should make helmet use mandatory for all cyclists in Ontario. I know that probably most of us will support this legislation and this motion.

How many bicycle-related injuries are there in Ontario? I was astonished when I looked at the specifics of how many injuries there are and how many times our emergency department has to respond to these injuries. In Ontario alone in the past three years—get this—there

have been 27,898 emergency department visits. Wow, imagine that: 27,898. That's a massive amount, massive numbers of people who have to go to the emergency department and be treated because of accidents.

Do these injuries impact our community? Mr. Milloy gave us a very interesting fact sheet from which I shall read. According to ThinkFirst Canada, he says, each catastrophic head and spinal cord injury costs approximately \$4 million to \$8 million for health care, rehabilitation and lost earnings over a lifetime. Wow. Again, these are massive numbers: \$4 million to \$8 million for health care, rehabilitation and lost earnings for each case.

In my riding of Davenport, on Springhurst Avenue—I live on Springhurst Avenue—there is a group home. I've lived there for over 35 years. I've walked and cycled many times on Springhurst Avenue, and I see the results of these kinds of accidents. It is sometimes tragic to see people in wheelchairs and people who are trying to walk with a cane and with other equipment. Sometimes I even see people with two others trying to help them to take the first steps out of the home. When you see this kind of image in front of you, then you know something should be done, not just to protect and interfere with people's lives but to protect our citizens. So this helmet law, this regulation, must be changed and must be supported.

On a personal note, I want to tell you what happened to me. I was having my bike out with my girlfriend a few years ago and we rode down to Lakeshore. My house is very close to Lakeshore Boulevard. While I was looking to the left, I saw a car on the corner trying to make a right-hand turn. Because the traffic comes this way, the car driver was not interested in who was on his right. There were two bicycles almost parked next to the car: mine and my girlfriend's. While he was interested in looking to the left because of the traffic coming this way, he was not looking to the bicycles at all. He had no interest in looking to the right, where I and my girlfriend were standing. Consequently, as soon as he had a chance, he pulled the car over and turned right without looking, and he drove over—I just had a chance to pull my bicycle back. My girlfriend was to my left, and unfortunately she was caught. The tire of the car drove over her front tire and she was smashed, along with her bicycle, to the ground. Luckily, she wore a helmet, and hit her helmet against my pedal bar that was pulled back.

If she had not worn a helmet, we don't know what would have happened. The bicycle, of course, had to be replaced, and she had a few scratches. She came away with a fear of riding a bike again. But this, to me, showed that it is obvious what we have to do: We have to wear helmets.

I was the first one, being right in front of this kind of an accident, who from then on always wore a helmet. It is very clear that it is very important that this helmet law be passed.

There are other jurisdictions that have helmet laws in place. There is British Columbia, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and the fines are not very high, apparently, if you're caught without a helmet. The

fine in British Columbia is only \$29; in Nova Scotia, \$25. PEI has the highest fine, between \$50 and \$100. I would say that these other jurisdictions also have had experience and also know about some of these very tragic incidents.

I'm therefore delighted to lend my support to this most important motion by my colleague from Kitchener Centre.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** First of all, I want to say I'm happy to rise and speak in favour of the resolution from the member for Kitchener Centre. But I want to tell the audience who are listening—first of all, I want to say, even though the Speaker doesn't want the audience to applaud, I appreciate the fact that from time to time there is somebody in the audience willing to applaud. So we very much appreciate that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It's not the Speaker. I enjoy their presence. It's the standing orders, you know.

**Mr. Hardeman:** I'm sure the only person really interested in seeing those enforced is the Speaker. But we do appreciate them being here.

I do want to say, as my presentation goes forward, that even though I support the resolution, I do have some concerns, not so much with the resolution as with the process.

Safe Kids Canada reports that a properly fitted helmet can reduce the risk of serious head injury by as much as 85% and brain injury by 88%. Obviously, anything we do that would reduce the negative impact of misfortune is a good thing. As a parent, I know the fear and concern you feel when you watch your child going where they could get hurt or hurt themselves. That feeling is there as a parent, but it doesn't disappear because the child gets to be 18. In fact, we still want our children protected even after they have children of their own. I was pleased to reach that point this past year where my children have children of their own.

At the same time, I think we need to be cautious how this process would be implemented. There was a reason why the bill that was introduced and passed on behalf of Dianne Cunningham, one of my colleagues a number of years ago, stopped at the age of 18 as opposed to being for everyone who was on a bicycle: Those who were most vulnerable, those who needed protecting the most, were the ones who might not be aware of the risk they were taking. That's why I think it was important that there was legislation put in place that forced them or imposed upon them that they had to wear a helmet.

**1130**

Having this law in place encouraged kids to do the right thing and protect themselves. It also helped parents get their kids to wear their helmets. Obviously, it's very easy for a parent to say, "You must put your helmet on," but unless there's some mandated reason, they might not do it. It gave the police the right to step in when they thought a child was being reckless by not wearing a helmet. At the same time, limiting the helmet law to those under 18 meant that it restricted the law from being something that could be implemented and enforced. When you look beyond the age of 18, it's going to be

much more difficult for the police. It's a greater group of people who are also more difficult to look after.

One of the dangers of making the law too broad is that it becomes too difficult to enforce. Our police forces are dedicated and work incredibly hard, but we all have to admit that they have limited resources. We also need to be cautious as to whether the government is over-legislating or over-regulating. That is always a concern of the general population.

Perhaps it makes sense that adult cyclists in downtown Toronto should be wearing a helmet during rush hour, as the risk obviously increases with the amount of traffic. But does it also make sense to force an adult cyclist on a quiet, smooth—and I use the word "smooth" lightly—road in Oxford county to also wear a helmet? On a Sunday afternoon, cycling down McBeth Road where I live, it's quite possible you could go cycling for an hour and not see another vehicle in that whole time. So does it make sense, on a hot Sunday afternoon, that we have a law that says they can't do that unless they have their helmet on?

In fact, it's not just my opinion. I did receive an e-mail yesterday on this resolution suggesting that—it came from Woodstock. I just want to quote from it: "As the vast majority of head injuries happen to other groups of people such as motorists and pedestrians, it's hypocritical of Mr. Milloy, not to mention discriminatory, not to include all groups of people in his helmet bill who could possibly suffer head injuries."

I'm not suggesting that that is the be-all and end-all, but there is a risk of head injury regardless of where you are. In a head-on collision in a car, we're obviously going to have a lot of head injuries. Does that mean we should all be wearing a helmet and a faceguard and force people to do that because we want to totally eliminate that risk? We need to ensure that we are striking a balance between protecting people and protecting their rights and freedoms.

In addition to expanding the helmet law for cyclists, this resolution also calls on the government to recognize the safety benefits of wearing helmets for those using in-line skates, skateboards, scooters and similar devices. Again, I support that approach. I also support the approach of having more education and training for people in those categories.

I want to say that I did visit one of our local schools, and one of the questions from a grade 5 student was, "How do we go about getting the government not to force us to wear helmets?" So it isn't necessarily everybody who supports putting such restrictions in place.

Lastly, I just want to very quickly cover the process that we find ourselves in here. I recognize the challenges the member introducing this bill faces, having introduced a bill prior to this that went to committee and was then never called out of committee. It becomes very easy here in private members' business for everyone to stand up and speak in favour of something and then see it go to committee and never called back because it's just private members' business. So I think I recognize the need to put

forward a resolution to try and direct the government to get on with doing something about this issue, but the present government—maybe it's other governments as well—hasn't been very active in taking up direction from resolutions passed by this House and getting on with doing them. I had one passed in this Legislature a number of months ago asking the government to do something; in fact, it was supported by a majority in this Legislature. So far, absolutely nothing has been done to deal with that subject.

So I hope that as this resolution—and I hope it will pass—proceeds through the process, the government will have a look at this and start dealing with the issue, particularly with the education part of it, to make sure that our people are protected as well as they can be on our roads, highways and byways, and that we can leave this place and say that we did everything we could to prevent further injury.

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** Two years ago, when Mr. Milloy last brought this topic up in private members' business, I stood in this House and I made probably what I consider to be the most difficult speech I have ever made in my entire life. I'm going to try today not to make it quite so difficult.

This is a bill, or actually a motion, that needs to pass. The difference between the motion today and the bill the last time—just to underline it for members of the House—is that this is a motion of the House requesting the cabinet and the minister to use the privileges that they have to simply change a regulation. It is not a bill. It's a very simple thing that is being asked here today and what I hope the minister and the cabinet will take to heart. It will not require hearings; it will not require committees; it will not require people to go out of their way within the government; it will simply take the will of the minister to go forward and do what is right.

I said it was a very difficult speech at that time, and it was. But I am also mindful that on that day two years ago, the last time this topic was broached, every single member from every single party in this House supported it. We all understand the necessity of having people wear helmets.

I, too, after the last speech, got phone calls. I, too, got e-mails and faxes of people who don't want to wear helmets. Some of them were quite abusive to me. I was really quite surprised, given the circumstances under which I spoke and the personal tragedy of my own family, that they would behave in that fashion. But I will tell you and I will tell them that there's no sense in sending me these e-mails and faxes and abusive phone calls. What is being proposed here must happen. It must happen if we are to save lives, and it must happen so that other families and other people do not have or meet the same end and the tragedy that befell us.

I am very saddened that nothing has happened over these last two years. I am very saddened, given the process, that Mr. Milloy has to come here again today and put this back before this House. He has explained to me, in only minor detail, because he obviously is a man

of great integrity, the member from Kitchener. He is a man of great integrity and won't tell me what transpired in his caucus or what transpired with the minister after this happened. But I'm given to understand through snippets that there is some problem and there was some problem in letting it go forward.

Now he's trying a new approach and, I believe, ultimately a much more successful approach. All this is going to do is take away the exemption that adults have not to wear a helmet. Right now, today, in the province, everyone has to wear a helmet, save and except an adult. That means every kid has to wear a helmet. But once you turn 18, somehow you're exempt from that. You're exempt from that, I guess, because you have, as the member from Oxford said, this sense that you have a freedom and you have your own responsibility, you can take charge of your own life, which you could not do a few months before, when you were only 17.

Well, here comes the difficult part. This is what happened to my family, to my brother. My brother was a very law-abiding man. I don't believe he was ever charged with any offence, even driving too fast. He did everything that the law required of him. When the law required that his children wear a helmet, his children wore a helmet. When he went out on the bicycle with them, they had a helmet and he did not—and he was an athletic guy. One day he hopped on a bicycle—it was the end of the summer, Labour Day weekend—and he did what he was supposed to do. He lived in the town of Brampton; his family still does. He didn't want to get in the car to go to the corner store because in Brampton, the corner store isn't on the corner; the corner store is literally miles away. He got on a bicycle and did not go on the road—I want the member from Oxford to understand this—he went on a bicycle path. The bicycle path was a couple of kilometres to the nearest store. He went on that bicycle path to pick up something and, en route—nobody knows what happened—on the bicycle path, not on the road, he fell off his bicycle. He was not wearing a helmet. He hit his head. Five days later, my sister-in-law made a very courageous decision and turned off life support. Five days after the accident, he died.

#### 1140

I believe with all my heart that, had he worn a helmet, he would be alive today. I believe with all my heart that the statistics that have been cited, 85% reduction in head injuries and 88% reduction in brain injuries, would have been enough to maintain his life. You see, when he died, he had no other injuries. He didn't have any other broken bones; no car hit him. All that happened was that he fell off the bicycle and hit his head, and he fell off the bicycle and hit his head without a helmet on.

I want to make sure that what happened to him does not happen to anyone else. I want to make sure that his death was not in vain and that perhaps by my telling this story here today, people will know how important it is.

I see adults every day on the streets of this city, I see adults every day when I'm outside of the city, sometimes on little country roads, riding along without a helmet on.

In every case I want to stop my car, if I'm in a car, or just to stop them—I don't do it, mind you, but I want to—and tell them the story of my brother. I want to tell them how wrong they are to do what they are doing without taking proper precautions. It did not take very much for this to happen. It did not take any horrific event. I am sure it was simply an accident.

The members have cited some statistics that I believe were provided by Mr. Milloy, and I believe them as well: 5,078 people in the last three years, the majority of those since the last time we debated this bill, have been treated for head injuries as a result of bicycle accidents. Almost all of them were adults.

I think it is the responsibility of all of us as Legislators to learn from what has happened before. Clearly, a generation ago there was a debate in this House about wearing seat belts. I remember that debate, although I was not a member of the Legislature, and people talking about their personal freedoms and how they didn't need to wear seat belts; that it was their right not to wear a seat belt, but if the law required for them to buckle up their children, they would buckle up their children, but, "I'm an adult and I don't need to do that." This Legislature wisely, at that time, rejected that notion. We said that all persons must wear a seat belt. I remember that in the months and years that followed, there was a whole hue and cry. I remember seeing bumper stickers and hearing people saying, "You can't legislate my safety." I remember seeing all of that stuff. Wisely, the government, the police and the courts rejected all of those statements. Wisely, today you can look at the statistics of automobile accidents and the number of people who die from not wearing seat belts. You will see that the number has gone way down because we enforce people to do it. We make them do it. We tell them it's good, and it is good. It has saved a huge number of lives in the same way that this motion, if passed and if the minister obeys what the House is telling the minister, will save the same number of lives.

Perhaps there is another analogy which is even better, and that is the whole use of hockey helmets. When I was a boy, nobody wore a hockey helmet. I don't remember a kid who had a hockey helmet. We all played hockey and shinny and stuff, I wasn't very good at it and still am not, but we all played without hockey helmets. Nobody wore them at all, and then people started to notice the number of head injuries that kids were having from not wearing hockey helmets. Wise people came forward and suggested that kids should be wearing these, and eventually you started to see the odd child here and there wearing a hockey helmet. Nothing really changed. Some kids wore them, some didn't, until a remarkable thing happened: You started to see some NHL players wearing hockey helmets. They were not required by law to wear the hockey helmets but they determined that it was in their best interests to put them on.

Once the NHL players started to put on hockey helmets, so did the kids. Once there was this role model in front of them when they turned on Saturday night hockey and saw half the team wearing a hockey helmet, their

friends could no longer say, "Hey, you're a sissy," or "Why are you wearing that?" or "Does your mother make you do it?" It was seen as something they could do without ridicule. I can't remember the last time I saw somebody skating on the ice without a helmet, but it was a good, long time ago. The NHL finally came to its senses and made the hockey players wear helmets, and all of the junior leagues made them wear helmets. Every kid today who plays hockey and every player, no matter where it is on up the road, wears one too.

The reason I'm telling this story about the hockey helmet is because children will emulate the response of adults. Children who see that adults are not wearing a helmet while they're on a bicycle, or hear a person who is 17 who says, "On the day that I'm 18, I don't have to do this anymore because I'm an adult," will change their minds. Or they will change their minds and they will do what is right and they will wear it. And the kids will grow to become accustomed to the fact that that is the way it is done. I believe that too.

I want to imprint on you again that this has been a very difficult speech for me. I hope I have made some sense. It has been a very difficult speech because of my brother Derek. I think back to all the things that he missed. I think back also, though, to what his family missed. I think back to the two kids and the wife whom he left. I think back to the difficulty they have had these many years in not having a father. They've grown up quite well. One has finished university and has her own business and the other is in university. My sister-in-law continues to work. But there is an emptiness that they have inside, and I can feel it, because I feel it myself. I feel it and know that we could have and should have done something about it.

I'm saying to the minister that when you get this motion—and I hope this passes today—have the courage of what it takes to simply do the right thing: End the exemption. You don't need anybody else's permission. You will know that this House, all members of this House and all parties in this House know that this is the right thing to do. Do not let the emptiness that still is within my family, do not let the emptiness that my parents share to this day, be visited on anyone else. It is a simple thing to do. For those naysayers, and I'm sure there are going to be some, who are going to send me e-mails and faxes and phone me and tell me I don't know what I'm talking about, I will remind them, and I did remind them, of what it means to me.

I salute Mr. Milloy for not giving up this fight. I commend him for taking the time to come back and look at why his last attempt did not pass and come at it from a different angle which, in the end, will leave it up to one person, and one group of people within the cabinet, to change a regulation. If we can change that regulation, if we can do what we need to do, we are going to save the lives of many, many people. But more importantly, we are going to set an example for children so that a generation from now, just like what happened in hockey, you will get on a bicycle, but before you do, you'll put on your helmet. You'll put that on when you're eight and

when you're 12 and when you're 15 and when you're 85. It won't matter whether you're in downtown Toronto in traffic or whether you're on a small country road. It only takes falling off that bicycle and one small accident to make a change forever. This bill, I hope, makes sure that all the changes that happen will be good ones.

**1150**

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** As I did two years ago, I certainly intend to support the motion from my colleague from Kitchener Centre.

There are very few times when there is absolute quiet in this House. But there was, indeed, two years ago when two members of this House had great courage to share very personal stories with us about the ramifications of having adults over 18 not wear helmets when they were cycling. The member from Beaches–East York two years ago chatted about the tragedy of his brother, and my colleague the Minister of Health Promotion talked about a very close friend who lost his life while cycling and not wearing a helmet.

To me, it should be a very easy thing for the Ministry of Transportation, our colleague Donna Cansfield and the executive council to change the regulations dealing with the wearing of helmets while cycling for those over 18.

I've had the opportunity to chat about this issue with the local brain injuries organization in my riding in Peterborough. Two years ago they certainly pressed me to support the private member's bill of my colleague, and I indicated, when I heard that the member from Kitchener Centre was going to bring this back again, that this morning I would support the resolution.

I listened carefully to my friend the member from Oxford talking about bicycling on a quiet back road in rural Ontario and not wearing a helmet. About a year and a half ago, I talked to the local OPP detachment in Peterborough. One of the things they talked about that day was not accidents related to cyclists but car accidents that happen on rural back roads in Ontario. There's often a false sense of well-being, when one is travelling on one of those back roads, that perhaps because of the idyllic conditions on an autumn day in rural Ontario, you're not paying attention to the road as well as you should be, as one's mind wanders off thinking about other things. Indeed, there are many serious vehicle accidents that happen on those quiet back roads, even for people cycling, where something happens right out of the blue and they find themselves injured.

I think it's important that we move forward today and pass this motion to put pressure on the Minister of Transportation and the executive council, to make sure that we bring in this motion for people over 18 to wear helmets while cycling. I just think it's the right thing to do. It will prevent a lot of injuries and a lot of hospital care. I think it's important that we move forward on this motion today.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland):** I'm delighted to stand today and support this motion from my good friend the member from Kitchener Centre.

We've heard stories that have been very touching and compelling, and they're all perfect. And I see the reasons

why this member is trying to deal with this motion, to move it forward, because of those particular reasons. But I'm going to put a little bit of a different spin on this. I'm going to focus a little bit on cycling, although I'm not a cyclist very much. Cycling has become very big in our communities these days. The use of bicycles has increased dramatically.

I was fortunate to be a member of a municipal council that was instrumental in putting in the waterfront trail that now spans from Niagara to the Kingston area, the Thousand Islands. It goes right in front of my house. I can tell you that many times, as I'm on my driveway, there are a number of cyclists who come down that bicycle path, a dedicated path that stretches across the north shore of Lake Ontario. I guess what I'm getting at is that there is more and more use of bicycles, and the more we use them, the more the percentage of injuries goes up, as we just heard, specifically head injuries.

As legislators, we need to think of that. We tend to always react when the statistics get way out of whack, and then we rush in and put in laws to try to fix it. But the unfortunate part of that is—

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe):** Prevention.

**Mr. Rinaldi:** We don't do enough prevention, whether it's health care or, in this case, to protect injuries from bicycles. We waited so long before we instituted seat belts in cars, and yet we knew for a fact that if a person was properly restrained in a vehicle, the opportunity for injury was very much reduced.

Sometimes we wonder why we wait so long to do certain things as legislators for the health and welfare of our communities. I know my friend from Kitchener Centre has made an attempt at this in the past. I'm sad to say that it hasn't progressed fast enough. But I hope, as we sit around here and debate this motion, we really see the importance of it, because an injury is not an injury until it happens. We can talk about it—"Maybe, maybe not. This could happen"—but when something happens, we always say, "It's too late. We should have done something."

I think we have to be a bit forward-thinking. I'm prepared and I hope the rest of the members of this House are prepared to support this, because I think it's—I'm not going to say that it's too late, but maybe we should have done it before. Let's do it now.

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):**

It's not normal that a minister speak at private members' hour, but I felt very strongly about Mr. Milloy's motion. As Mr. Leal pointed out, I too had a similar situation occur to me—obviously not a relative. I very much appreciate the member for Beaches–East York talking passionately about the loss in his life of a brother as a result of an accident when his brother was not wearing a helmet. I had a friend—in fact, ironically, Mr. Milloy knows this friend, Carl Gillis—who was in-line skating and not wearing a helmet, and he tragically died prematurely. That's why I'm here to support this motion, as I was here to support Mr. Milloy's private member's bill.

Our Ministry of Health Promotion is listed in the motion, and if this House does adopt this motion, I very

much look forward to working with Mr. Milloy and members of the injury prevention community throughout the province of Ontario to do what we can to better educate people about the importance of wearing helmets.

We know for a fact that a properly fitted helmet helps protect the head by absorbing force from a crash or a fall and decreases the risk of a serious head injury by as much as 85% and brain injury by as much as 88%.

I also want to commend all of the medical officers of health. I know our former medical officer of health in Ottawa, Dr. Rob Cushman, is a leading expert in the importance of wearing helmets while in-line skating, skateboarding and riding a bicycle.

We are in the process in our ministry of putting together an injury prevention strategy. This motion, if passed, would be an ideal complement to making sure that we get it right and that we reach out to those groups that are doing good work to see if we can help them do a better job of getting the word out about the importance of wearing a helmet.

I want to commend Mr. Milloy, the member for Kitchener Centre, for the work that he's done, the persistence in making sure that this issue stays alive, because we know that if more people wear helmets, particularly past the age of 18, more lives will be saved.

I want to commend Dianne Cunningham, the former member from London, who brought forward the motion in the first place. Let's continue the good work she's done by supporting this resolution of Mr. Milloy's in the memory of people like Mr. Prue's brother and my friend Carl Gillis.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr. Milloy, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Milloy:** I've appreciated the debate this morning in the Legislature. As I think I pointed out in my presentation, this motion is really about balance. It's about making sure that we have the type of legislation and regulation which makes people sit up and notice when it comes to issues of wearing helmets and, at the same time, that it's complemented with education and an education campaign that has real teeth.

I want to thank the speakers from all three parties who stood here today to speak in favour of the motion. Due to the brevity of time, I just want to comment on two speeches. The first is that of the Minister of Health Promotion, who is named in the motion put forward today in the sense that we are asking for a government education campaign. I just want to state my appreciation for his commitment here that, if passed, he will certainly make it part of health and safety campaigns that he's moving with in the future. The second person I want to pay particular tribute to, of course, is my friend from Beaches—East York. I want to congratulate him on his courage in coming forward to the Legislature and telling his personal story.

As I said at the beginning, data is important, research is important, but at the end of the day, it's the personal stories which I think convince all of us of the importance of helmet use in our province, and the fact that it can withstand so much and prevent so many tragedies. At the

same time—I see my time is running out—I do want to thank all the groups and organizations who have come forward to endorse my bill. The brain injury association in my own community of Waterloo—Wellington—I have to mention them specifically for the leadership that they have shown at home. They really encouraged me to move forward, and I was then able to connect with a large number of local organizations.

In closing, this motion does something very simple. It creates a culture of safety which hopefully is going to lead to a situation where no one in this province would get on a bicycle, go in-line skating or skateboarding without wearing a helmet. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

#### CO-OPERATIVES

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** We shall deal first with ballot item number 67, standing in the name of Mr. McMeekin.

Mr. McMeekin has moved private member's notice of motion number 33. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We will call in the members after dealing with the next ballot item.

#### WEARING OF HELMETS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** We shall now deal with ballot item number 68, standing in the name of Mr. Milloy.

Mr. Milloy has moved private member's notice of motion number 34. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

*The division bells rang from 1202 to 1207.*

#### CO-OPERATIVES

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. McMeekin has moved private member's notice of motion number 33. All those in favour, please stand and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Leal, Jeff	Ramal, Khalil
Arthurs, Wayne	Levac, Dave	Rinaldi, Lou
Barrett, Toby	Marsales, Judy	Runciman, Robert W.
Bisson, Gilles	Matthews, Deborah	Ruprecht, Tony
Bradley, James J.	McMeekin, Ted	Sandals, Liz
Brotten, Laurel C.	McNeely, Phil	Scott, Laurie
Brownell, Jim	Miller, Norm	Smitherman, George
Dhillon, Vic	Milloy, John	Van Bommel, Maria
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Mitchell, Carol	Watson, Jim
Fonseca, Peter	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wilkinson, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wilson, Jim
Horwath, Andrea	Parsons, Ernie	Zimmer, David
Jeffrey, Linda	Prue, Michael	
Kwinter, Monte	Racco, Mario G.	

**The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 40; the nays are 0.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been dealt with, I do now leave the chair. The House will resume at 1:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1210 to 1330.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### CONTAMINATED PROPERTY

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** I rise today to bring to the assembly's attention the lack of Ministry of the Environment action to deal with a big oil company's responsibility for the contamination of privately owned property and the impact the contamination has had on the lives of the owners and their family-operated business on the now polluted site.

My constituents Brent and Linda Carriveau discovered a gas leak on a property owned by Petro-Canada beside their restaurant west of Ottawa, at Silver Lake Provincial Park. The Carriveaus reported the contamination to the ministry six years ago, yet they've been left alone to fight with a large corporation to salvage their business. They have had to press ministry staff to visit the site to check neighbouring property, including the provincial park.

The Ministry of the Environment has never charged Petro-Canada for their irresponsibility and the damage incurred. They've effectively abandoned the Carriveaus to fight Petro-Canada on their own, and this big oil company with deep pockets is using every legal avenue available to delay a settlement and drive the Carriveaus to financial ruin. Last week, in a CTV news report, Mr. Carriveau was quoted saying, "We didn't have anything to do with this contamination, yet we're being left to fight this oil company on our own. It's like a mouse wrestling an elephant."

In this instance, the Ministry of the Environment has clearly neglected its responsibility. I call on the minister to get her officials involved and provide much-needed and -deserved support and assistance to the Carriveaus.

### EVENTS IN NORTH BAY

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** Mr. Speaker, as you know, Christmas is always a great time of year and always a great time in downtown North Bay.

Downtown North Bay was awash in lights and a happy glow a few weeks ago as the residents of North Bay celebrated our downtown Christmas walk. Thousands of people came downtown to see the great tree lit and enjoy the hospitality of our downtown merchants. On November 19, we had a huge Santa Claus parade, which was a great success as hundreds and hundreds of young

people enjoyed over a dozen floats that came down on a bright Sunday afternoon.

Our downtown North Bay boasts some wonderful merchants and some beautiful storefronts. I want to highlight but two this afternoon. On October 27, Mr. Ralph Diegel, the owner of Deegan's Shoes, celebrated his 80th birthday. As well, he celebrated 60 years of working in downtown North Bay in his business, which has been in operation since 1889—that's 117 years. On November 25, Gulliver's Quality Books and Toys celebrated 20 years of business in downtown North Bay. Suzanne Brooks and her staff have been providing the people of northeastern Ontario with a great literary hub, as she stocks great books, great children's books and toys, and brings some fabulous authors into our community.

These two merchants, together with countless others, make downtown North Bay a great place to shop and North Bay a great place to live. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Ralph and Suzanne, to wish all of our downtown merchants a successful holiday season, and to wish all the residents of Nipissing a very happy and safe holiday.

### MINISTRY SPENDING

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** I rise today and hold a copy of an invitation to a bash held on December 11, hosted by the Minister of the Environment, here in this Legislature. The party was to pat herself on the back for her avoidance-of-responsibility legislation disguised as the Clean Water Act. Interestingly enough, neither the NDP critic for the environment nor myself were formally invited, although I do have in my hands this piece of partisan swag in the form of a baseball cap which the minister was handing out to attendees before they went to the bar and got their free drinks. The minister is not only a paper environmentalist; she's now fully engulfed in the business of partisan swag.

In light of the Auditor General's report and the obvious disregard of taxpayers' money by the members across the way, who paid for the open bar and these hats?

Next Tuesday, the purchase of the Green Lane landfill site will be completed. Is the minister going to make the taxpayers pay for yet another party? Minister Broten and her colleagues think it's open season on hard-working taxpayers.

The minister promised to meet all of Justice O'Connor's recommendations. Nowhere in these recommendations does it say to establish a separate piece of legislation that downloads responsibility to rural Ontario and nowhere in these recommendations does it say to use taxpayers' money and throw a partisan party with an open bar and baseball caps.

I would think the minister knows not to be using taxpayers' money for the back-slapping, open-bar party she probably hosted this past Monday, but I assure you the official opposition will be checking, just to make sure.

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

## ONTARIO ARTISTS

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale–High Park):** I rise in the House today to acknowledge the professional artists and cultural workers who are unable under current legislation to improve their working conditions and livelihoods through collective bargaining, a right presently enjoyed by six million other Ontario workers.

During the 2003 provincial election campaign, the McGuinty Liberals promised to introduce status-of-the-artist legislation to improve the lives and incomes of Ontario's workers in the cultural sector. This promise was reiterated on May 15, 2006, by the Minister of Culture in her statement to the Legislature. Yet despite months of consultations, the Ontario government has failed to introduce legislation that would deliver improved minimum working conditions, enhanced economic and social benefits and collective bargaining rights.

Artists and cultural workers need protection for child performers, access to training and development programs and funds, income averaging and/or exclusion of certain incomes from provincial taxes, and protection for senior artists. Without these steps, the government will have failed all professional artists and cultural workers. They, and we, demand action now.

## MARILYN ALEX

**Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West):** I rise in the House today to pay tribute to a wonderful woman, Marilyn Alex, who will be truly missed by family, friends and the Hamilton arts community. Marilyn was tragically killed in a car accident last week.

I had known Marilyn from my first audition in 1978 to appear in the stage production of *Carousel* produced by Hamilton Theatre Inc. Marilyn was an inspirational choral director, mentor and friend to myself and all who loved music and theatre. She carried herself with dignity and was a gracious model to aspiring musicians, singers and actors. She was gifted with a wonderful full voice which could demonstrate tenderness and power to articulate any theatrical role.

Marilyn was well-known for her theatrical accomplishments. Her last performance was in a production at Drury Lane as Madame Armfeldt in *A Little Night Music*. She held many senior roles in theatre. She gave everything she had to her profession, always striving to be the best she could be.

She worked for Hamilton Police Service for over 20 years and Hamilton's CHML as a record librarian. She was the founding member of Hamilton Theatre Inc. and the Harlequin Singers. She was a member of Canadian Actors' Equity and ACTRA. She was a member of Choral Bells for over 50 years.

She is survived by her sons Adam and Timothy, two grandchildren and a brother and sister.

I am sure she is organizing a theatrical group of angels as we speak. I want to say thank you, Marilyn, for all you

have contributed towards making Hamilton a great city for music and theatre.

## REMOVAL OF CHRISTMAS TREE

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I'm calling on the Premier and the Attorney General to publicly denounce the decision by Justice Marion Cohen to order the removal of a Christmas tree from the lobby of the Ontario Court of Justice in Toronto. The reason cited was that, "It is a Christian symbol that alienates people of other creeds and traditions."

This is an act deeply offensive not only to Christians, for whom in fact the Christmas tree has an enduring religious significance; it is also offensive to the many Ontarians of diverse faiths and culture for whom it has become a symbol of this holiday season and in many ways is in fact symbolic of goodwill for all.

Here in this Legislature, we have commemorated the Muslim feasts of Eid-ul-Fitr, the Hindu feast of Diwali, and this week we will also be lighting a menorah in honour of Hanukkah.

If there is any place where the fundamental principles of religious freedom and affirmation of our diversity should be abundantly evident, it is in fact at the centre of our justice system. The action taken by this judge is contrary to our best-established traditions of celebrating diversity and of tolerance. I therefore call on the Attorney General to intervene and in fact to undertake to ensure that Ontarians are not only able to celebrate their faith and culture, but that it will also be protected and respected by our justice system.

1340

DURHAM COMMUNITY  
STRATEGIC PLAN

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge):** I rise in the House today to draw attention to the wonderful progress being made by the regional municipality of Durham in realizing the objectives outlined in the Durham community strategic plan. I recently received the third update report on the progress in the implementation of their six objectives, and I want to highlight just a few of the many noteworthy initiatives going on in Durham region.

The first one is in regard to transportation. They're making tremendous progress with the establishment of a region-wide transit system with a single ticket fare, giving the public more choice for travel. The Salem Road interchange on the 401 is being completed, the Stevenson Road interchange is well under way, and the widening of the 401 between the two interchanges is under way. That is as a result of co-operation with the province of Ontario. An environmental assessment is moving forward on the extension of the 407 eastbound.

On the environmental front, Durham is partnering with York region to develop an energy from waste facility, thereby reducing landfill and producing energy, if it all

gets approved. All of Durham now has the green bin kitchen food waste composting program, so wet waste is no longer going to a landfill.

On the safety and health front, they are making progress with increased seniors' beds in regional facilities as a result of the rebuild of Lakeview Manor, and a second facility, Hillsdale Terraces.

On the economy, the Durham Strategic Energy Alliance is facilitating research, program development and implementation. Having the University of Ontario Institute of Technology in the community promotes a very educated workforce.

Finally, on partnerships and government effectiveness, they are partnering with many municipalities for supportive submissions on issues such—

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

#### COMMUNITY GRANTS

**Mr. Mario Sergio (York West):** As the MPP for the riding of York West, I am absolutely thrilled with the recent McGuinty government announcement of \$6 million in support of the community grant program. Our government has recognized the need and the work being done in various communities to reach out to our youth before they are lost to guns, gangs and a life of crime.

Premier McGuinty is partnering with various faith churches that are doing excellent work and bringing hope to so many of our bright young people. Indeed, the announcement at the First Baptist Church in Toronto, the oldest community institution working as a community and information centre, will lead the efforts to deliver the message of hope.

In my own area, the Jane and Finch area: the San Romanoway Revitalization Association; the Jane-Finch community centre; PEACH, the school away from school initiative; the Christian Centre Church; Lisle Memorial Baptist; and the World Centre for Mission Mobilization. The Black Action Defence Committee, as well, will be receiving a three-year, \$450,000 grant.

All these dedicated and caring people will be working to make a real, positive difference in so many lives: our youth, our most vulnerable, single mothers and those who suffer as victims of violence.

I compliment the work of the faith church organizations and the support from Premier McGuinty in partnering and delivering inspiration and hope—

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

#### WORLD LEADERSHIP AWARD

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East):** As the member for Mississauga East and a member of the Mississauga Healthy City Stewardship Centre, I would like to say that we have won the 2006 World Leadership Award held on December 6 in the Royal Courts of Justice in London, England.

The purpose of the World Leadership Awards is to identify exceptional leadership in cities across the world

and to use that leadership as an example and inspiration to other cities facing similar problems.

Cities were judged on criteria such as leadership displayed, difficulties or obstacles the city has overcome and the degree of inspiration the city may give to others. Furthermore, this award is about communities: how a wide range of actors play in the role of building up a community to the point that the world recognizes the collective growth of a city.

Collaboration was created between the city and the University of Toronto, Mississauga. Fourteen key organizations in the city came together to collectively work toward improvements in local health. Working together, these organizations developed a Healthy Mississauga 2010 Plan that focuses on nine priority areas.

Receiving this award shows the level of commitment that exists within Mississauga to the idea of having a truly healthy city. We hope that being a recipient of this high honour will motivate other cities in this great province to adopt healthy ideas and policies.

#### REPORT OF CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the 2005 annual report of the Chief Election Officer of Ontario.

#### NOTICE OF REASONED AMENDMENT

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 69(c), the House leader for the third party, the member for Niagara Centre, has filed with the Clerk a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 173, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act, the MPPs Pension Act, 1996, and the Executive Council Act. The order for second reading of Bill 173 may therefore not be called today.

#### VISITORS

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I want to take this opportunity to introduce some visitors in the west members' gallery: Dr. Mathew Stephenson and his wife, Brenda Stephenson, and John O'Toole's executive assistant, Sheryl Greenham, who are here visiting today.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale–High Park):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to introduce to the House today some members of 30 different cultural workers' organizations that gathered this morning. We have some representatives from ACTRA, the Brantford Musicians' Association, the Directors Guild of Canada, the Toronto Musicians' Association, the Writers' Union and, a little later on, the Ontario Federation of Labour, all here to see if we can't get status-of-the-artist legislation passed. Welcome.

## MOTIONS

### COMMITTEE SITTINGS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I believe we have unanimous consent to move a motion relating to a committee of the Legislature.

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

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I move that the following committee be authorized to meet during the winter adjournment: the standing committee on social policy, for the purpose of public hearings and clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 140, An Act respecting long-term care homes, on January 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 30, and 31, 2007, as outlined in the subcommittee report.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### ENDANGERED SPECIES

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** In May of this year, the McGuinty government launched a public review of the Endangered Species Act. Our goal is stronger and broader legislation, updated for the 21st century, that will protect and provide for recovery of species at risk and ensure that future generations of Ontarians benefit from a healthy, diverse natural environment. There is considerable work to be done during this review to ensure we properly identify and address the measures needed for optimum protection and recovery of species and their habitats, but I am very pleased to report to the House today that we will table new legislation at the earliest opportunity in the spring session of the Legislature.

We are grateful for the help we have already received from stakeholder groups, aboriginal peoples and interested members of the public who have participated in this review. These groups include farmers, rural landowners, land developers, environmentalists, rural communities, anglers and hunters, municipalities and representatives of resource industries, including forestry and mining. A separate process involving consultation with aboriginal communities and organizations continues to be ongoing. I'd like to note that most of the stakeholders that we have heard from strongly support improved legislation for species at risk.

1350

We're also grateful for the contributions of an advisory panel made up of individuals with expertise and experience related to species-at-risk protection and re-

covery planning. The members of the advisory panel worked with my ministry and provided input for a discussion paper that was used in the public consultations between May and June of this year. In a report submitted to the government in August, the advisory panel suggested a framework for legislation that provides effective protection and recovery measures as well as the necessary tools for practical application. We intend to use this framework in developing our new legislation.

We are proposing that the legislation include a science-based process for identifying and listing species at risk and will require the protection of species. A requirement for meaningful habitat protection will also be a priority in our proposed legislation. We aim to balance strong protection measures with flexibility to encourage stewardship and recovery efforts.

Encouraging stewardship is essential. Helping species at risk to recover can be costly and complex, so the best course of action is to prevent the species from declining in the first place through responsible land use stewardship practices. We already owe a great deal to the farmers and landowners who have been volunteering for years to help with the recovery program on their lands. There are also many environmental, agricultural and community organizations that have voluntarily taken on important stewardship roles to protect essential habitat and green space. We need the continued support and involvement of all of these groups and individuals; and we recognize, in turn, that we need to actively support new as well as existing stewardship efforts.

So with this in mind, our government is taking on a three-pillar approach to species-at-risk protection and recovery. The first pillar is providing incentives for on-the-ground stewardship activities, the second is an updated and strengthened law, and the third is ensuring that we have the means and the tools to effectively implement the proposed new legislation.

I am pleased to say that the Ministry of Natural Resources has already been working, through our natural spaces program, to facilitate private land stewardship. This government has been encouraging good stewardship through a variety of other programs, including the greenbelt in the greater Golden Horseshoe, land acquisitions and new protected area designations. We have also supported the work of our conservation partners in several ways, including through enhancements to the conservation land tax incentive program and the Conservation Land Act.

As I said at the outset, our goal is to create better protection for endangered species in Ontario. We will accomplish this through effective stewardship programs, strengthened legislation and the development of the necessary tools for implementation.

### FALLS PREVENTION

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

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I do have a statement, but it's in my capacity as the minister responsible for seniors.

I rise in the Legislature today as minister responsible for seniors to announce the launch of a new information program for seniors, the falls prevention seminar. I hope every senior in Ontario will take advantage of this program to help safeguard their well-being and independence.

Earlier today, I was joined by Community Care City of Kawartha Lakes, other service providers and seniors from Central Eglinton Community Centre to share ideas about staying safe and well this winter and, indeed, throughout the year.

A fall can have a drastic impact on anyone's health and independence, but especially that of Ontario's seniors. The facts are startling. Each year, more than 24,000 seniors are hospitalized due to a fall. Falls cause more than 90% of all hip fractures for seniors, and they account for a high percentage of all admissions to long-term-care homes. In the midst of these sobering statistics, there is good news.

It is estimated that 90% of falls are preventable by following a few simple steps such as slowing down; replacing scatter mats with non-slip rugs; securing extension cords or using a cordless phone to eliminate cords and wires; ensuring that boots and shoes are non-slip and waterproof; and making sure that sidewalks, steps and driveways are well sanded or salted and free of ice. These are simple things, but they are important things that take only a moment or two, and they can quite literally save a life.

To get falls prevention information to seniors, their families and friends, I launched today the falls prevention seminar program for seniors. We are working closely with Community Care Kawartha Lakes and have consulted over 30 other local, regional and national organizations to bring seniors the very latest information on falls prevention. The falls prevention seminar will be offered to seniors in communities right across Ontario.

My colleague at the Ministry of Health Promotion has been working with our partners at public health units to ensure that injury prevention strategies are a key part of program delivery at the local level. Through their work, the injury prevention public health program is striving to reduce the disability, morbidity and mortality that can result from preventable injuries.

I encourage all seniors in Ontario to attend this one-hour seminar to learn how to protect their health and independence.

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

#### ENDANGERED SPECIES

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** I'm pleased to respond to the Minister of Natural Resources' statement on the proposed endangered species act.

Today's statement raises a lot of questions. For example, are you going to strike a balance that meets the needs of environmental groups, industry, First Nations and municipalities? Are you going to consult with all those groups? So far you haven't. At a time when the province is projecting the slowest economic growth in the country, are you going to do a full socio-economic impact assessment of the proposed species-at-risk legislation? Are you going to base your decisions on science?

Here's what we've seen so far. You've consistently neglected your duties to conservation and fish and wildlife programming. Your first act as minister was to close the Frost Centre. You dumped the Ringwood fish hatchery, but fortunately groups like the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters stepped in to take over the fish hatchery. You're starving operations funding for conservation officers—those who are left—so that they aren't able to properly do their jobs—many of their cars are parked—despite your election promise to fully fund the fish and wildlife program. You've cut programming in Ontario's parks and reduced support staff. You did away with counter service and public access for biologists and MNR specialists. I know that's the case at the Bracebridge MNR office and in other offices around the province. You were all set to cut the community fisheries and wildlife involvement program until public outrage prevented that. We've heard from the member for Nepean–Carleton about Bam Bam, the abandoned fawn adopted by the Strabys and confiscated by the Minister of Natural Resources in a SWAT-style raid with three cop cars.

I've heard from municipalities in my riding about the species-at-risk provincial policy statement. In March 2005, the policy statement came into force in Parry Sound district. Municipalities were told that all their planning decisions had to be consistent with the policy. They've been waiting all this time for a tool kit that your staff promised would help them. So far, there has been nothing. According to Parry Sound municipalities, municipalities in Simcoe, Nipissing, Algoma and other parts of Ontario weren't subject to these additional responsibilities. It's just another case of poorly-thought-out tinkering on your ministry's part. It's also another case of failing to consult, in this case with municipalities.

The implications of this legislation are serious. What about First Nations who want to realize their potential through resource economic development? Have you fully thought out the impact on those communities?

For the past three years we've seen the results in the forestry industry of your policies of high energy costs, high delivered-wood costs, lots of red tape and thousands and thousands of lost jobs mainly across northern Ontario, but across all of Ontario.

The question is, are you prepared to push along legislation that has significant negative economic impact for our resource and development sectors, as well as hampering economic development for First Nations, or will you bring a balanced approach to this legislation?

1400

## FALLS PREVENTION

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton):** I don't know why I was asked to respond to this particular statement in the absence of Mr. Martiniuk, who is our critic in this area and who is much senior to me.

No one can argue with the need for a seminar and program which would in any way reduce the number of falls that our seniors experience each year. Try as we might, we will never prevent them all from occurring. If our seniors are to have independence, and we would like many of them to have independence and live on their own, then this is going to be an unfortunate result of that. So I am with the government with regard to providing this education to prevent more falls occurring.

However, I want to say to the minister opposite that when we passed the smoking issue, there was no allowance made for people who are in long-term-care facilities, to provide those people who had been smoking for 50 or 60 years, and who will die smoking, with adequate facilities where they could smoke cigarettes in the remaining last years of their lives. When these people are forced into the cold and into the winter, there will be some falls as a result of that. I invite the—

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

## ENDANGERED SPECIES

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth):** My response is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Dalton McGuinty gave Ontarians a written promise to update the Endangered Species Act during the 2003 election. Over three years later, the Minister of Natural Resources is saying that he proposes to get around to it next year. Dalton McGuinty promised an updated act that includes scientific listing for endangered species, as well as protection for the habitat of endangered species.

Ontarians want endangered species habitat protected. They want to know that crucial habitat protection will be central in any legislation brought before this House. They also want to see provisions in an Endangered Species Act that ensures funding for species recovery plans. As we've seen with so much of this government's legislation, such as the Clean Water Act, the implementation funding to make the act work on the ground is nowhere in sight. If endangered species legislation is ever introduced, New Democrats will be working to ensure it contains the scientific listing, the habitat protection and the implementation funding Dalton McGuinty promised and Ontarians expect.

The irony of the minister making the statement today is also not lost on New Democrats. It was a week ago today that we learned about this minister being party to a decision made by the cabinet to permit the expansion of the Milton quarry on the Niagara Escarpment, the spine of the greenbelt. Part of the purpose of having a greenbelt

is to protect and preserve ecosystems and habitats that are homes to endangered species. For years, this government has been warned—warned repeatedly—that this expansion will negatively impact on the Jefferson salamander, a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, as well as the butternut tree, which is an endangered species under the provincial act.

The minister being part of the decision to permit the quarry expansion offers a preview of the extent to which the legislation he puts forward will actually protect endangered species: probably not much.

## FALLS PREVENTION

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I want to respond to the statement made by the minister responsible for seniors and agree with him that falls among seniors are a very serious issue. If you look at this report that was released in 2006, *The Economic Burden of Injury in Ontario*, in the section under "The Cost of a Silent Epidemic" it says with respect to seniors:

"In 1999, unintentional falls cost Ontarians \$1.9 billion, with \$927 million attributed to the direct costs of falls among those 55+ years of age.... It is estimated that about 40% of falls leading to hospitalization are the result of hip fractures. This statistic becomes even more alarming when one considers that the proportion of Ontarians aged 65 and older will nearly double from 13% of the total population in 2004 to 24% in 2031."

So it is clear that any efforts that can be made to reduce falls among seniors are efforts that need to be focused and enhanced and worked towards.

But I want to also say that, because the minister in his press release today referenced grants that have been previously made to organizations working to prevent elder abuse, I am compelled to make this point. On June 15, the government and its community partners unveiled publicly three of the ads on World Elder Abuse Day. The ads focused on elder abuse: what it is, how to recognize it, that abuse of 64,000 seniors in Ontario is a crime and that it can't be tolerated in Ontario. I saw the three ads with the minister on October 19, when we celebrated elder abuse day here in Ontario, and I can say that those ads are very powerful, very compelling and, frankly, they're very shocking.

The problem is that most Ontarians are never going to see the ads because they were done as public service announcements. OMNI has taken it upon itself to run the ads. They've taken it upon themselves to even dub over the English in a number of other languages. But this should be the responsibility of the government. It should be the government giving the Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse the money to translate the ads into French so they're relevant as well in my part of the world, and in Ottawa, and into other languages here in the GTA and Toronto that would be more relevant to the ethnic communities. So I encourage the minister to do that.

Most importantly, though, I think the government really has to cough up the money to make sure that these

ads play on television. I note that the government has lots of money for ads for wait times and for education etc., but where is the money to put these ads on television so that people can see first-hand how serious elder abuse is? I'm sure the minister has lobbied the Minister of Finance very hard for these funds, and I would ask him to redouble his efforts here today to make sure that he can get government money to get these ads on television.

### VISITORS

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):**

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I am very pleased that, this session, Ottawa West–Nepean has had a page, Philip Lee. Philip's mother, Lily Yip, is in the gallery up above, and his brother, Robert Lee, is with us. We welcome them to the Legislature.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: In the members' east gallery today, I would like to introduce Paul and Linda Jobe from the riding of Peterborough. They were successful winners at a United Way auction to have lunch with their MPP, and they're here from Peterborough today. Paul and Linda, just stand up for the members here. Welcome to Queen's Park.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Health. Last week, the Auditor General released his report, in which he called the wait times data put forth by the McGuinty Liberals "misleading" and that the McGuinty Liberal wait time data need to be "taken with a grain of salt," to quote the Auditor General.

Given that it was on the basis of these data, which have been found to be misleading and to be taken with a grain of salt by the Auditor General, the very same data upon which the McGuinty Liberals ran their \$2-million ad campaign this past fall about wait times, I want to ask the Minister of Health whether or not he still stands by the accuracy of those ads.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I think it's very, very important to note that the auditor himself, whom you have attributed quotes to, approved those ads. It's an important part of the law that was brought in by our government following the last election, so I think that's an important point in the matter.

I would like the honourable member to know two other things. The Auditor General's reporting was based on a lot of stuff that was happening around May of last year. Subsequent to that, you asked questions in this Legislature about presentation and made the suggestion that we should be presenting on the basis of the 90th percentile rather than the average. At that time, we did

make the adjustment to our website because we felt that that was a presentation that made more sense to more people, which was frankly the good advice that you offered to us. Our website alteration occurred at that time on the basis of the information that you offered. So, yes, we very much stand by those ads. We respect the view that he has brought forward, and in supplementary I'll give you some more information on what we've done in response to the Auditor General's efforts.

**Mr. Tory:** I'll certainly look forward to that, but the fact is that the ads are based on data that the Auditor General himself called "misleading" and said should be "taken with a grain of salt."

Since October, we have been stating that the ads made claims that couldn't be supported by the facts; namely, that by calling the phone number cited in the ads you could reduce your wait time. So we called that phone number, as we've said many times in this House, and were told that this was not possible, that you couldn't call the phone number and get your wait time reduced.

I will ask the minister again: In the face of the points we've raised in this House and now in the face of the criticisms the Auditor General has raised and which you have responded to by appointing someone to look into them—so, obviously, you take those seriously—do you believe those ads, based on those numbers that he found misleading, were accurate and that the \$2 million of taxpayers' money was spent putting forward accurate information to the taxpayers?

1410

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** As I said to the honourable member in the earlier answer, yes, very much so. Wait times are down in the province of Ontario.

There is an issue that the Auditor General has brought forward about the best way to measure and present. I think it's very important in this place that we not undermine the work that has been done by all of the best experts. We're pioneers in the province of Ontario related to the posting of this type of information. We asked 25 experts in the subjects of MRI and CT to give us the best advice that they could about the way to measure and present that information, and that's what we did.

Subsequently, the Auditor General gave us some different advice. What we've done, which we think is prudent, is we've asked Senator Kirby, who's pretty distinguished around health issues, to come in, take a look at the way we've been doing it and give us his best advice early in the new year about whether there are alterations that should be made. Accordingly, as we said from the very first, if good advice is on offer to us, we'll take a look at it. The honourable member himself has helped to amend the way that we present this information on the basis of questions that he brought to the floor of this Legislature last year.

**Mr. Tory:** What we're really after here is—the Auditor General has commented on the data; we're talking about the ads done by your good friends over at Bensimon Byrne.

We have a letter dated December 5, 2006, from Advertising Standards Canada. They issued a letter in response to a complaint about these print and television ads. That letter says the following: "In council's opinion, the advertising in question raised expectations that remained unsatisfied after reading or hearing the information found in the website or helpline [to] which readers/viewers of the advertisements were directed. Council, therefore, found that the newspaper and television advertisements made inaccurate claims and omitted relevant information, contrary to clauses 1(a) and (b) of the code."

These are people in Canada who are put in charge of monitoring advertisements so that when someone complains, they can determine whether it's accurate or inaccurate. They say it's inaccurate and that it contains data that misleads people.

My question is this: It's now not just the auditor; it's not just us; it's the Advertising Standards Council who said you spent \$2 million of taxpayers' money running ads that contained inaccurate claims—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question has been asked.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I have no difficulty doing so on the points that I've already raised. Firstly, anyone who studies the subject or intuitively speaks to anybody knows that wait times are down in the province of Ontario. No one makes claims that the whole situation is licked, but there's no doubt whatsoever that wait times are down. If your member was here from Barrie, you could simply turn around and ask him, "Was the Barrie Examiner wrong in October when it ran an editorial that said, 'Previously, it took about 54 weeks to receive an MRI locally, the longest in Ontario, but that period has been reduced to 7 weeks'?" Wait times are down; that's the point that has been made.

The Auditor General himself approved the very ads that the honourable member is now complaining about. The reality is that an investment of \$600 million of the people's money contributed in a variety of areas all across the province to reductions in wait times. Now we're going to ask Senator Kirby to give us some advice based on what we heard from the Auditor General about whether there is a better way to present the information. I think that'll be a report that will benefit all of those who wish to participate in the debate about wait times in Ontario.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr. Tory:** My question again is to the Minister of Health. We see him at his worst today, because what we have here now is the Auditor General saying that we have data on the website that is "misleading" and should be "taken with a grain of salt." We now have the body that you seem so apparently able to dismiss, the Advertising Standards Council of Canada, the independent organization that is charged with the responsibility of monitoring and adjudicating upon ads as to whether they're accurate or not, and they have said that these ads that you spent \$2 million on and defended day after day

in this House contained inaccurate information that should not have been in front of people at the time they saw them. In fact, they go on to say, "The advertising in question raised expectations that remained unsatisfied after reading or hearing the information found in the website or helpline [to] which readers/viewers of the advertisements were directed." That is a very clear finding that they have about an inaccurate ad, which, by the way, they have communicated to your government.

My question is this: Are you prepared to get up in light of that independent finding and the Auditor General's comments and retract those ads and apologize for misleading the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** No, not at all. In fact—

**The Speaker:** Order. I need the Leader of the Opposition to rephrase the last part of his question.

**Mr. Tory:** It's great to have a chance to ask it again: Will the minister agree to apologize and retract these ads, that have been found inaccurate and omitting vital information to the public of Ontario, on which he spent \$2 million of the taxpayers' money?

**The Speaker:** Yes, you're right, and you will withdraw the offending word.

**Mr. Tory:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** A few things that I think are important. Firstly, the honourable member wants me to apologize, but I say, with respect, our Premier ran in 2003 on an initiative to reduce wait times. He worked through the Council of the Federation leading up to a conference in September 2004 which brought the whole country together and has brought serious new resource to this issue. We brought together the best experts in our province—

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** Just apologize and withdraw.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** You should be doing so. We brought the very best experts together and we asked them to give us advice, and we've been moving forward on that basis. The reality is that we've increased access to MRIs in the province of Ontario by 78%. So for the honourable member to stand in his place and pretend that that hasn't produced a result or to ignore the circumstances in Barrie asks me to wonder whether he shouldn't apologize for undermining the good work of people on the front lines in health care who have made a discernible difference to the people of Ontario. Wait times are down. There's more work to do, and we're looking forward to getting on with it.

**Mr. Tory:** The minister, of course, absolutely refuses to deal with the issue that I'm raising here, which is advertisements paid for with the taxpayers' money done by his good friends at Bensimon Byrne, which have been found by an independent organization, the Advertising Standards Council, to omit relevant information. They are quoted as follows:

"The general impression and message conveyed by the advertising, in council's view, was that wait times for all hospital procedures have already been reduced; that

Ontarians are now spending less time awaiting needed procedures; and that upon visiting the website or information line, respondents will be told how to further reduce their wait times.”

That is what they found to be inaccurate as a claim in the ads and that omitted relevant information. It's not about what you have to say about the data; the Auditor General has already commented on that. What I've asked you is, in light of this finding by the independent body that your ads omitted relevant information, and in light of the additional finding that they're accurate, will you get up and apologize for those ads spending \$2 million of the taxpayers' money and retract what they claim, which has been found to be inaccurate? Will you do it?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Here again, firstly, the honourable member wants me to be accurate, but in his statement two or three times now he's said that Bensimon Byrne did those ads. He's not even up to date and relevant enough to know that publicists did those ads, not Bensimon Byrne. But the greater point here is that the content of the ads themselves was approved by the Auditor General. That's what the law in Ontario says, as a result of the efforts that we have been involved in.

What people all across the province of Ontario know is that we worked hard to reduce wait times. The wait times strategy has been about five areas associated with a high degree of disability. Everyone in Ontario who's followed the discussion—Ruth Collins-Nakai, president of the Canadian Medical Association: “Ontario has moved from being a laggard to being a leader in the field of wait time management.” The point is, aligned all across the health care system professionals have dedicated themselves to the reduction of wait times. Wait times are down in a wide variety of areas. There is more work to do, and we look forward to getting on and applying all the lessons we've learned to date to reduce the wait times even further for the people of Ontario.

**Mr. Tory:** The very same auditor the minister refers to who found the wait time data misleading does not review the veracity of the ads; he only looks at whether they're partisan or not. What the Advertising Standards Council has clearly found is that those ads were inaccurate and omitted relevant information. That's what they found.

You named some names. Let me name some names: Paul Katz, Gary McGregor, Brenda Bailey, Mary Jane Fisher, Millie Downing. These are some of the people we have brought to this House who have been waiting exceptionally long periods of time to get necessary medical care in this province. These are people you were marketing with this data that the Auditor General calls misleading and ads that the Advertising Standards Council calls inaccurate and omitting relevant information.

They deserve an apology from you because you ran ads with \$2 million of the taxpayers' money saying, “Just call this line or go to this website and your wait time will magically disappear or be reduced.” Will you stand in your place, in light of this finding of the advertising standards council, and apologize for running these ads at

taxpayers' expense that are found to be inaccurate and omitting relevant information? Will you have the courage to do that?

**Mr. Yakabuski:** You lack the courage.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Well, you know what? You're lacking a question at the moment. But I think what the honourable member really is having a struggle with is, he's having a hard time respecting the fact—

**Mr. Yakabuski:** You're certainly lacking the answer, brother.

1420

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I think the bar got opened early here.

I think what's clear is that the honourable member opposite prefers to come into this place and talk about ads, but what he is doing also is undermining the fact that across the front lines of health care, dedicated individuals have been working hard to reduce wait times. Six hundred million dollars have been invested to produce 657,000 additional procedures. In Barrie, we know that the wait time for MRIs has been reduced from over one year to six or seven weeks.

The point is that people in Ontario know that wait times are down, and they know as well that there are other areas where there is more work to be done. No one pretends about that. It's only the honourable member who thinks that all solutions can be resolved on the one hand through a signature and on the other hand through a \$2.4-billion cut to health care.

#### MEMBERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** To the Deputy Premier: In Ontario today, too many working families are being forced to work longer and harder for less. Meanwhile, under the McGuinty government, those who have high incomes are seeing salary increases like never before. In the last four years under the McGuinty government, the pay for the chair of the Ontario Energy Board has tripled, the pay for the top dog at Ontario Power Generation has doubled, and the pay for the top dog at Hydro One climbed so high that he lost track of his expenses and lost his job.

Now the McGuinty government has decided that the number one public policy issue is to increase MPPs' pay by 31%. My question is this: Why does the McGuinty government believe that it's good public policy to increase salaries at the top?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** When a question comes from the central figure in millionaires' row I think it deserves and warrants just a little further examination than what the honourable member is prepared to put on the table.

The honourable member, I'm sure, in discussions with the caucus members who sit behind him that he's prepared to undervalue on a daily basis—they're not in the same circumstance that he's in. They're not sitting in a circumstance where an honourable member who asked

the question has received a very, very substantial commitment already to his future circumstances.

The honourable member makes the allegation that this is the only issue, that this is a priority. To the contrary: We've been working vigorously in this Legislature—in fact, all members have—to move forward on a number of fronts. We are capable of doing such.

Last night, Marilyn Churley, a former member who used to sit in the front row alongside that honourable member, had something to say about this. I'll look forward to bringing that to everybody's attention in supplementary.

**Mr. Hampton:** Minister, I talk to a lot of ordinary folks every day. I talk to people in coffee shops, I talk to them in hockey rinks and I talk to them on the street. No one I talk to believes that MPPs in Ontario are underpaid. While you consider increasing MPPs' salaries by 31%, the number one public policy issue, legislative bills that would raise the minimum wage languish, legislative bills that would help firefighters suffering from cancer aren't dealt with, legislative bills that would warn families about dangerous chemicals in their homes are not dealt with and legislative bills that would protect nurses on the job aren't dealt with.

My question is this: Can you explain why firefighters, nurses and low-income working people have to wait while the McGuinty government makes a 31% pay increase for MPPs the number one priority?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** It's very good that the honourable member has come into the House and given the ironclad assurance that he's going to exempt himself from it once and forever, just like his friend from Niagara.

Here's what Marilyn Churley said: "I think there are reasonable grounds, and have been for some time, for a salary increase, I really do, when you compare it to other jurisdictions, federally in particular, and in this case it was the Integrity Commissioner who did a study. But I do agree ... that there should be a salary increase.... It has been going on for years and years and years where there has been no increase whatsoever, and I do know that MPPs do work very hard."

So I don't know how it is that you turn around and look in good conscience at a person like Gilles Bisson and say to him, "You're worth 60% of Charlie Angus's salary and not 25% of his pensionable benefits." I know Olivia Chow and I know Rosario Marchese, and I don't believe that they should be undervalued in the way the party leader offers to them in support. So I look forward to you—

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

**Mr. Hampton:** I have received literally hundreds of letters, e-mails, faxes and phone calls now—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock. Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Minister of Energy.

I need to be able to hear the leader of the third party place his question. When I sit down, I don't want to be hearing other people speaking. Thank you.

The leader of the third party.

**Mr. Hampton:** As I said, I've received literally hundreds of e-mails, faxes, phone calls and letters from ordinary people who are quite opposed to what the McGuinty government now proposes to do. All of them make the point that they heard Dalton McGuinty make literally hundreds of promises before the last election, most of which he has now broken. But the one thing they can't remember is Dalton McGuinty promising that he was going to raise his own salary by 31%. So what they're asking is, will Dalton McGuinty delay this 31% pay hike until after the next election so that those people who heard all the other promises will have a chance to hear this promise and decide on it? Will you do that, Deputy Premier?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The honourable member started his question by saying, "I have received." Oh yes, indeed he has received. Let's go back to the story about what he received: "Pensions All in the Family."

"It was a very rich buyout,' Hampton, MPP for Rainy River, said at Queen's Park yesterday...."

"Hampton confirmed receiving \$500,000, before tax, as his share of the \$109-million bill to abolish the gold-plated ... pension plan."

The member beside him to his right received \$200,000. In relatively the same period of time in this Legislature, the member for Niagara Centre received a payout of \$200,000. In the same period of service, relatively speaking, I have received for my pensionable time \$39,000.

This is the kind of outrage that comes manufactured on their basis. I encourage them to stand in their place today and make the firm commitment that they seem to be suggesting, which is that they will opt out, if that is the principle upon which they're prepared to stand.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

New question.

**Mr. Hampton:** To the Deputy Premier: What is clear is that working families will foot the bill for the McGuinty government's 31% pay hike. But before you ram it through, which is what this exercise is now all about for the McGuinty government, I think you should hear people out, like this woman from Niagara Falls who wrote: "My husband was just let go from his job in the automotive sector, and I am getting only a 2.3% increase this year. How do you justify a 25% increase? I am 100% against this increase."

Deputy Premier, why don't you and the Premier come with me to Niagara so you can meet some of these laid-off workers, look them in the eye, and explain why the McGuinty government considers a 31% pay increase for MPPs to be the number one public policy priority?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I think the Hamilton Spectator today, for anyone who hasn't had a chance to see the editorial cartoon entitled "NDP Leader Howard

Hampton Is Outraged,” has caught the man well in their sights, and I recommend it to everyone.

Here are the things that the NDP has stood against in our period of office: insulin pumps for diabetic kids—they voted against it; lowering auto insurance rates—they voted against it; ending 60-hour workweeks—they voted against it; ending mandatory retirement—they voted against it; 15,000 new affordable child care spaces—they voted against it; ending the national child benefit claw-back going forward—they voted against it; raising rates for those on social assistance—they voted against it; and raising rates for those on ODSP—they voted against it.

**1430**

The point is that this Legislature and the members here work very, very hard, and the honourable member stands in his place and says to his caucus, with his back turned on them, “You’re not worth it. We undervalue you. You’re not worth even 75% of the rate of compensation that a federal member makes for representation of the exact, same territory”—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Supplementary?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. We can’t go on this way. Let’s restrain ourselves on all sides. The leader of the third party.

**Mr. Hampton:** Deputy Premier, across northwestern Ontario, the misguided McGuinty policy of driving hydro rates through the roof has destroyed literally thousands of good-paying jobs in the forest sector. Why don’t you and the Premier come and meet Jim Gamble from Thunder Bay, who writes, “With your new-found raise of 25%, what is it you will say to all those northwestern Ontario workers who have lost their good-paying jobs and benefits at Bowater and other paper mills which have closed?”

I’d simply say this: Before you ram through this 31% pay hike for MPPs, why don’t you come to Thunder Bay and other northern Ontario communities and talk to those people whose jobs the McGuinty government has in fact destroyed and ask them if a 31% pay increase—

**The Speaker:** The question has been asked.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I hope the honourable member, when he has his meeting, will take his friend Jack Layton, because here’s what happened. On November 24, 2005, the government of Canada under Paul Martin announced a forestry competitive package worth \$1.5 billion, including a loan insurance program of up to \$800 million, as well as \$581 million in funding to support forest-dependent communities, market diversification and incentives for innovation in the forest industry. Although the NDP repeatedly called on the Liberal government to help the forestry industry, just four days later they joined forces with the Conservatives to bring down the government and force an unnecessary Christmas election. This action resulted in the forestry competitiveness program being put on the shelf for the election period and the subsequent cancellation of the program by the new Conservative government. Your own hands are on this, and those of your unified NDP are

very, very dirty indeed. The good people of northern Ontario are on to you.

**Mr. Hampton:** I think the precipitating event of that election was literally dozens of Liberals once again caught with their fingers in the public purse, some of whom are now going to jail.

Dalton McGuinty’s 31% pay hike is out of touch with the reality that working families across this province are feeling. I want to give an example of one woman from Toronto who works hard for the minimum wage. She writes, “At this point I have enough to pay my rent next month, but I can’t afford new glasses, I can’t afford to have my wisdom teeth removed, I can’t afford to get Christmas presents for my family and I’m not happy to hear that McGuinty is getting another \$39,000 a year.”

Minister, there are literally hundreds of thousands of people in this province who have less income, who are struggling harder than ever. Can you explain to them why you are so intent on ramming this legislation through the Legislature without ever hearing from them, without ever giving them an opportunity to cast an opinion? Why is this suddenly the number one public policy issue for the McGuinty government, and you don’t care to hear from those ordinary working people who are working longer and harder for less?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Maybe in the NDP the ram works that slowly. He offers the suggestion that there is some ramming going on, but the reality is that the bill hasn’t even been brought forward for discussion.

I want to say to my honourable friend, on the issue that the millionaires’ row is blushing pretty good so far: I want to send you my Standard Life report, which shows the net value of my account at \$39,010.79

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I’m prepared to put this in the public domain; no problem. Then you could do us all the favour of letting us know how your half a million has rested over these last years and how your conscience is resting and how you’re prepared to pretend your way through this circumstance and be so dishonest and devalue so forwardly the circumstances from your caucus members. Why is it that the honourable member is unprepared to acknowledge that it’s appropriate that we should—

**The Speaker:** Minister, I need you to withdraw—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I withdraw.

**The Speaker:** Withdrawn. New question.

#### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** I want to keep the Minister of Health busy. I want to have one more go at this business of the advertisements, because I don’t think the minister has carefully taken into account what this is, which is a response from the independent body that looks after advertising in Canada and is a self-regulating process of the industry. The complaint was brought to the attention of the government, so they had a chance to put their opinions in front of this body, as did

the complainant. And this body has found that the advertisements on which you spent millions of dollars of taxpayers' money—they said that these ads “made inaccurate claims and omitted relevant information, contrary to clauses 1(a) and (b).” It goes on to say that the council is pleased to learn that the advertisement was no longer being published and would not be published again in the future.

I ask you again, in light of this finding by an independent body that these ads were inaccurate and omitted relevant information, will you stand up and acknowledge this ruling, apologize for the fact that the government funded an ad that is inaccurate and omitted relevant information, and retract the ad and publish a retraction? Why won't you do that?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I think I've answered the question pretty much by now, but I'm happy to take as many more licks at it as the honourable member brings. But since he's going to be up on his feet on this issue, maybe the next time he stands up he can remind us of the strategy that he deployed after he unleashed personal attack ads on a gentleman about to be the Prime Minister of Canada that made fun of a disability. Because that's on your track record, sir, on the subject of advertising. That's your personal involvement in advertising.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** It rankles the one from Ottawa; not surprising. But she really needs to look a little more into the history of her leader on these matters.

As a result of our actions, nearly half a million more people have access to a primary care physician in Ontario. The wait for those people is over. They've gained access to those services. Through the investment of \$600 million, wait times in a wide variety of other areas have been reduced. In Barrie, Ontario, an MRI no longer takes a year but has been reduced to a small number of weeks. We have made good progress. There's more work—

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

**Mr. Tory:** It's interesting, because—and I don't know, quite frankly, whether it's the politically correct thing to say in here or not, but in connection with that particular incident, in which there was a long story that lay behind it, what I did do was I said that because I was a co-chair of that campaign, I accepted responsibility for what happened. That is all that I'm asking you to do as the Minister of Health and the Deputy Premier in the province of Ontario.

In light of the finding by an independent body that you aired ads that had inaccurate information and that omitted relevant information and that they have found to be ads that should not have been published and should not be published again, I'm asking you to do the same thing, which is to stand up in your place and accept responsibility, apologize to the public and say that it won't happen again and that you're going to retract those ads. I'm asking you to do the same thing. Why can't you do it?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I take full and complete responsibility for working alongside the Premier to reduce wait times in the province of Ontario, because that is what the record indicates; no doubt whatsoever.

In accordance with the views that have been brought forward by the auditor long before a letter that I haven't even had the privilege of seeing yet, but from the auditor's work of last week, we asked Senator Kirby, who's pretty good at making reports related to health care, who's a well-recognized figure, to take a look at what the best experts have told us is the measurement system and the way that it's reported. I've already said to the honourable member that we're going to get that done in very short order. Early in the new year we'll take a look at whether we can present the information in a way that is more helpful to people.

At the heart of it, the honourable member wants to leave the illusion that wait times are not reduced. Indeed, they are. That's well-known by everyone who has taken a close look at it, and accordingly, we'll continue to work to reduce wait times, to the benefit of the people of the province of Ontario.

#### NUCLEAR ENERGY

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** To the Deputy Premier. Today the Pembina Institute released a major report that presents compelling technical evidence that the McGuinty government and the nuclear industry are lowballing the cost of your nuclear mega scheme. For example, the report says that managing radioactive fuel from existing reactors alone will cost \$24 billion, but that number is not included in the McGuinty government's cost projections for your \$40-billion nuclear scheme. That's \$24 billion to store the waste from reactors that already exist.

1440

My question is this: Why is the McGuinty government lowballing nuclear costs? And can you tell the people of Ontario how much more money it will cost to store the nuclear waste that will be produced as a result of your \$40-billion nuclear mega scheme?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy):** First of all, the Ontario Power Authority has identified potential costs associated with the development of nuclear power. There are a number of variables that will go into that. We don't concur with those conclusions.

We have established processes that will look very carefully at a number of these issues, including the storage of nuclear waste subsequent to the development of the additional nuclear capacity and the refurbishment of existing capacity. The bottom line is that we've begun that analysis. These decisions will continue through both an environmental assessment process and a licensing process. For the member opposite or any group to suggest that they can conclude with certainty around a range of

these issues is frankly not—it has to be dealt with in a broader context.

The bottom line is that we don't concur with those estimates. There are a number of estimates out there that we're looking at carefully. We will continue to examine them, both through the environmental assessment process—

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

**Mr. Hampton:** The fact is that nuclear power in Ontario has always had huge cost overruns. The people of Ontario were told that Darlington would cost \$4 billion. When it was finished, it was \$14 billion—a \$10-billion cost overrun. Now we have more of the same.

What the report also points out is that the cost of nuclear energy accounts for \$15 billion of the nearly \$20 billion of stranded debt. The huge costs of nuclear energy are not limited to the costs of building the plants. There are numerous extra costs associated with the storage of nuclear fuel, nuclear safety and the creation of new transmission lines.

Why does the McGuinty government want to repeat this very expensive history in Ontario in your nuclear mega scheme? Why do you want to saddle hydro consumers with a nuclear mega scheme that's going to cost far more than \$40 billion and drive hydro rates up even more?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** The leader of the third party is simply inventing those numbers. They're not rooted in reality. I would invite him to have a look at a range of cost estimates that have been provided to the government, to the Legislature, as we embark on this discussion about nuclear power in Ontario.

Nuclear power has been with us for 40 years in Ontario. In fact, under the IPSP, we will see nuclear power's percentage of our total generating capacity decline over the next 20 years. There is no doubt that there's been something of a checkered history in terms of cost related to the development of nuclear power, but there's one government that's brought a nuclear project in on time and on budget, and that is the McGuinty government. Pickering A, unit 1—on time and on budget. This government will manage this file.

There are enormous challenges, but nuclear power has been part of our history and will continue to be. We simply don't agree with the leader of the third party.

#### ONTARIO ARTISTS

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex):** My question is for the Minister of Culture. Minister, as you know, my riding of Perth–Middlesex is home to many artists. My hometown of Stratford is known as a cultural jewel around the world, and my community is very fortunate to be able to enjoy the fruits of the labours of these talented individuals, actors, artisans, dancers, musicians and visual artists.

We know in my riding, I believe more keenly than in others, that the quality of our lives and the vibrancy of

our economy in the 21st century will be determined in large part by the contribution our artists make to our society. Minister, can you please tell me what our government is doing to ensure that artists in this province have the opportunity to thrive?

**Hon. Caroline Di Cocco (Minister of Culture):** I want to thank the member from Perth–Middlesex for his tireless advocacy for the arts in his community.

We support our artists in many ways, particularly by creating an environment in Ontario where artists, arts and culture can thrive. For example, earlier this month I was in Ottawa and made a presentation to the CRTC. Why? To advocate on behalf of artists and creators. It was the first time in 20 years that a delegation from the ministry responsible for culture actually appeared at those hearings, and possibly the first time in history that a minister herself made a presentation.

We flow \$40 million annually to the Ontario Arts Council. This agency of my ministry benefits 1,300 individuals and 800 organizations. There are many more examples that I will provide in my supplementary.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** It's reassuring to know that our artists are finally being valued, after eight years of being treated as a burden on society by the previous government.

While individuals are of course the lifeblood of Ontario's cultural sector, I have been told by my constituents that in order to thrive, artists cannot do it in isolation. They need to share ideas, they need forums to display talents and they need to come up with creative ways to enrich the lives of all Ontarians. This government's direct support to individual artists is very important in my riding and right across Ontario, but beyond this, how are we creating the conditions within which these individuals can create and thrive?

**Hon. Ms. Di Cocco:** I'm very happy to report that we do indeed have a comprehensive support strategy for the arts sector, and it's based on creating the environment I spoke about. We have just launched a \$7.5-million entertainment and creative cluster partnership fund that will help businesses with an arts focus to become the most innovative in the world.

Since coming to office, we have been actively working with municipalities to help them recognize the cultural and economic benefits of arts, and we are helping them to develop their own municipal cultural planning.

I'm excited about our recent initiative to promote Ontario's culture abroad. In January, my ministry and several key stakeholders will participate in a business mission in India, one of the world's fastest-growing economies.

I want to mention that right here in Toronto, we're supporting the city's first-ever international arts festival, Luminato, which will highlight artists and products from across the province.

#### LANDFILL

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton):** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Almost a

year ago, Waste Management Corp. began the process of applying for a massive expansion of their landfill site at Carp Road in the west part of the city of Ottawa. The draft terms of reference were released and commented on, but the revised terms of reference have not been filed with your ministry because Waste Management is out of compliance with their existing landfill site.

One of the main offences of the site is groundwater contamination of adjacent property. What did Waste Management do to meet the regulation? Did they clean up the leachate? No. They simply bought the land beside them so they could continue to pollute the groundwater. Minister, will you make them clean up this existing mess before you consider any terms of reference for an environmental assessment to expand this quagmire?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment):** I know that my friend opposite has some understanding of the importance of the environmental assessment process, and that is what is taking place in the context of a request by Waste Management to expand the Carp landfill. The critical issue that my friend raises is with respect to the leachate, and that issue must and will be addressed in the context of the environmental assessment that will take place, as I fulfill the responsibility to ensure that if this landfill is to be expanded, it will be done only if I can be assured that the communities surrounding that landfill will be safe and secure.

1450

**Mr. Sterling:** We want the leachate cleaned up; we just don't want it there forever.

Madam Minister, our community is gagging on the odours that emanate from this site. The stench has increased in intensity and frequency and is migrating farther afield than ever before, even in the cooler weather. The community has been told by your ministry that during 2006 the company has been in a "voluntary abatement program" to improve this crisis. The problem hasn't improved; it's worse. Your ministry contends that the odour is more of a nuisance than a health concern; however, my constituents don't agree.

How long do my constituents have to gag on this stinking mess? Will you shut down this site until the company deals with these obnoxious odours? Shut it down until they clean it up.

**Hon. Ms. Broten:** Thank you very much, and I can indicate to my friend opposite that the ministry is actively engaged with Waste Management and is well aware of the issues faced in that community. In fact, it was the Ministry of the Environment that refused to consider the agreement until the proponent addressed the issue, and they have taken several steps to address the odour problem. We have approved, at the Ministry of the Environment, those steps: A temporary gas flare. The company has also applied for approval for a misting system, which would be an odour neutralizer. As to the leachate system, this issue will be addressed in the context of the environmental assessment.

To update my friend with respect to the leachate, the company has installed a leachate control system, and that

is now being collected in the Ottawa sanitary sewer. The Ministry of the Environment is actively engaged, protecting the community, and all of these critical issues will be brought to light in the context of the very important environmental assessment that is now taking place.

#### ONTARIO ARTISTS

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale-High Park):** My question is for the Minister of Culture. In the gallery today, we have stakeholders representing various professional artisans, cultural workers, associations—almost 30 this morning. They have been waiting two years for your report on the status of the artist and almost four years for status-of-the-artist legislation. The report was to lay the foundation for legislation that would improve the lives of Ontario artists in the areas of child performers, taxation, employment standards and collective bargaining.

Minister, when is this long-overdue report going to be released, and when are we going to see legislation that will truly improve the lives of Ontario's struggling artists and cultural workers?

**Hon. Caroline Di Cocco (Minister of Culture):** It's really very difficult to respond seriously to someone who is part of a party that after five years in power did absolutely nothing on this file; absolutely nothing.

But having said that, artists are the centre of our creative society, and I want to acknowledge and thank the visitors who are here today. I know that artists reflect the best of who we are in our world, and I'm well aware of the challenges that they're facing. We do take it very seriously.

I'm working with a number of ministries, and I'm carefully looking to get this right. That's what I'm doing. We're not going to do what the NDP did, which was sit on reports for five years. And I would just like to convey to the third party that we have the best track record in this province when it comes to arts and culture.

**Ms. DiNovo:** Dalton McGuinty promised to bring in that legislation within two years. It's almost four years now. An example of the kinds of problems that require urgent action: Artists are not classified under the Employment Standards Act, so they're not privy to the standards that protect the rest of the workforce. We're just asking for that, Madam Minister of Culture. Answer them. The question is, will you immediately bring in status-of-the-artist legislation, like you promised?

**Hon. Ms. Di Cocco:** We did have a review with the advisory council, as we said we would.

I want to also convey to this House that we have advocated strenuously in this province. We have created an environment. Just look around the city of Toronto, look around this province, at the investments that have been made when it comes to arts and culture. It is second to none. We are the envy of this country, if not other jurisdictions around the world, because of the work we are doing here. Not only that; we are taking our excellence in our arts and culture and we're promoting it around the world because it is something we're extremely proud of. Yes, we're going to continue. There's a

lot more to do because there has been a lot of rebuilding to do because of the inaction of the previous government on arts and culture. We understand it and we understand and value artists. We are going to do everything we have to do to create the best environment in this country, in Ontario, for artists.

## ACCESSIBILITÉ POUR LES PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES

### ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

**M<sup>me</sup> Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** Ma question s'adresse à la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires. Comme les membres de cette Chambre le savent, un Conseil consultatif des normes d'accessibilité a été formé en décembre 2005, avec un mandat de conseiller la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires sur l'élaboration de normes d'accessibilité et sur des programmes d'éducation sectoriels et au grand public à l'appui de la mise en oeuvre efficace de la Loi sur l'accessibilité pour les personnes handicapées de l'Ontario.

Ce conseil est composé de représentants du monde des affaires, d'organismes du secteur public et de personnes handicapées de tous les milieux. Ensemble, ils nous apportent une somme impressionnante de compétences et de connaissances.

Le conseil se compose de 13 hommes et femmes qui, au cours de la dernière année, ont joué un rôle crucial en aidant le gouvernement de l'Ontario à concrétiser sa vision d'une société accessible d'ici l'année 2025. Qui sont ces gens à qui nous devons fière chandelle?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur (ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones):** Je voudrais premièrement remercier la députée de Nipissing, qui est une grande militante pour l'accessibilité en Ontario. En effet, nous avons souligné hier le premier anniversaire du Conseil consultatif des normes d'accessibilité.

Le conseil est présidé par M. David Onley. Comme beaucoup d'entre vous le savent bien, David est un journaliste chevronné de Citytv. Il compte à son actif de nombreuses années de bénévolat et de défense des droits des personnes handicapées. En 1997, David a été intronisé au Temple de la renommée Terry Fox pour ses contributions répétées à l'avancée de la cause des personnes handicapées.

David est épaulé par la vice-présidente du conseil, M<sup>me</sup> Tracy MacCharles, de Pickering. Tracy a été membre de l'ancien conseil consultatif de l'accessibilité pour l'Ontario.

Les autres membres du conseil viennent de partout en province. Je veux aujourd'hui les remercier pour le travail exceptionnel qu'ils ont fait.

**Ms. Smith:** I'll take the advice of the Minister of Citizenship and be brief this time.

The majority of members of our council are people with disabilities. This is important because there is such a wealth of talent in the disability community, people who

stood by us as we developed the OADA, people who believe in the legislation and are committed to seeing it through.

The 2025 mark is not the beginning but an end point to the process of making Ontario fully accessible. Bearing that in mind, Minister, what steps have been taken by the council so far?

**Hon. Mrs. Meilleur:** Over the past year, these dedicated individuals have donated their time, expertise and passion for breaking down barriers for people with disabilities. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank them on behalf of the Ontario government.

Key accomplishments of the council over the past year include meeting with chairs of both the customer service and transportation accessibility standard development committees to share preliminary ideas on the initial proposed standards, providing advice to the minister on the initial proposed customer service centre, and participating in focus groups on a proposed accessibility public education campaign. In addition, members were actively involved in community events to raise awareness of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and of the barriers faced by people with disabilities. They are playing an instrumental role in helping the government to implement the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and we look forward to their continued advice and counsel as we move ahead.

1500

## FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** I have a question for the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, I'd like to ask you about an article in today's North Bay Nugget. I'll quote from the article:

"The Ontario Public Service Employees Union will hold bake sales today in North Bay, Timmins and Hearst, to help raise money for the cash-strapped Ministry of Natural Resources....

"MNR employees care about quality wildlife management and are at their wits' end after years of cuts that have left absolutely no room to trim any further."

In another article today, John Kerr tells us that as a result of your cuts in 2005, charges against violators dropped and fines fell by a whopping \$479,240, and worse is expected for 2006-07.

I've heard from people in northeastern Ontario who tell me that MNR vehicles have been parked since mid-October. I've also heard from MNR staff who are despondent.

Minister, do you think it's reasonable for employees to have bake sales to put gas in their cars? What's next: car washes and candy bar sales?

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** Well, we did a job there. I appreciate the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka's interest in the ministry, because I know he lives in an area where people love to hunt and fish, as I do, and have a special interest and pride in the ministry,

basically taking care of our wildlife across the province, and we take that pride as it extends to our compliance and enforcement also.

The member used a statistic that compared the amount of the fines one year over another. That's a very difficult and imprecise comparator, as you should be looking at the number of convictions year to year. The fines can vary, depending on the crime, the severity of the crime and maybe the number of occurrences, but I think convictions would be a stronger comparator. Convictions are more or less the same, because basically we've spent more or less the same on that service.

**Mr. Miller:** In June, in response to my question about your broken promise to fully fund the fish and wildlife programs, you said that hunting licence fees were forecast to be declining. You said, "...we feel that with some of the decline in the purchases of hunting licences ... those revenues are projected to decline." You also said you were going to have to sit down with stakeholders and negotiate how to build up revenues in the special-purpose account.

Well, the actual figures for hunting licences contradict your June statement. Between 2003 and 2005, there have been significant increases in licences in almost every category: small game licences up 5%, deer up 14.9%, moose up 4.5%, bear up 13.6%, wild turkey up 47%, non-resident moose up 4.5%, non-resident deer up 69%. Licence sales are up, and that means more dollars for the special-purpose account, so where is this extra money being spent? Because it's not going into the fish and wildlife program.

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** Obviously I'm doing a far better job than I predicted I could do in June, and I'm pleased with that. Really what it is is opening up more hunting opportunities, because we saw those projections, that with an aging population we needed to look at more hunting opportunities. That's what we've done, as the member knows, by extending the opening of Sunday hunting in southern Ontario. We've also been looking at more precise deer management, which means more opportunities. So we have been able to increase that funding. I work with my heritage hunting commission to see how else we can do this. They've come up with some good recommendations. As you know, we're going to have a Heritage Day next year. We're also looking at ways that we can increase the amount of money in the special-purpose account. As you know, all money that goes into that special-purpose account is dedicated to the management of wildlife.

#### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** In the absence of the finance minister, my question is directed to the Deputy Premier today. Minister, there are 70 workers who have been walking picket lines in Hamilton. They've been on strike for about two months. Their employer is a democratic membership-based organization that's demanding major concessions from them. They

don't want to provide these women workers with full-time hours, they don't want to continue their pension plan contributions, and they want to roll back their sick benefits.

Deputy Premier, these women work for FirstOntario Credit Union, whose CEO boasts record profits. Do you think women workers should be treated this way?

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour):** The honourable member knows very well that as government we have had a very good track record at seeing collective agreements solved in this province; over 97% have been solved.

As well, the honourable member should be aware that it is the responsibility of the employer and the union to resolve their differences at the bargaining table. It's our hope, as always, that both parties will make every effort to conclude a new agreement.

The Ministry of Labour is certainly in a position and prepared at all times to offer mediation assistance to parties at the bargaining table. This assistance is available upon request.

**Ms. Horwath:** Back to the Deputy Premier: The bottom line is, I am actually a member of that democratic organization, and I planned to attend the FirstOntario Credit Union's annual general meeting, which was supposed to be held December 6. But in order to do that, they had to actually hold the meeting. Many members were waiting to go to that meeting to hold that board accountable and ask them questions about the strike. But I couldn't go because the finance ministry officials at FSCO gave the board permission to postpone their AGM.

Your ministry's meddling interfered with the democratic rights of the membership, prolonged the strike and has done serious damage to the cause of these women workers. Will you rein in your financial services regulator and ensure it stays out of labour relations matters that are clearly beyond its mandate?

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** It always strikes me, as the member for Hamilton East stands up and professes to advocate for workers in this province—perhaps at some point she can explain to workers and working families in this province why she and her party voted against ending mandatory retirement in this province, voted against ending the 60-hour workweek.

The honourable member should understand that the importance of collective bargaining is that we want both parties sitting at that table to work out their differences. It would be inappropriate for any member of this Legislature to interfere in that collective bargaining process.

Again, the Ministry of Labour always has mediators available. We're ready and willing to come in and provide assistance to both parties.

#### EDUCATION LEGISLATION

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville):** I've got a question for the Minister of Education today. Minister, students in Ontario claimed victory this week as the House passed Bill 52, learning to 18. The new law

requires all students to continue learning till age 18 or till graduation. It gives students more choice in programs that are offered to match their own skills, interests and goals. Bill 52 was introduced exactly one year ago. We held various public meetings on the issue, and we listened to the concerns. The Tories put partisan politics ahead of the interests of students and voted against Bill 52. Let's not forget the NDP, who offered no solutions and didn't bring forward one amendment to the bill.

Unlike the Tories and the NDP, the McGuinty Liberals have not turned their backs on students. Please tell this House how this bill will improve the success of students in this province.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education):** Thank you to the member for Oakville. I'm really proud to be part of a government—the McGuinty government—that has been willing to look at the school-leaving age for the first time since 1954 and recognizes that the conditions in 2006 are very different than the conditions in 1954.

I want to thank all the education partners and the parents and students who came to the committee and brought suggestions for amendments. My parliamentary assistant, Ted McMeekin, listened very well and then came forward and made sure that the amendments we put in place strengthened the legislation.

Only principals will be allowed to issue credits for learning outside the classroom; we've allowed courts to suspend drivers' licences as a last resort; and we've made sure that programs like the one in Oakville at St. Ignatius of Loyola, which is part of the Halton Catholic District School Board—it offers a program called the expansion of e-learning in a credit recovery classroom. This kind of pilot project will inform the kinds of programs that we're going to be putting in place going forward that are going to keep students in school. Six thousand more students graduated last year than the year before. That's what this program is about.

1510

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to standing order 37(a), I wish to advise you of my dissatisfaction with the response of the Minister of the Environment to my question about the Carp dump.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. You may file that with the table.

#### PETITIONS

##### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton):** This is the last of 2,200 individual signatures to support a school in south Nepean.

“Whereas Longfields and Davidson Heights in south Nepean are some of the fastest-growing communities in Ottawa and Ontario; and

“Whereas the Ottawa–Carleton District School Board has voted to authorize the final design phases for a grade 7 to 12 school to serve the Longfields and Davidson Heights communities; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario has lifted a three-year moratorium on school closings in order to make way for new educational facilities;

“We, residents of Nepean–Carleton, petition the Parliament of Ontario to ensure that the Ottawa–Carleton District School Board continues with plans to build a new grade 7 to 12 school no later than autumn of 2008 to serve the Longfields and Davidson Heights communities.”

I wholeheartedly support this petition and I affix my signature.

#### CHILD PROTECTION

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

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

“Whereas Ontario is one of the few provinces that does not have independent oversight of child welfare administration; and

“Whereas eight provinces now have independent oversight of child welfare issues, including child protection; and

“Whereas all provincial Ombudsmen first identified child protection as a priority issue in 1986 and still Ontario does not allow the Ombudsman to investigate people's complaints about children's aid societies' decisions; and

“Whereas people wronged by CAS decisions concerning placement, access, custody or care are not allowed to appeal those decisions to the Ontario Ombudsman's office;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we support the Ombudsman having the power to probe decisions and investigate complaints concerning the province's children's aid societies (CAS).”

I agree with this petition. I sign it and send it to the table by way of page Simon.

#### IDENTITY THEFT

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I keep getting petitions from the Consumer Federation of Canada. This petition reads as follows:

“To the Parliament of Ontario and the Minister of Government Services:

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

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

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

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

“We, the undersigned, demand that Bill 38, which passed the second reading unanimously in the Ontario Legislature on December 8, 2005, be brought before committee and that the following issues be included for consideration and debate:

“(1) All consumer reports should be provided in a truncated (masked-out) form, protecting our vital private information such as SIN and credit card numbers” and others.

“(2) Should a credit bureau discover that there has been a breach of consumer information, the agency should immediately inform the victimized consumer.

“(3) Credit bureaus should only report inquiries resulting out of actual applications for credit and for no other reasons.

“(4) Credit bureaus should investigate any complaints within 30 days and correct or automatically delete any information found unconfirmed or inaccurate.”

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

#### LAND TITLES

**Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford):**

I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

“Whereas, in the current environment of an escalating problem of title theft and mortgage fraud, property protections for homeowners are warranted and real measures are necessary to address real estate fraud; and

“Whereas MPP Joe Tascona’s Restore the Deed Act, Bill 136, has passed second reading in the Legislature and has been referred to the standing committee on general government; and

“Whereas, among others, the Restore the Deed Act has four primary benefits:

“—Reduce the harm by ensuring that the person who is the rightful owner of the property keeps the property. The innocent buyer or the innocent lender must seek compensation from the land titles assurance fund, as is New Brunswick law;

“—Prevent the fraud by restricting access to registration of documents to licensed real estate professionals who carry liability insurance, by requiring notification statements and the freezing of the register, as is Saskatchewan law, and by establishing a system of ‘no dealings’ where landowners can mark their title, which can only be removed by them using a personal identification number prior to the property being transferred or mortgaged;

“—Access to the land titles assurance fund be reformed as a ‘fund of first resort’ and be operated by an arm’s-length board of directors appointed by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, composed of a broad

representation of consumer, real estate industry and law enforcement groups;

“—Victims of fraud prior to the enactment of the Restore the Deed Act will be eligible to apply for compensation under the reformed land titles assurance fraud fund; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government’s proposed legislation will not get the job done;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to enact the measures to protect homeowners from having their homes stolen, as contained in MPP Joe Tascona’s Restore the Deed Act.”

I support the petition and sign it.

#### PEACE OFFICERS’ MEMORIAL DAY

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for an Ontario Peace Officers’ Memorial Day, and a memorial monument on Queen’s Park (Bill 131):

“Whereas, Ontario peace officers have performed significant and heroic duties to protect the public for over 130 years; and

“Whereas, Ontario peace officers have been murdered, killed, or died in the ‘line of duty’; and

“Whereas, federal peace officers have also been murdered, killed, or died in the ‘line of duty’ in Ontario; and

“Whereas, Bill 131”—my private member’s bill—“would establish a Peace Officers’ Memorial Day, and a permanent Ontario peace officers’ monument on Queen’s Park; and

“Whereas, Ontario peace officers are recognized nationally, along with police, at the police and peace officers’ memorial on Parliament Hill in Ottawa; and

“Whereas, eight (8) other provinces have police and peace officers’ memorials,

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 131 that would create a Peace Officers’ Memorial Day in Ontario, and a peace officers’ memorial monument on”—or in or around the precinct of—“Queen’s Park, where fallen officers’ families, other peace officers and the public can remember peace officers who have given their lives in the performance of their duties in Ontario.”

I wholeheartedly sign this petition in full support and ask members to do so, as I pass it to Philip.

#### GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I’m happy to present a petition:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas the high and unstable gas prices across Ontario have caused confusion and unfair hardship to Ontario’s drivers while also impacting the Ontario

economy in key sectors such as tourism and transportation; and

“Whereas the member from Superior North and the member from Essex, as well as the current ministers from St. Catharines, Eglinton–Lawrence and Sudbury have introduced legislation to freeze gas prices;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the government of Ontario consider an immediate temporary gas price freeze and fair and transparent gasoline pricing by supporting the previous members’ bills while international gas prices stabilize: Bill 10, the Gas Price Watchdog Act, introduced by the Liberal member for Thunder Bay–Superior North; Bill 18, the Gas Price Watchdog Act, introduced by the honourable Liberal member for Eglinton–Lawrence; Bill 80, the Gasoline Consumer Protection Act, introduced by the Liberal member for Essex; Bill 32, the Petroleum Products Price Freeze Act, introduced by the honourable Liberal member from Sudbury; and Bill 16, the Gasoline Pricing Act, introduced by the honourable Liberal member from St. Catharines.”

I affix my name in full support.

#### MACULAR DEGENERATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** Gosh, Speaker, you look just like the guy who read a petition a moment ago.

I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that was sent by dozens of people in the Niagara area through my seatmate, the member for Niagara Falls. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

I send greetings to my seatmate, the member for Niagara Falls. I’m pleased to affix my signature and to ask page Arianne to carry it for me.

1520

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I have a “Petition to Ontario Legislature to End Discrimination.” It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition and gladly affix my name to it and give it to page Daniel to deliver to the table.

#### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** I have a petition here. It was prepared by my wife, Michelle Berardinetti, and it’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. She should have sent it a few days ago, but it has arrived today.

“Whereas the province of Ontario in its last budget allocated in excess of \$2 billion for public transit expansion across Ontario;

“Whereas the majority of these funds are slated for subway expansion to York University up to the city of Vaughan;

“Whereas the city of Toronto has not yet acted on determining what it plans to do with the antiquated Scarborough LRT;

“Whereas the issue of resolving Scarborough’s LRT, along with a transit growth strategy for Scarborough, was

not adequately addressed in the TTC's latest transit growth strategy document;

"Whereas the current transit regime designed for Scarborough does not actively promote nor encourage increased ridership;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure that new provincial monies received by the TTC for transit upgrades and expansion go towards addressing the transit shortcomings in Scarborough."

I strongly support this petition, Mr. Speaker. I affix my signature to it and pass it on to you.

#### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** I have a petition to do with the viability of small, independent pharmacists and it reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government passed the Transparent Drug System for Patients Act; and

"Whereas as a result of the regulations of the bill, generic drug companies are required to supply drugs at the cost prescribed by the government; and

"Whereas generic companies have not agreed to these terms; and

"Whereas pharmacists are required to purchase the drugs at prices set by the generic companies; and

"Whereas the government's new formulary does not fully reimburse pharmacists for the cost of drugs; and

"Whereas the government has removed the 'cost to operator' provision; and

"Whereas pharmacists are forced to either lose money or bill patients for the actual cost of the drugs; and

"Whereas the viability of small, independent pharmacists is being threatened through the government's actions;

"Now therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government immediately return the 'cost to operator' provision, thereby guaranteeing affordable access to medication for all patients."

I support this petition.

#### FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Sir Frederick Banting was the man who discovered insulin and was Canada's first Nobel Prize recipient; and

"Whereas this great Canadian's original homestead, located in the town of New Tecumseth"—Alliston—"is deteriorating and in danger of destruction because of the inaction of the Ontario Historical Society; and

"Whereas the town of New Tecumseth has been unsuccessful in reaching an agreement with the Ontario Historical Society to use part of the land to educate the

public about the historical significance of the work of Sir Frederick Banting;

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

"That the Minister of Culture endorse Simcoe–Grey MPP Jim Wilson's private member's bill entitled the Frederick Banting Homestead Preservation Act so that the homestead is kept in good repair and preserved for generations to come."

I, of course, agree with this petition and signed it, and want to note that the Ontario Historical Society has sold the homestead. Shame on them.

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I wish to give notice of my dissatisfaction with the response to my question of the Minister of Natural Resources to do with funding the fish and wildlife program.

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, on that point of order: I want to file a notice of dissatisfaction about the question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** That is not a point of order.

Do you want to give that to the Clerk? Okay.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker:** One moment.

Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Lanark–Carleton has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of the Environment concerning the Carp dump. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

The Chair recognizes the deputy House leader.

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** I'd like to rise pursuant to standing order 55 and give the Legislature the business of the House for next week.

On Monday, December 18, 2006, in the afternoon, second reading of Bill 173, the Legislative Assembly Statute Law Amendment Act; in the evening, third reading of Bill 130, the Municipal Statute Law Amendment Act.

On Tuesday, December 19, in the afternoon, to be confirmed; the evening will be confirmed.

On Wednesday, December 20, 2006, the afternoon and the evening are both to be confirmed.

On Thursday, December 21, both afternoon and evening are also to be confirmed.

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of

Natural Resources concerning funding for the fish and wildlife program. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### ELECTORAL SYSTEM REFERENDUM ACT, 2006

#### LOI DE 2006 SUR LE RÉFÉRENDUM RELATIF AU SYSTÈME ÉLECTORAL

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 28, 2006, on the motion for second reading of Bill 155, An Act to provide for a referendum on Ontario's electoral system / Projet de loi 155, Loi prévoyant un référendum sur le système électoral de l'Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Debate? The Chair recognizes the member for Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins—James Bay):** I've been looking forward, actually, to participating in this debate. This is an issue that members of this House have heard me and others in my caucus and, I would argue, probably some others around here speak about on a whole number of occasions, and that is the issue of electoral reform.

I've felt for years that the system that we have now of first-past-the-post is one that at the time that it was designed worked well. It was done for a reason. But in a modern democracy such as we have today, where Legislatures have to deal with very difficult questions and we're talking about much larger budgets than we did in the past, I think it's much more important that we have an electoral system that at the end of the day will give you a certain proportionality to represent what the actual percentage of vote was inside your communities. It would be really nice to see in this Legislature, at the end, that if a party got 45% of the vote, 45% of the seats in that House would be represented by that party etc., and the only time a government would get a clear majority is if more than 50% of the public actually voted for them. What a wonderful thing that would be, because it would allow us and force us, quite frankly, to work together. Let me give you a couple of examples, and then I'll talk a little bit more specifically about the bill.

There have been times in this Legislature where we've had very controversial issues that have been brought before us, but because the government has a majority, they are able to use that majority to do sometimes what the public doesn't want or is sometimes completely opposite to what they promised in an election. If you had a system of proportionality, it would mean that a government would have to, at the very end, get the support of at least one opposition party or a combination of those members to pass whatever initiative.

1530

Let me give you an example. I remember a very difficult debate in this House for many people on the amal-

gamation of the cities. The government of the day, under Mike Harris, wanted to amalgamate Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Sudbury and many others, and the people in those communities had referendums—those who did—and voted against the idea of amalgamation. The government ended up ignoring the referendums and used the majority in order to create what we have now, the greater cities of Toronto, Sudbury, Hamilton and Ottawa, even though the citizens in those communities who are the ratepayers, who pay the taxes, said by way of referendum that they didn't want that to happen.

At least in a system of proportionality in this House, if the Conservatives of the day thought it was such a good idea, they would have had to come to the New Democrats, or the Liberals, at that time in opposition, to get us to support it so they'd have at least 50%. It would force us, in the opposition, to be a little bit more reflective in trying to figure out how to work with the government, because at times they would need to come to us for support, and obviously that would give us an ability to get things back. It would mean that members have to work together.

I listened to the debate where members have said, "Well, there are really bad examples. Look at Israel." I will argue that Israel is what she is today because of proportional representation. That country would never be able to govern itself in the climate that they are in unless it had PR because it allows them to pull together coalitions that are necessary to find a way to govern themselves. Others have talked about Italy. People don't understand the history of Italy. Italy was a whole bunch of city states and didn't become a nation until quite recently, actually. The actual date was 1870. What happened was that there were coalitions of left, centre, right—various coalitions—that came together to form a government, and Italy is doing quite well through that system of election that they have.

I would argue that there are better examples. I'm just using those that people like to point at as being bad ones. I would also point to the very strong ones, such as Australia and Germany. They have a mixed system of proportional representation that has served those democracies well. I will only say this: At the end of the day, those are among the strongest economic powerhouses in the world, and they govern under a system of proportional representation.

To this bill: This bill will allow the government to set the question. We're having our citizens' assemblies. Lise Breton, from my riding, and others are meeting with the public to get recommendations on what should be proposed as far as a concept for what type of model we want. That question is going to be put on the ballot in the 2007 election.

The problem with this bill is that the government is saying that the only way the referendum in the 2007 election is going to pass and be supported is if you get 60% of the vote, I believe, in two thirds of the ridings and 60% overall. I'm just saying that, to me, this is very anti-democratic. For example, in Canada, we've seen

Newfoundland join Canada under a principle of 50% plus one. If we had gone to Newfoundland and said, “60% plus one,” they’d still be out as a colony of England. It was a very bitter referendum debate and campaign they had back in—

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York):** In 1949.

**Mr. Bisson:** —in 1949—I was trying to remember the date—where it ended up being 51% that the Newfoundlanders voted to join Canada. If it hadn’t been for that—in other words, if you had this law in place—Newfoundland would still be sitting on the outside.

Every other concept that we have in our democracy is 50% plus one. When we go and vote as workers on our collective agreement to ratify or reject an agreement, the majority is 50% plus one. It’s not 60%; it’s 50% plus one. I’ve been in situations where I’ve been happy with an agreement or unhappy with an agreement, and at the end of the day, it’s the members who speak—50% plus one—and that’s the way it works. If this government argues that we should have a threshold that’s 60% of the overall vote, with two thirds of the ridings being in the affirmative, they’re telling you what they want in the end, and that is the status quo. Why? Because it suits the government, in the sense that they believe they will govern again, and they would like to have a clear majority in order to continue doing what it is they’re doing.

The other part of this bill that I think is problematic is that even though we’ve put together these citizens’ assemblies, they’re not going to give the citizens’ assemblies the ability to figure out what the regulations are vis-à-vis how the bill will be enacted. The government is giving themselves that power and they’re basically, like King John, going to decide at the end of the day what is to happen.

I wanted to put those couple of things on the record.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Bisson:** I should finish on that point, actually. I wanted to put those things on the record.

As I was saying earlier, and I was reminded by my good friend Mr. Prue, at the end of the day it’s not the citizens’ assembly that will set the question. They will go out and do all the hard work that has to be done, they will turn their attention to what they think they’re hearing from people and give a recommendation, but at the end of the day the minister can just disavow anything that’s happened at the citizens’ assembly and can herself set the question, which may not be the question that the citizens’ assembly wanted in the first place. So I say to them, why are you doing that? That’s wrong.

Je voudrais finir sur ce point-ci, qui est l’ouvrage sur lequel les comités des citoyens travaillent présentement. J’ai eu la chance de parler à Lise Breton, qui est notre représentante sur le comité. Je peux vous dire que ce monde-là est en train de prendre très au sérieux l’ouvrage qui lui a été donné. Ce monde-là essaie de se pencher sur la question que cette Assemblée lui a donné pour voir ce qu’on doit faire : est-ce que le système présent est adéquat? Sinon, y a-t-il d’autres systèmes ou idées qu’on peut regarder pour bâtir un système électoral qui

représente mieux les citoyens et regarder quels modèles feraient du bon sens pour l’Ontario à la fin de la journée?

Je peux dire que ce monde-là, qui travaille sur ces comités, sont très intéressés à quoi faire. Ils sont très dévoués au travail qui leur a été donné et ils le prennent tellement au sérieux. Il ne faut pas donner à ce monde-là l’impression qu’à la fin de la journée l’ouvrage qu’ils vont faire ne veut rien dire, en disant que la ministre va décider ce que c’est la question et que le référendum peut être accepté seulement avec 60 %.

Donc je dis, de la part de ceux qui ont été choisis au hasard pour nous représenter sur ces comités, qu’il faut leur donner le respect et l’habileté de faire ce qu’ils ont à faire sur leur comité, écouter attentivement ce qu’ils nous disent et leur donner au moins l’habileté d’influencer ce que la question va être sur le référendum à l’automne, en octobre 2007.

Sur ce, je veux dire que j’aimerais finalement voir changer le système. Mais le projet de loi qu’on a présentement n’est pas, très franchement, adéquat en donnant à la ministre tous les pouvoirs et qu’elle peut faire ce qu’elle veut sans écouter les personnes qui travaillent sur ce dossier.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments? Seeing none, further debate?

Mrs. Bountrogianni has moved second reading of Bill 155. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members; there will be a 30-minute bell.

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** May I interrupt, Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the House whip.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** “Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on the motion by Minister Bountrogianni for the second reading of Bill 155, An Act to provide for a referendum on Ontario’s electoral system, be deferred until deferred votes on December 18, 2006.”

It is signed by David Levac, MPP, chief government whip.

Orders of the day?

**Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General):** I move adjournment of the House.

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** No. Liberals don’t want to work.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. When a motion to adjourn the House carries before the usual 6 p.m. adjournment hour, a scheduled adjournment debate late show is automatically carried over to the next sessional day on which such debates are held, which is Tuesday. Therefore, the late shows originally scheduled today are carried to Tuesday, in the event of passage of the motion to adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until Monday, December 18, 2006, at 1:30 p.m. of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1539.*

**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	<b>Brown, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (L)</b> Speaker / Président	Haliburton–Victoria–Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)
Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford	<b>Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)</b> 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	<b>Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L)</b> 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	<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)</b> 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	<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)</b> 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	<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> 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	<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (L)</b> 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	<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L)</b> Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Eglington–Lawrence	<b>Colle, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (L)</b> Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration	London–Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Elgin–Middlesex–London	<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)</b> Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)</b> Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Erie–Lincoln Essex	<b>Crozier, Bruce (L)</b> 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	<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L)</b> 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	<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L)</b> 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	<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)</b> 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	<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)</b> 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	<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)</b> Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé	Timiskaming–Cochrane	<b>Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> 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	<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)</b> Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)</b> 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	<b>Sorbara, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (L)</b> 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	<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b> 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	<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)</b> Minister of Economic Development and Trade, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce, ministre délégué à la Condition féminine
Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	Windsor–St. Clair	<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)</b> Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie
Sarnia–Lambton	<b>Di Cocco, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (L)</b> Minister of Culture / ministre de la Culture	York Centre / York-Centre	<b>Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L)</b> 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	<b>Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L)</b> 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	<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)</b> 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	<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)</b> 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	<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)</b> 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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