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# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 5 April 2007

Jeudi 5 avril 2007

Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Thursday 5 April 2007

Jeudi 5 avril 2007

*The House met at 1000.*

*Prayers.*

WEARING OF FLOWERS

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to ask for unanimous consent for members to be able to wear this beautiful tulip, which is to promote awareness of Parkinson's disease in the month of April.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is there consent? Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS'  
PUBLIC BUSINESS

MUNICIPAL AMENDMENT ACT  
(DIRECT ELECTION OF DURHAM  
REGIONAL COUNCIL CHAIR), 2007

LOI DE 2007 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES  
MUNICIPALITÉS (ÉLECTION AU SCRUTIN  
GÉNÉRAL DU PRÉSIDENT DU CONSEIL  
RÉGIONAL DE DURHAM)

Mr. Ouellette moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 172, An Act to amend the Municipal Act, 2001 to provide for the direct election of the Durham Regional Council chair / Projet de loi 172, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités pour prévoir l'élection au scrutin général du président du conseil régional de Durham.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to standing order 96, Mr. Ouellette, you have up to 10 minutes.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** The region of Durham is growing at an astounding rate. In fact, it's recognized as one of the fastest growth areas in the country. Oshawa and Durham region have also experienced unprecedented economic growth and prosperity in recent years, and that's never been more evident than the drive in this morning. It was three times as long as it normally takes. Oshawa is listed as one of the highest-growth communities up to 2009, maybe to 2012, with all the growth and development going on there.

The regional government provides many essential services for the people. The regional chair position now

oversees over 600,000 constituents—a very important position indeed. Now it's time to have a chair who is directly elected by the people he or she serves.

On November 13 of last year, in the municipal elections, the residents of Oshawa, Ajax and Pickering were asked if they supported the direct election of the regional chair, and the results were overwhelming. In Ajax, the support for a directly elected regional chair was 89.39%; in Pickering, the support for a directly elected regional chair was 89.24%; and in my riding of Oshawa, the support was 86.31%. On February 14, 2007, Durham regional council endorsed the resolution.

I must say that I've been very impressed and actually overwhelmed with the support that I have seen in response to the introduction of this bill. I can't get over the number of phone calls, e-mails and correspondence, all complimenting this bill and the importance of democracy at the local and regional levels. As a matter of fact, I will give some examples from the local weekly paper, Oshawa This Week: "Electorate Says Yes to Voting for Regional Chairperson"; "Region Endorses Bill Calling For Direct Election of Chairperson." Ajax mayor Steve Parish: "I hope this bill is supported by government and passed expediently." Oshawa mayor John Gray: "Mr. Ouellette is fulfilling the requests of the people of Oshawa." Ajax councillor Colleen Jordan: "It is time we start moving in the direction people ask us to." And our member from Durham, Mr. O'Toole: "I commend [Mr. Ouellette] for reintroducing this bill, as it reflects the wishes of the people of the regional municipality of Durham."

I think the important point here is that this is why I previously introduced the bill; that is, this bill is what the people of Oshawa and the region of Durham have requested and voted for. They want more democracy in our area and they expect the government to support their wishes.

I know some concerns have been brought forward—I met with the minister briefly yesterday and we discussed this—that we may hear this morning regarding the cost of implementing a direct election. Well, the evidence is clear that in other, similar jurisdictions they have moved forward with a direct election for the regional chair and the cost concerns have not been validated.

I would like to share some of the information on similar experiences from the region of Halton and the region of Waterloo, two regions which are very similar in size and population to Durham region and which now have an elected chairperson. The evidence from these jurisdictions is interesting, but not quite surprising.

General observations from these regions show that voters are now accustomed to and pleased with having a directly elected regional chair, and voter turnout is consistent with other municipal elections.

There is no indication that a party apparatus backs or assists any candidate. There is no evidence that candidates cannot campaign effectively. The incumbent advantage is no different than in any other election. There is no apparent advantage to candidates from larger municipalities within the region. In fact, the chair of Waterloo region is actually from a township and not from the larger municipalities of Kitchener, Waterloo or Cambridge. The residents feel the elected chairperson best represents the entire region. The residents believe that the direct election results in a chair that is more powerful and, quite frankly, more accountable.

If you look at some of the stats from Waterloo, for example, the chair was first elected in 1997 and the voter turnout was very consistent with other municipalities in similar situations. The highest-spending candidate in the previous election—they have the stats for 2003; as 2006 was just finished, they don't have those returns completely compiled yet. In 2003, the chair for the region of Waterloo spent a total of \$25,883 to get elected, a considerable amount less than what the average member in this chamber would spend. Not only that, but in Halton, where the chair was first elected in 2000, the chair spent a total of \$40,388.22 in order to get elected.

As well, I would read a number of pieces of information from, for example, the town of Ajax. This is re Bill 172, direct election of regional council chair. It's to the Honourable John Gerretsen, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**1010**

"Dear Sir:

"Please be advised that the following resolution was endorsed by Ajax town council at its meeting held on January 22, 2007:

"That the government of Ontario be urged to approve Bill 172, the Municipal Amendment Act (Direct Election of Durham Regional Council Chair), 2006, without delay;" and it goes on.

Not only that, when you look at what took place at Durham region council—this is a letter to the Honourable Dalton McGuinty, the Premier of Ontario:

"Honourable Sir, at their meeting held on February 14, 2007, the council of the regional municipality of Durham endorsed the following resolution:

"Whereas the" chairperson "of the regional municipality of Durham has considerable responsibility, influence and authority over numerous public policy and service issues affecting all residents, businesses and electors in the region of Durham;

"And whereas a fundamental principle of democracy is that the electors, through a general vote, have the right to freely choose their political representatives;

"And whereas an identical question was placed on the Ajax, Oshawa and Pickering municipal election ballots asking electors if they wished their local councils to

approve a resolution to request that the government of Ontario make a regulation requiring that the method of selecting the chair of the regional municipality of Durham be changed to election by general vote;

"And whereas electors responded to the ballot question as follows"—and it goes on to list:

—Ajax: Yes, 89.39%; No, 10.61%.

—Pickering: Yes, 89.24%; No, 10.76%.

—Oshawa: Yes, 86.31%; No, 13.69%.

"And whereas the ballot question results, while not legally binding as 50% of the ... electors in any of the municipalities did not vote on the question, indicate significant support for changing the method of selecting the regional chair to election by general vote;

"And whereas Bill 172, Municipal Amendment Act (Direct Election of Durham Regional Council Chair), 2006, which would require that the head of council for the regional municipality of Durham be elected by a general vote, received first reading by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario on December 12, 2006;

"Now therefore be it resolved:"—remember, this is to the Premier from the council of Durham region—"That the council of the regional municipality of Durham endorse Bill 172, Municipal Amendment Act (Direct Election of Durham Regional Council Chair), 2006, and that the government of Ontario be urged to pass this act and provide royal assent without delay."

It's quite clear, when you receive information such as this, when you see the votes coming in on the municipal ballots saying that over 86% and 89% in Ajax in Pickering want it, that those areas specifically want this to move forward.

Some of the difficulties: We heard or we thought that if it was directly elected, the larger municipalities would control what takes place. However, that's quite contrary to what has been shown in the region of Waterloo: It was from a township that an individual has been elected as chair. So quite clearly, the concerns brought forward by some of the municipalities in the region—and yes, there are pros and cons for everyone. I know some of my colleagues will expressly bring out some of those pros and cons, especially my seatmate, who is the former chair from the region of Halton and will discuss some of the actual financials, possibly, some of the levy costs and the overall implications of directly electing a regional chair.

The evidence is clear that the region of Durham is now ready to move forward with the direct election of the regional chair. I would ask all members for their support and consideration on this day.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** I rise to support this particular motion. I rise to support it not only because the people in Durham have spoken very strongly through the ballot box that they want this but also because I think that the whole way in which regional governments have been structured in the past is arcane. It's of another era. It's of a time when the province would meddle in the affairs of the municipalities, which hopefully is coming to an end.

I remember and we all remember the time when the province had a say in who was going to be the regional chair, and that the regional chair was not even an elected person. In many of the regional governments across Ontario today, they are not elected. They do not seek office. What they do is seek the support of those who have been elected to office. They make deals with politicians and they make deals in order to get elected. It's done in a closed group, and the public has very little or no say in how it is done.

I support what the member for Oshawa is trying to do, but I think it isn't going far enough. I'm going to vote for it. But what is good for Durham should be good for all the other regional governments in Ontario, for all those places that do not have one-tier governments like Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa or London. All of those places that have a two-tier government should have the same opportunities. We've seen what happened in Halton. We have a member today, the member for Burlington, who was the first regional chair of that municipality and who was directly elected. It seemed to me that she did a pretty good job. I think she was elected and re-elected again until she determined that the time was up and she wanted to move on and come here.

The whole issue of having non-elected people in charge I think would rankle any true democrat. It would rankle anyone who thought that this was the way to go. Therefore, because the people have spoken so strongly, there should be no doubt in anyone's mind that we give them what they want. Because the municipal politicians have backed that up, there can be no excuse, which I have heard from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing from time to time, that he's not going to take action on referenda because the local municipality doesn't agree with the people. That's the case in the city of Kawartha Lakes, and that's the rationale he has given for not doing it. But he cannot have a similar rationale here, because not only do the people want to change the system but the politicians want to change it too, and there should be absolutely no hindrance in getting that done.

There was one question raised by my friend from Oshawa that is related to the cost. I'm not sure within the body of his bill when he intends this to happen, if it's right away and to go out for a brand new election, or whether he wants this to happen in the elections in 2010.

**Mr. Ouellette:** Next election.

**Mr. Prue:** It's 2010. If it's in 2010, I want to tell you that the cost will be so minimal to the municipality. There are already poll clerks, there are already ballot boxes, there are already electoral places that will be determined to house the poll clerks and the ballot boxes. The cost of putting an additional couple of names on a ballot will be minuscule.

Just to close, I think this is an idea whose time has come for the people of Durham. I would implore the government to look at this, and if you're going to do it for Durham, think about all the other municipalities. Think about Peel, about York region, about all the other places that have regional governments with appointed

chairs. This harkens back to a day which has long passed. If the government is true to its word, and I have heard many members on the government side speak to this and say that they believe municipalities are mature levels of government, then they also have to believe that the municipal electors are mature levels of electors and have the confidence and the good sense to choose in their minds who is best for them and not to leave it up to a municipal council to appoint someone who does not even seek elected office.

**Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre):** I'm delighted to join in this debate. I want to begin by stating that I do have a lot of respect for the member for Oshawa. He is a hard-working MPP, and he's also a fellow hockey coach. For anybody here who thinks that it's tough to be a politician and you take a lot of abuse, try being a hockey coach. It's a heck of a lot tougher than the job we have to go through year in and year out. I know the member for Oshawa is an excellent hockey coach because he happens to coach my constituency assistant Monica's son, David McGee. I've heard nothing but good things, and when you hear good things from a hockey parent about a hockey coach, it means he must be pretty darn good. So I congratulate him for that. I tell him I have a lot of respect for him for that.

Unfortunately, I'm not going to be able to support his resolution today, and let me explain why. You see, our government believes that the best solutions in municipal governance are those that are developed at the local level and supported locally. While I know and I recognize that there is what seems to be a building consensus for direct election of the regional chair throughout the region of Durham, there's still a process in place whereby municipal representatives and the public can bring forward this change. I really don't feel comfortable usurping that process to sort of dictate from here what we think is best rather than allowing the municipal politicians to participate in what I think is a very legitimate and proper process for them to go through.

**1020**

Let me just outline what the process is. It sounds complicated but it's really quite simple. Regional council would have to pass a resolution requesting that the minister pass a regulation under something called subsection 218, regional powers—not very difficult for them to do. It sounds like there may be a consensus at the region that may allow them to do that. Notice of this and the holding of a public meeting would be necessary. I think that's important. The public should have an opportunity to speak to this.

A bylaw would be passed by the regional council and circulated to lower-tier municipalities for endorsement. Councils of lower-tier municipalities would then vote on the upper-tier bylaw, and the bylaw would have to be passed by a majority of lower-tier councils representing the majority of the public by the population.

I don't think it's that difficult to get that kind of consensus. When you do make a change in terms of structure of governance, it's important that you do have a con-

sensus. There is not a full consensus out there right now, and that's one of the concerns we have. The community of Clarington, for instance, is on record as being opposed to this. We don't think their views should be totally ignored. This could still go forward under this structure without Clarington's support, but we think their voice should be heard.

In addition, the representatives from the township of Brock, the municipality of Clarington, the township of Scugog, the town of Whitby and the township of Uxbridge voted against the resolution at regional council. So I am not sure whether the consensus is as strong as we are being told today. It may well be, but if it is, there is a very fine way for the municipality to bring this forward.

I don't want to get too political here, but our approach to municipalities is that we have confidence in municipal leaders to be able to carry out their responsibilities. That's why, under the new Municipal Act and the new City of Toronto Act, we have given them more authority and more autonomy. We have confidence in their ability to do this. This is an approach that's directly different from the approach taken by the previous Tory government, which felt they had to—I don't want to use the word "dictate," but it's probably appropriate in this circumstance—dictate to municipalities when they thought, "You should amalgamate." For instance, in the city of Toronto, where 73% of the people didn't want to do it and despite the fact that there was almost unanimous consent—almost unanimous, not entirely—from local representatives not to do it, they thought, "The province knows best; let's impose this."

My concern is that this is a similar approach, and I think it demonstrates the differences in the approach taken by the different governments. The McGuinty government looks for a consensual approach: "Allow municipalities to do what they're entitled to do and use their autonomy. We have confidence they will do that appropriately."

We are not going to impose a solution on them here, even though most of us on this side of the House probably agree that direct election of a chair makes sense. There are a lot of good reasons to do that. We just don't feel we are in a position where we want to impose that. We want municipalities to go through the proper process and develop the consensus they need with their people, with upper and lower tiers. We think that's the more appropriate way to go, and as a result we won't—I won't—be supporting and I won't be recommending that members of the Legislature support this particular resolution.

Well-intended as I think it is, we think it just runs contrary, going through and imposing our view at Queen's Park on the people of Durham. It's not the appropriate way to go.

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline (Burlington):** I'm pleased to rise and support my colleague from Oshawa on his private member's bill. I speak from personal experience, having been elected twice as a regional chair in Halton. Just from a personal point of view, I can tell you that

there is no more honour or pride than in having the trust of the people shown to you in a public vote. It was a really good feeling in 2000, when council requested of the provincial government of the day to have the regional chair of Halton directly elected.

The first direct election of the regional chair was in 2000, and I guess because it was the first time, many of us wondered how, physically, this would be carried out in a large area that spanned four provincial ridings. But, quite frankly, it's what the people wanted and it was something they accepted and took great pleasure participating in.

I asked council to make this request of the provincial government because it was at a time when services and financial responsibilities were being transferred to the regions, whereas previous to that the regions were collecting about 14 cents of every property tax dollar. When the transfer of services and financial responsibilities occurred, we were collecting much more than that. It actually turned about, and the local area municipalities were collecting about 14 cents or 15 cents of every dollar, school boards were collecting about 14 cents or 15 cents of every dollar and the region was collecting about 70 cents of every property tax dollar. I felt it was critical that the head of council be directly accountable to the people, based on the amount of money that that particular level of government collected in taxes.

Overriding, for me, was the accountability directly back to the people whose services you were providing, whose money you were collecting, whose advice you needed to take and whom you needed to report back to. It needed to be a direct relationship, not a relationship through members of council who were elected. That indirect relationship was a broken line for me. It also speaks to democracy. My family came to Canada in 1953, and we lived in refugee camps. I know what democracy feels like. Democracy is being in Canada; democracy is being in Ontario: having the ability to speak out and say what you would like, and most especially having the right to vote for the people who represent you. So democracy for me was a big part of why the regional chair in any municipality should be directly elected.

Appointed by council, as I said, is that broken line that occurs and it's that disconnect with the people. Even though your style may be to connect directly with people, you still don't have that same accountability that you do when you're directly elected by the people. You all know how that feels, because we're all directly elected to this Legislature. It's a good feeling. It's a strong feeling. It gives you a confident feeling that you're representing the people.

Being an appointed chair, to me, resembles the appointed bodies that occur from time to time, and I am not a proponent of special-purpose bodies. I never have been. The more that are created, I think the more problems that occur. Decent people serve on appointed boards, well-meaning people serve on appointed boards, but when it comes down to it, they are not accountable directly back

to the people. MPAC, OLG, CCACs, LHINs—these are well-meaning people that run these arms-length, autonomous corporations, but do you know what? People can't reach the people making the decisions, and I don't think that's right in a democracy.

In a government that delivers the critical services in a municipality, if the federal government were gone tomorrow, we wouldn't know for a year. If we were gone tomorrow, you wouldn't know for months. If the local level of government were gone, you would know the instant you tried to turn on your tap, you tried to turn on your lights, you wanted an ambulance, you called for a fire engine or you called for a police car. It is the level of government that touches the people closely, directly and instantly. The person that heads that council should be directly accountable to the people.

The critical services that are delivered come with a high cost and in large part are invisible services, so you don't know about regional government as quickly as you might know about your local government that runs the buses on the streets, that has the parks that your children play in, that floods the ice rinks that your children play in and that has the libraries. Those are visible things in the community. But your regional government presents a product to the people that, for the most part, is invisible.

**1030**

When you turn your water on in a regional municipality, you don't think about who is responsible for that service. You don't even think about whether your water is clean and safe; it just happens. That invisibility of regional government is, I think, something that needs to be changed. One way to do it is to create the direct election of the regional chair, because then that person goes out into the community and the community becomes aware of who that person represents.

If you think about it, in councils where regional councillors are indirectly elected to the region—for example, in Burlington they are elected as Burlington councillors and then appointed to the region—most councillors don't run on regional issues. Most councillors run on issues very local to them: on parks and recreation and libraries and that kind of thing. Those larger issues are never profiled. But the regional chairman is the only person in a regional council that represents the entire region. If that person is elected, he or she is accountable to that entire region.

These are the critical services that are provided in a community. Let me tell you folks that since the realignment of services occurred in the late 1990s, regional budgets are very large, topping over half a billion dollars and more in the larger regions. This is a lot of money for councillors to be handling, but the head of council ought to be accountable directly back to the people for that large amount of money that's collected and overseen.

It's not a difficult campaign, because when you're campaigning in a local municipality the issues don't really vary much from municipality to municipality on a regional basis. The geography is larger; no question. But it is not a difficult campaign, and I speak to that from personal experience.

I feel that the pros far outweigh the cons. I've told you about why I feel it's important that the mandate to represent the entire region and to be accountable is the overriding issue for me. It's about democracy. It's about being in the new millennium, being a sophisticated municipality where the people have the right to say who they want as the head of their council.

I will say, though, that there are a couple of issues that are—what can I call it?—less than advantageous in a process like this. One of them is that if the municipality chose—I haven't seen this happen in any area where a regional chair is directly elected—party politics could creep in. I'm not a believer that party politics belongs at the municipal level; it does not. You see it in some of the very large municipalities and, quite frankly, it does not work. That is one opportunity that I think would be a disadvantage. The other thing is that name recognition sometimes can override the ability of the person to actually carry out the job. That could be a disadvantage to the municipality. But I think that, given what I know from experience, the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I will be supporting this bill that the member from Oshawa has presented. I agree with many of the arguments presented by the member from Oshawa, including the arguments presented by the member from Burlington, except the last comment, and I'll get to that in a second.

The member from Scarborough Centre raises an interesting point—and the only point that he said that he will be voting against—and that is the principle of consensus and that they have the power, as a regional council, to be able to, on a consensus basis, simply come to terms with this issue. It seems like a very reasonable argument. On the face of it, it sounds as if it would be very difficult to say, "How could you disagree with the notion of consensus?" It seems so friendly; it seems so nice; it seems like the way to do things, except, if we did things by consensus nothing would ever happen, by and large, because you're always going to have one person saying no, for whatever reason. In this case, one little town might decide, for whatever reason, "No, we just don't like it." If you left it to the principle of consensus, no change would happen. So, should the notion and/or the principle of consensus override the principle of direct accountability and the principle of transparency? I say no to that argument. I think direct accountability should override consensus in this regard. I think transparency is a much better principle to speak about and to support rather than the issue of consensus in this case.

When you run for a regional council chair, you are running on a platform that is clear and transparent to the public. You are forced to put out a platform. As the member from Burlington said, you would be running on regional issues, not local issues, so when you run, everyone in every region would know what ideas you are advocating for and on that basis people will support you or reject you. How could we oppose the idea of direct election? It's hard for me to say I would oppose that. I

like direct election. I like the idea that people have a platform and that I know what he or she stands for. On that basis, I either vote for them or I don't vote for them.

I understand the fears; I do. I appreciate the fact that some of the towns in that region would be very worried about losing their possible autonomy or their smallness and that they might be swallowed up by the big ones. It's a possible, legitimate fear. But I'm not sure that that fear is greater if you have a direct election versus the fear that you might have now at the present time in a non-direct election. I think the fears are equally true whether you elect somebody directly or not. So while I understand that there may be fears, the principle of direct election should override that fear.

I don't think cost is an issue. My colleague from Beaches–East York said there isn't much of a cost issue, the member from Burlington said as much, and the member from Oshawa. I don't think that's an issue, and I'm not sure that we're going to get too many arguments connected to the issue of cost.

I wanted to remind the member from Oshawa that I will be supporting it, in spite of the fact that your leader, Harris, at the time, you'll recall, when he amalgamated the city of Toronto, did so in spite of the fact that over 80% of the public that was consulted in a referendum said no to amalgamation. We should remember that because I was supportive of the people who, in a referendum, said we shouldn't amalgamate, in the same way that I'm leaning to support your argument that a lot of the people where there has been a referendum are leaning heavily towards having direct elections. We have to be very supportive of those kinds of initiatives. I'm convinced that the member from Oshawa remembers this very well and is likely not to ever repeat that mistake, in the same way that the NDP was in government then and made a few mistakes and is likely not to repeat the very same ones. It's true that you might commit others, as we might, should we ever get into government, but I think we are not likely to repeat the same ones.

The member from Burlington raised another fear, and that is the fear of party politics at the municipal level. I have never been frightened of party politics at the municipal level. In fact, I believe the majority of people know which party we belong to. I am convinced that the good folks who elected the member from Burlington knew then that she was probably a Conservative Party member and/or a Conservative Party supporter or a member who has Conservative politics. I am convinced that people know us, in the same way that if I did not reveal my leanings when I was a school trustee, in the way that I spoke, in the motions that I supported, people would say, "He looks and sounds like a New Democrat." So what separates us from saying, "I am a New Democrat and vote as a New Democrat, but I do not reveal myself as New Democrat"? The point is, we reveal ourselves in the way we speak and the way that we vote, and people know that. So hiding your politics is subterfuge, really.

**1040**

I'm not sure that we would making politics at the municipal level worse if all of a sudden people said, "I'm

a Tory," and others, "I'm a Liberal," and others, "I'm a New Democrat." We have it now, except there is no label at the moment.

But all I say to people is: Look at the voting record in all of the regional council debates, all of the city debates, town debates; look at the voting patterns of individual members and you can pretty well have a good sense, "This person is a Tory; this person is in the middle, always a Liberal; and this person is a New Democrat"—usually a New Democrat on the left. There are times when some Liberals go to the right and some Liberals go to the left. This is equally true, but on the whole, people know, based on their voting pattern.

The main thrust of my argument is that direct accountability is something we should all be supporting. People have a right to know who is going to be their regional chair where we have regional governments; and to go further, as my friend from Beaches–East York said, where we have regional governments, the government should move quickly to direct elections. It shouldn't be just as it relates to this Bill 172; it should be with all regional governments across Ontario.

I think it's good bill. It's a bill that I will be supporting and many of the members of the New Democrat Party are likely to support. We will see whether other Liberal members have a different point of view than the one raised by the member of Oshawa.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon (Scarborough–Rouge River):** I rise to speak on Bill 172 as presented by the member from Oshawa. I have to say that I pay respect to the member from Oshawa that he is trying to move forward the business of his city of Oshawa. But the member mentioned several things that I am concerned about. I cannot support this bill in its present form because the member seems to go through the statistics that the city of Oshawa and the town of Ajax moved resolutions to support this bill. Also, there was a question on the ballot in Ajax, Pickering and Oshawa and there was overwhelming support for this particular bill. He mentioned the percentages, but I tend to look at the numbers. He mentioned that there are approximately 600,000 people in the region of Durham. When I look at the numbers of people who actually voted yes, it's only 48,892. I would calculate that to be less than 10% of the population of the region. Ten per cent, to me, is not an overwhelming majority and it does not tell me that the people of the region have spoken strongly. Even if I were to take that and further break it down by individual cities, it probably would show a whole different picture altogether.

I have to say that our government has been working very hard to build a relationship with municipalities over the last three years. There has been a lot of good bridge-building, if I can say, within the last three years. I would have to say that I'd respect the municipality's wishes. If the municipality wanted this to happen, we have legislation today that allows it to happen. If the region of Durham has debated their resolution to support Bill 172 and actually advised the government that they support Bill 172, I would find it overwhelming to support this bill



if the region had also followed the process in the Municipal Act, which is clearly stated in section 218. Let me just clarify why it concerns me that we are not following section 218. If you read the details of section 218, the regional council has to pass a resolution requesting the minister to change regulations. But one specific part of section 218 reads: "Bylaw passed if the majority of lower-tier councils representing a majority of the upper-tier electors endorse the bylaw." There's a specific reason for that in the act today, because what it does is provide fairness for the minority partners of a regional municipality. It allows the minority partners to have some type of fairness before something happens that affects the smaller group or the minority people in that particular region. This particular bill, I do not believe, respects the wishes of the minority regions because it's really looking after what Ajax, Pickering and Oshawa want and it's ignoring the other smaller municipalities.

I pulled down from the Internet the vote of the regional council of Durham when they debated Bill 172 and it's interesting to note that the mayor of Pickering voted no, although his people want it. So you have to ask yourself, "What is the problem here?" Well, obviously there isn't consensus. The whole Municipal Act is designed in such a way that you have some form of consensus or agreement by the general public and the majority of the people who are around.

This particular bill reminds me of what happened in Toronto. I was a member of the city of Scarborough council at the time. I will tell you, it will come across, if we accept this bill and support it, that the province is meddling in the municipal world again. To me, I can't support that. There are many pitfalls with what happened in Toronto and, no matter what, the government will not be looked upon positively if we impose this bill on the region of Durham. So I cannot support it.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** It's interesting that the Liberals aren't supporting this bill, because it deals with the electoral process and it deals with a lot of the same things that are happening with the parliamentary reform committee and how that's operating in Ontario. It's interesting how that's operating in that 103 members, who were unelected—in fact, were unknown by the constituents that they represent—were brought together to talk about changing the way in which we elect members to this House. Here we are discussing how—or will be discussing in the bill—those people are going to be elected to this House, and we have no idea who the 103 people were who came together and created this system. They were totally unelected. There was no review. There was no peer review, certainly, as to who they were. They came together and created a system, which they refer to as MMP, I think it is, that is going to change, or could possibly change, the way in which the Ontario government is run.

The Liberals have supported this bill and they're bringing in this new system which could very well change the way Ontario is governed. So it's not surprising that we stand here today and listen to the Liberal

Party and they're totally against, or not in favour of, having the due process of democracy take place, and the chairman of a major region with a population that is greater than one province and perhaps two or three provinces—it certainly is a very large area that they are representing—isn't elected. There seems to be a theme that runs through it.

Not only that, we stand in our place here and talk, and I know that, whenever I talk about things, I'm hopefully well briefed on it and somewhat knowledgeable on the things I talk about. I sometimes wonder about other members of this House as to whether they have that same degree of knowledge as to what they talk about. I'm certainly not talking about the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who is always well briefed, but he was looking at me rather surprised when I mentioned that.

**1050**

But today we have someone in the House who has actually gone through the process that we're talking about going through in the former chairman of the region of Halton, Joyce Savoline, who went through the process of becoming an elected chair, of representing the people. She stood in her place today and told of her experience. So we have this first-hand knowledge. First-hand knowledge in this place is always fairly rare. I think even the Minister of Municipal Affairs would agree that it's fairly rare to have that first-hand knowledge and experience when we're discussing a particular bill.

It was interesting to listen to her account of how it felt when you're on one side of the equation and how differently it felt when you were on the other side of the equation and how much better it is when the people whom you are representing actually elect you to office in that you have that feeling of representing those people in a very real sense. So we're fortunate today to have this. I'm surprised, quite frankly, that the Liberals aren't understanding this aspect of it. They're getting this first-hand experience. I'm surprised they're not a little more open-minded on this particular subject. But then, I guess when we consider the direction the reorganization of the political process in the province of Ontario might be taking, in that we may move to a mixed-member proportional representative system where up to 30 seats in this House, in this Legislature, wouldn't be elected at all—they would have no responsibility to an individual group of electors; they would be elected off a list—this is something that is so undemocratic. To be elected off a list means that you would have absolutely no responsibility to the people of Ontario. You would only have responsibility to the people who made up the list: the party bosses. Boy, if we need less influence by party bosses anywhere in this province, it would certainly be in this Legislature.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Chudleigh:** I'm getting lots of advice from members across the hall, but I suspect when the time comes, we will see them stand and vote the wrong way on this bill.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** I wasn't expecting necessarily to speak to this bill but certainly

will take the couple of minutes that were left over after my colleague and friend from the riding of Trinity–Spadina made his remarks, as well as my friend from Beaches–East York. I would have to say that I stand firmly with them in support of this particular bill.

Certainly, when I was on regional government, in my first opportunity to be elected in my community there was direct election of a regional chair and I think, frankly, which was the best way for people to hold to account elected officials. It's the best way for people to be able to determine whether or not the performance of that person met the standard that they had hoped, that that person was performing their duties in an appropriate way and that judgment came on election day at the municipal level, when people could vote for the person who was running for regional chair and determine whether the person who had that position was doing a good job or not.

There are certainly other ways that you can express your feelings or your concerns about the performance of your elected officials during their term of office, and I would certainly encourage anyone watching here today to do that on a regular basis and not just wait until the next election. I can recall that always being said when I was on council in the city of Hamilton: "We don't have too many public meetings and we don't need to have public input because the public input comes on election day." I don't think that I necessarily agree with that; in fact, I know that I don't. I think getting public input and getting the community to be involved in decision-making is important. However, ultimately, direct election of the regional chair is important, and that's why I support this bill.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland):** It's a pleasure to join this debate this morning. I want to congratulate the member from Oshawa for bringing this forward. I was part of a government that was two-tier prior to this, and I know the frustration one goes through on that upper level. In my case, it was a county. We had a warden who was chosen amongst the mayors of each municipality. In a majority of times, things worked out just fine, but sometimes there were some challenges; let's put it this way. And not once or twice; I'll be very clear.

The problem that I have with this—the cost and the accountability and all of that stuff, I think, is all irrelevant when we talk about democracy at its best, with all fairness. Where I have a challenge with this—I wish the member would have broadened the scope of his bill so that it's not just for Durham. I think we should have talked about all two-tier municipalities, because I really believe that what's good for one should be good for the other. If we're going to treat Ontarians the same, every Ontarian needs the same respect. I believe in elections; I believe in democracy. That's what put us here, and we should all be proud of that. My challenge is when this level of government goes down to its siblings and puts handcuffs on them, telling them, "This is what you must do." That's what I have a problem with, in all fairness. So if we are going to change laws, I think the law should

respect every municipality and every community the same.

In the county that I come from, in 2002, we had some amalgamations. They were driven by the folks at those lower-tier municipalities; that's what they wanted to do. I must say, we went from 13 municipalities to seven, and they work very well. They were not imposed on us. We drove that piece, but we worked within the structure and the rules of the day.

I'm not sure how much more strongly I can express that I believe in democracy, in the election process. As much as sometimes we say, "Well, it's only 30% of the people who turn out and vote," we ought to congratulate those 30% because they believe in democracy, and I respect that. We need to look at ways to increase that.

My challenge here is that we're going to be circumventing the rules for one municipality when they don't have consensus. I have a resolution in front of me from Clarington that strongly opposes this. And there are other municipalities, probably smaller than Oshawa, probably smaller than Ajax. I guess maybe I have a soft spot for those municipalities because I come from a small municipality, and it's always afraid of Big Brother ruling the roost. That happened when we were going through amalgamation in the county of Northumberland to form a one-tier level of government. That's one of the things that the smaller municipalities were opposed to, and this is why the smaller municipalities got together, they amalgamated, and it worked very well.

So we have the process in place. I would encourage the folks from Durham to go through the process, to listen to what the people have to say, and proceed with that. If tomorrow we have another piece of legislation that deals comprehensively across the province on how we deal with two-tier municipalities, how we elect folks, I'd really like to get engaged in that debate and to pursue that piece, because I believe they should be elected. I make that very, very clear. My problem here is that we're using some powers of the province—and I don't want to get political either—that the previous government used, and I don't want to go down that road. I believe in decisions made on the ground. So I cannot support this the way it is, but I do believe in the process.

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

**Mr. Ouellette:** I appreciate the comments from the members for Beaches–East York, Scarborough Centre, Burlington, Trinity–Spadina, Scarborough–Rouge River, Halton, Hamilton East and Northumberland. I'm going to try, in the time I have, to speak about a couple of issues.

First of all, Beaches–East York: Yes, the intention would be to move forward in 2010, during the next full election.

I should also mention that the member from Erie–Lincoln has brought a bill in to address the same issue in the region of Niagara. He has had similar difficulties as I did, being stuck on the 401 trying to get here.

**1100**

Now, a couple of things. I think we'll start where we finished off, with the member from Northumberland.

You talk about the difficulties in possibly the smaller municipalities being taken over, yet you also stated that you went from 12 to seven and didn't have any problems and it worked well. Going to a committee process and having a committee look at this bill at least would explore those opportunities, so if there's future potential for our doing it province-wide—and, quite frankly, the reason I didn't go province-wide is because I represent Oshawa. I had the stats and the figures from Oshawa and the comparators with Halton and Waterloo to bring forward today. Through the committee process, we can certainly address those issues and talk about that and, quite frankly, your municipality would be given the opportunity at that time to discuss the pros and cons of it.

Now, if we move backwards as well and speak to the issues brought forward by the member from Scarborough—Rouge River, the member stated that the mayor from Pickering voted against it. Well, some of the difficulties there in his comments were saying that the minority is making the decision there. It's now the minority that's making the decision, and it's democracy. We're trying to move forward.

In closing, in the few seconds I have left, I'm just going to say what the region of Durham resolution was: "That the council of the regional municipality of Durham endorse Bill 172, the Municipal Amendment Act (Direct Election of Durham Regional Council Chair), 2006, and that the government of Ontario be urged to pass this act and provide royal assent without delay."

#### VISITORS

**Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I wish to inform this House that a private school from the riding of Thornhill is in attendance here today. I wish to welcome the students from As-Sadiq Islamic School.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** That's not a point of order, but they are welcome.

#### WAR OF 1812

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should establish an independent commission to devise and carry out a plan for the commemoration of the bicentennial of the War of 1812; that this commission should include among its members representatives of groups dedicated to the preservation of Canada's military history and heritage as well as representatives of Ontario communities that are the sites of battles or other significant events of the war; and that the government of Ontario should work with the government of Canada and other governments to commemorate the War of 1812 during its bicentennial and afterwards as an important tourism and educational experience.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mrs. Munro has moved private member's notice of motion number 50.

Pursuant to standing order 96, Mrs. Munro, you have up to 10 minutes, and the floor is yours.

**Mrs. Munro:** Before I begin my formal remarks, I would like to welcome and recognize Rob Leverty, who is in the gallery here representing the Ontario Historical Association, and, in the gallery above, John Adams and Joe Gill, from Friends of Fort York. I want to welcome them and appreciate their support.

Just a few days from today, Canadians will gather together to remember with pride and sorrow the battle of Vimy Ridge. Ninety years have passed since this great and terrible battle, which many see as the birth of Canada as a fully independent nation. Our ancestors of 90 years ago would themselves have looked back to the battles of the War of 1812 as events that helped create the Canada they knew. The Canadians who fought in the battles of the War of 1812 laid the path for the nation that would send its troops to Vimy and for the nation we live in today.

Why is it important for us to remember the War of 1812? It is important because if the people of this province had not taken a stand to defend their freedoms, neither our province nor our country would exist. The actions of our ancestors in the war remind us that preserving freedom means we must sometimes risk our lives. Canadians know this in Afghanistan, they knew it in Korea, and they knew it in two world wars. They first learned it in the War of 1812.

My resolution proposes to establish an independent commission that includes amongst its members experts on the war and representatives of those communities most affected by the war. I want to see this commission working with the federal government and other provincial governments, as well as the US federal and state governments. In my consultations, I have received unanimously positive support for the idea of this commemoration. Indeed, many of the volunteer groups that help preserve our forts and sites, as well as government agencies involved in heritage and tourism, are already planning for the bicentennial of the war. A provincial commission would help coordinate commemorative events and assist local volunteer groups and communities in their commemorations.

Another growing group that is very interested in the bicentennial are historical re-enactors who commemorate many of the historic regiments and events of the War of 1812 and the revolution. In the US, bills and resolutions to commemorate the war have already been introduced in Congress and many state legislatures. Americans may dispute who won the war, but there is no question the events such as the burning of Washington and the battle of New Orleans are important in American history. The Star-Spangled Banner originated in the war during the siege of Fort Mifflin in Philadelphia. In fact, the bombs bursting in the air of their anthem actually came from our ships.

The bicentennial provides a tremendous opportunity to educate our people about our history and to help them enjoy the tourist value of our heritage. Forts and battle-

fields and other sites are scattered throughout Ontario: from Crysler's farm near Morrisburg to the battle of the Thames in southwestern Ontario; from Nancy Island in Georgian Bay to the battle of York, and south to the forts and battlefields of Niagara. Defenders of Canada included British troops, local militia and Native forces, including those led by the great Tecumseh.

I know some of my colleagues will be speaking more about some of the important events that happened in their local areas. Sometimes when we think about battles taking place in Ontario, it's hard to really believe they took place in our province. Vimy or Juno Beach cost many Canadian lives, but they occurred far, far away. The battles of the War of 1812 happened only miles or, in the case of this House, blocks away.

Canadians see our nation as a land of peace, yet it is amazing how many of the turning points of our history took place during war. Ontario was founded by Loyalists fleeing the American Revolution. We stood together during the War of 1812. Our nation came of age in two world wars. Canadians have been tested many times in wars. I'm glad we did not fail.

The wars we have had to fight to preserve our freedom have made us well aware of what peace and freedom mean. One particular reason it is vital for this Legislature to commemorate the war is because of the events of April 1813. American forces landed at York on April 27 and defeated the British and militia forces. On April 29 and 30, they committed some of their greatest outrages, plundering empty homes, burning parts of Fort York, and the town and even stealing the mace from the Parliament buildings. The American commander did return some of the plunder, including some of the books stolen out of the public library. The mace you can see downstairs in the foyer today was only returned by order of President Roosevelt in 1934.

Perhaps the greatest outrage committed in York was the burning of Upper Canada's Parliament buildings, the meeting place of our predecessor assembly. As their successors, we have an obligation to remember the war—to remember that the elected assembly of our province was attacked and to remember how the war affected members of this House and, indeed, all of the people in Ontario.

**1110**

As members of this assembly, we can be proud that our predecessors continued to meet regularly during the war. We have no Hansard record from this time, but we do know the words the Lieutenant Governor spoke to the assembled members in his speech from the throne in 1814: "The valour of our soldiers and citizens has proved what can be effected in a good cause by men who have nothing in view but their own honour and their country's safety." As a member of this assembly, I can only express my greatest respect for our predecessors continuing to meet throughout the war, even after the Parliament buildings were burned and the war continued.

Not only the seat of government suffered; the war presented a great burden for most residents of Upper

Canada. In 1814, the Legislature, addressing itself directly to the Prince Regent on behalf of the King, stated, "The whole male population of Upper Canada able to bear arms does not exceed 10,000 men and it is scattered over a frontier of at least 800 miles in extent. Nearly one half of these were embodied for the last campaign." The war probably affected almost every family in Ontario, and in their address to the Prince Regent they told him, "Many of our militia men have fallen by the sword of the enemy, many have been disabled, and a large proportion of them have died from diseases contracted while in the field and from being destitute of every comfort. Our population has decreased, our properties have been destroyed, and hundreds are reduced to beggary and want without even the consolation of knowing that their exertions, their fidelity and their sufferings have been represented to the government and to the country for the maintenance of whose rights they have made such sacrifices and such exertions and to whose favourable notice they look forward as their greatest reward."

We must never forget that the war was not just a series of battles. It was a time of great suffering for many people in Upper Canada. Our ancestors defended their freedoms and their loyalty to crown and country, but many did so at a tremendous price. The war did not end in a victory for either side, yet the survival of a free British North America meant that half a century later there could be a free Canada. It meant 200 years of peace, a peace that leaves our country with no fear of beggary or want, living in peace and freedom. Our debt to the men and women who fought and survived the War of 1812 is immense, and we hold an obligation to remember them and their struggle.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh):** It gives me pleasure today to speak on this motion presented by the member from York North. Certainly I respect the member's interest and passion for history and heritage and culture. Long before I got to this Legislature, I knew of this member and I knew of her passion and interest, and I want to thank her for what she has done there.

I think it's important for me at this point to indicate to this House what has already been done by the Ministry of Tourism with regard to the opportunities that we will have in 2012 to celebrate the bicentennial of the War of 1812. As a ministry, and as the parliamentary assistant, I'm pleased to say that we have identified six key sites in this province where we are now in the process of organizing focus groups, and from those focus groups, local committees. Focus groups have already been established in St. Lawrence and the Thousand Islands, and that brings in the area I represent, my constituents of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh. There are also focus groups in Windsor–Chatham, Georgian Bay and Sault Ste. Marie, and from these focus groups now we have local committees formed. These local committees have received small grants to assist them in the early works of

establishing what strategies will be put in place—a draft plan—and hopefully by the early part of this summer we will have some idea of what will happen, what will take place and what ideas will be formulated in these areas. I'm very happy to report that to this House.

Speaking on the motion this morning, I just want to say that throughout Ontario we have some great opportunities all along the St. Lawrence, around Lake Ontario and along the Niagara River. I taught school for 32½ years and had the opportunity to bring many students to heritage sites related to the War of 1812. I brought students to Fort Erie, down to Fort George in Niagara-on-the-Lake—certainly tramped many times around Queenston Heights and Brock's Monument—and to Fort York. I understand there are representatives here today from Fort York. I'm delighted to hear that. Year after year in my English class at Viscount Alexander school in Long Sault we studied *Treason at York*, by John Hayes, a very interesting historical novel.

I'm hoping that the opportunities we have as we lead up to 2012 and the bicentennial will give the drive to individuals to profile literature. For example, in my own local area, Dorothy Dumbrille wrote *A Boy at Crysler's Farm*. The member from York North referred to Crysler's Farm in her opening remarks and in her presentation earlier today. That is a very pivotal battle in the War of 1812-14. It took place just as you head down the St. Lawrence River to where the Long Sault Rapids used to be. The Long Sault Rapids are no longer there. They were flooded in 1958 when we lost the six communities of the Lost Villages. Even the site of the battle of Crysler's Farm was flooded. But before it was flooded, earthmovers came in, scoured up the earth from the site and built a huge mound. Today the obelisk that was put up to commemorate that war sits on top of that mound of earth.

I think all that along the St. Lawrence, around Lake Ontario up to Erie and even into Quebec—the member commented that she wishes the federal government would get involved here, as do I, because this is really a national event. We have the battle of Chateaugay, in Quebec. We know that Montreal was quite involved, because it was the interest of the forces of Wilkinson, as he headed down the St. Lawrence to team up with the forces of Hampton as he went up through Lake Champlain, to take Montreal to cut off the supply and immigration routes up the St. Lawrence. These are the stories that I'm hoping we will be able to tell and profile and put on a pedestal.

The member also made comments about people who do re-enactments at these different sites. In eastern Ontario, at Crysler's Farm, we have the Friends of Crysler's Farm Battlefield Memorial. Every year they put on a celebration, a re-enactment. This year, on July 14 and 15, they will have another re-enactment at that site. Providing for this commemoration of the bicentennial will give added support to the good work these people do in encouraging people to travel and learn about their history and heritage, and also to present and tell the story

of this great province. It's one aspect of a great history that we have.

As a retired history teacher, I'm really proud to have had the opportunity of standing here and speaking to this bill.

**1120**

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey):** I'm pleased to rise and speak on the resolution introduced by my colleague the member for York North, Julia Munro. I support establishing an independent commission on developing a plan for the bicentennial commemoration of the War of 1812.

This morning I want to take a few minutes to recognize the local efforts in my riding of Simcoe–Grey and in my home community of Wasaga Beach in presenting annual events that commemorate the War of 1812 at the Nancy Island Historic Site.

The Nancy was a schooner launched in November 1789. She originally sailed the upper Great Lakes as a private cargo vessel built for the fur trade before being pressed into service as a British supply ship in the War of 1812-14, which was fought, of course, between the United States and Britain in Upper Canada.

While in this service, the schooner was destroyed in the Nottawasaga River by American forces. When the United States declared war against Britain in 1812, the Nancy was wharfed at what is now called Windsor. At that time, the Nancy was requisitioned as a British transport, capable of mounting six four-pound carriage guns and six swivel guns, according to an inventory provided to General Isaac Brock.

During the summer and early autumn of her first year of war service in 1812, the Nancy sailed Lake Erie, transporting goods between Detroit and Fort Erie. Following a devastating battle in September 1813 against the British fleet, the Nancy was the sole surviving British ship left on the upper lakes. Until the summer of 1814, the Nancy continued in service as a transport to the British fleet between Fort Michilimackinac to the mouth of the Nottawasaga River.

Following the American forces' attack on Fort Michilimackinac in July 1814, the Nancy was hidden upriver two miles from the Nottawasaga supply base by Lieutenant Worsley and his force of 22 seamen and 23 native Canadians under the command of Lieutenant Ramsay Livingston and nine French-Canadian voyageurs.

When the Americans discovered the hidden Nancy, she was attacked by three American ships and 500 men armed with a formidable array of guns and weaponry. Knowing the situation was hopeless, and rather than let her fall into enemy hands, Lieutenant Worsley destroyed the Nancy in the Nottawasaga River.

Over the next 100 years, an island was established by the Nottawasaga River currents, gradually depositing silt on the sunken hull of the Nancy. It was not until July 1911 that Mr. C.J.H. Snider located the Nancy hull, which was at that time visible beneath the surface of the water. Another 14 years would pass, though, until the

Nancy was rediscovered by Dr. F.J. Conboy in 1925. More than 114 years following its destruction, the hull had been raised and placed on the island with the official opening of the Nancy Museum in 1928, designed to commemorate the site of the Nancy's demise and her gallant defence.

Now known as the Nancy Island Historic Site, this seasonal tourism destination operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Natural Resources in Wasaga Beach. As part of its commitment to sharing history, the Nancy Island Historic Site provides an annual re-enactment that attempts to capture the spirit of Lieutenant Worsley and his men during the 1814 battle of the schooner Nancy. Over the three-day event, the public is able to wander with up to 400 volunteer re-enactors staying on Nancy Island and participating in a grand encampment in historic 1812 fashion through what is called Wasaga Under Siege. The re-enactors include families that entertain visitors with military tactics and lifestyle activities that include live period music, meals prepared over open fires, musket and cannon demonstrations, settlers with their wares and a variety of other demonstrations. Re-enactments of historical and other fictional battles are fought in beach areas 1 and 2. The battles end with the British winning the local Nottawasaga battle.

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie—Lincoln):** I don't remember that battle.

**Mr. Wilson:** And it's the same thing every year.

The efforts of the Nancy Island Historic Site, featuring the Wasaga Under Siege re-enactment, were acknowledged in 2006 when they won the Wasaga Beach Chamber of Commerce business of the year award. The award recognized the role of the Nancy Island Historic Site through its historical programs and the 1812 re-enactments in making the community a tourist destination noted for its general service and hospitality in sharing such a remarkable history with all visitors.

In 2005, more than 4,000 visitors enjoyed the War of 1812 Wasaga Under Siege experience. In 2006, the Nancy Island Historic Site had almost 13,000 visitors. The economic contributions of these activities are significant to Wasaga Beach and our area communities. In this regard, attendance numbers to events at the island demonstrate the success of the interpretive education and historic programs offered to the public during a seasonal operation that provides three full-time summer jobs. Already, Wasaga Beach and the Nancy Island Historic Site have set aside the weekend of August 12-14, 2012, for the bicentennial event.

The War of 1812 is an important part of Ontario history. I'm happy to share the efforts of my riding to promote the events of the War of 1812 for both Ontarians and visitors in a meaningful, educational manner.

Let me conclude that, again, I'm pleased to support the resolution put forward by my colleague from York North establishing of the War of 1812 bicentennial commemoration. She certainly deserves great credit for bringing this forward.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** I suspect, like pretty much everybody in the House today, that

we're all going to be supporting this initiative by the member for York North.

I wanted to focus my remarks in this regard on my own experience of growing up and being raised in a community where one of the great battles took place, and that's the Battle of Stoney Creek, and I'm sure that the member for Stoney Creek is going to be speaking about this as well. I'm a Creeker. I certainly did grow up in Stoney Creek. In fact, the Battle of Stoney Creek took place not too far from where I grew up. There is a monument there. There is a castle, if you want to call it that. There's a park, and every year there are re-enactments not only from Canadians who participate in the re-enactments but Americans come as well for these re-enactments. It's a fabulous celebration in our community of the history of what took place in Stoney Creek during the War of 1812.

I want to spend a little bit of time explaining exactly what exactly took place during the War of 1812 in the area of Stoney Creek, so I'm going to read from an article in the Upper Canada Tribute that was published June 7, 1813, and it says this:

"An American army was seen marching up the forested paths of Stoney Creek, towards Burlington Heights, by local settlers, 19-year-old Billy Green and his brother Levi, on June the 5th. This army of Yankees was the same group that had defeated General John Vincent's army, only a week earlier at Fort George. This army of about 3,000 troops (as told by witnesses) had walked up the trail, planning on trying their luck again, and to invade farther into Upper Canada.

"They stopped at a farm of the wealthy homeowner James Gage and made camp, as they were weary after the day's march, with little provisions. Some nearby settlers claimed to have seen the army walking quite a bit farther up the road, looking for a good area to set up camp, although obviously not thoroughly pleased with the land they then turned around, and marched back to the Gage farm. American Generals, Chandler and Winder, took control of the house, locking the large family in the cellar. The house became their headquarters.

"A local blacksmith named Isaac Corman, was taken to the encampment, as a prisoner. Corman let slip that he was Kentucky born, and related to an American general so they gave him leave, with the password, so that he would be able to get out of the camp safely. Billy Green learned the password from Corman, his brother-in-law."

The article goes on to describe the battle that ensued after the British troops decided that they were going to be able to take the Americans by surprise. Interestingly enough the battle, although the Americans had a larger number of troops, was won by the British largely because of this element of surprise and the fact that the American troops were caught unawares by the British and the surrounding settlers who joined in the battle. In fact, the way it's described, it says,

"When he arrived at the Heights, it was full of about 1,800 redcoats (most of them wounded and ill), local militiamen and civilians fleeing from the Yankees. There

were green-coated Glengarrys of the St. Lawrence, a company of black men commanded by Captain Robert Runchy, and regular soldiers, hundreds of miles away from their homes.” This describing the troops who gathered together to fight in that battle.

The article goes on to describe in great detail the skirmishes that occurred over those two days in the Battle of Stoney Creek. It concludes by saying,

“The Battle of Stoney Creek (June 5th and 6th) was a wise decision on the part of the British. Had the soldiers not marched up the path from Burlington Heights to Stoney Creek, the Americans would most likely be invading farther into Upper Canada at this very moment. Instead, they are believed to be heading with great speed towards the border, and it is all because of the short 45-minute battle fought in Stoney Creek.”

I know that the member in her comments remarked about the historic nature of the War of 1812 and what it meant for us as a Canadian nation. I think this one description, particularly of the Battle of Stoney Creek and the likelihood of advancement of the American forces, had that battle not been successful was certainly looming large in the mind of the writer of this article in the Upper Canada Tribute from back in 1813.

#### 1130

I said at the beginning of my remarks that I grew up in Stoney Creek. As I was reading some of these articles and I came upon names like, of course, James Gage—anybody who has been to Hamilton know that Gage Avenue is a major street in our city. It will be the experience of all of the members, I’m sure, in this Legislature who have had historic commemorations of the events that took place over centuries in the past that many of the street names of those communities are named after significant players in some of those events.

In just this one article they refer to James Gage—of course, Gage Avenue being an important street in my own riding of Hamilton East—but also Billy Green, the young man who was the first to tip off the British about the advancing Americans. The member for Stoney Creek will know that Green Road is a very important street in the former city of Stoney Creek, which is now part of the larger city of Hamilton.

As well, this blacksmith named Isaac Corman—and, growing up in Stoney Creek, Corman Avenue was another street that a number of my friends lived on. I lived on Grays Road—that’s “Grays” with an “s,” as opposed to “Gray” with no “s,” which is a little controversy that continues to roar from time to time in Stoney Creek.

But nonetheless, growing up in Stoney Creek and knowing the history of the War of 1812 and the significant role that the battle of Stoney Creek played in that war, I was quite honoured about a year ago to be approached by an organization in Hamilton called the Canadian Club. The Canadian Club was commemorating an anniversary of theirs, a significant anniversary. They asked me to participate in a bit of a skit, if you will, in

period costume, commemorating some of the events of the Canadian Club.

In fact, the article I just read from the Upper Canada Tribute is illustrated with a painting by a woman named Sara Calder. Interestingly enough, Sara Calder was the woman whom they asked me to portray in this historical skit at the Scottish Rite Club, which is a fabulous facility in our downtown area.

The Canadian Club asked me to play the part of Sara Calder, so I needed to do a little bit of research on her. I found out—I was surprised they asked me to do it—that she was a very vocal woman of her time. She was a woman who was in the women’s auxiliary in the Canadian Club. One of the things she actually undertook, much to the chagrin of the gentlemen of the Canadian Club at the time, was an effort to raise funds to develop a memorial for the battle of Stoney Creek. Sara Calder was pooh-pooed by the gentlemen of the Canadian Club and told that there is no way the monument would be able to be funded and there was no way there would be enough monies raised to put together a monument to the battle of Stoney Creek.

She said, “No, I don’t agree with you. I am going to go and make this effort on my own with the ladies’ auxiliary, and we’re going to put up a monument to the battle of Stoney Creek.” Sara Calder went ahead, notwithstanding the disdain of the male members of the club, and made sure the money was put together to raise the monument at the battlefield which now exists, at which there are many celebrations that take place memorializing or commemorating the war.

Having said that, one of the other things I think is interesting is that Sara Calder—which is why there’s a painting of hers in this article—was a founding member of the Women’s Art Association of Hamilton. To her credit, she had spent a great deal of time painting various scenes around Stoney Creek and around the community at the time. Some of those paintings recently were brought back to the battlefield and are actually displayed there at Battlefield Park in the Gage House, I believe, although I’m not sure exactly where the paintings sit at this time.

So it was quite fortuitous that the member brings this particular resolution forward, and it’s one that I certainly will be supporting, because I’ve had the opportunity a couple of times now to reflect upon not only the War of 1812 but specifically the battle of Stoney Creek and to learn so much more about that in my participation with the Canadian Club in their efforts to do some fundraising, quite frankly, but to also spend some time commemorating their own history as an organization in Hamilton.

I have to say that the reality of war is not a pleasant one, ever. As we go through, hopefully, the efforts of putting together the commemoration of this war in various communities in Canada and in the United States, I think it’s important to remember that there are many people who were not memorialized in any of the monuments, or at least not in many of them.

I wanted to refer particularly to the First Nations communities that participated in many of the battles. I

would hope that we make sure that we're engaging First Nations communities in terms of their efforts that they added to this monumental occasion back in 1812.

People will know that there were a number of black slaves who had fled America and had come to Canada, either as slaves, initially, or through the Underground Railway and other initiatives to flee from slavery, and those men were also participants, on behalf of the British, in the War of 1812.

So, as we go through this commemoration process, as we go through this process of putting together the various events that, as the member indicated in her resolution, will be tourist draws and important times to reflect on our history, I think we need to really make sure that we're engaging First Nations and the black community to make sure that their role is not overlooked and that they are equally memorialized in our efforts as we move forward.

As I was reading through this article on the battle of Stoney Creek, one of the things that comes straight out at you is—they're talking about the legacy of the war. Interestingly enough, although we see the War of 1812 from the perspective of our nation-building, if you like, in terms of the British-American issues that were on the table, some would say that there really was no resolution, that the War of 1812 didn't really resolve any of the outstanding issues that brought it to a head in the first place. Having said that, though, one of the things that does come through clearly is—in this article, it says, "Although a monument is raised in honour of the soldiers involved, no Mohawk warriors are credited in it for doing battle."

There was a corps called Runchy's Coloured Corps that actually fought at the battle of Stoney Creek—and there were other participants from the black community.

I have to say that as we go forward and we look towards the celebrations, we have to make sure that those celebrations reflect accurately on all of the various players who participated on behalf of the British in the War of 1812.

I know that there are other members from the Niagara region who are going to be speaking to this as well.

As a person who grew up in that area, the significance of the War of 1812 for many of the communities in that area is nothing to dismiss. It's something that was part of my growing up, part of my heritage. At Battlefield Park, particularly, not only were there re-enactments, but there were often fireworks celebrations on Canada Day and Victoria Day. That was certainly a great part of my growing up.

I can only look back to people like Sara Calder and others who had the foresight to make the big effort and to raise the funds to put these memorials together. As I look back at my youth and the times that I spent at Battlefield Park, particularly, I know that if it wasn't for their efforts at that time, there certainly wouldn't have been the memories that I have around Battlefield Park. That's probably the similar experience of many members here who have those kinds of memorials in their communities.

As we go forward with this initiative—and I certainly hope the member from York North gets full support for

her resolution—let's make sure that on this bicentennial celebration effort, not only are we pulling in some of those participants who perhaps were overlooked in the previous memorializations of these battles, but that we are then setting a new foundation for the children and the young people of today to remember the significance of the War of 1812 to Canada.

**1140**

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member from historical Stoney Creek.

**Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek):** I rise today to support, of course, this motion coming from the member from York North, whom I really do respect for all the work she has done in heritage and culture. She was my predecessor as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Culture, so I take particular interest in this.

However, you cannot talk about the War of 1812 without talking about Stoney Creek, as you've just heard. It was the turning point of that war, the battle of Stoney Creek, and it is re-enacted in exquisite detail, magnificent energy and enthusiasm every year on the first weekend in June. I invite each and every one of you to come back. You will be absolutely amazed. You will think you have stepped back in time, because the Americans, the British, the Canadians, the Mohawks—they all come. They are in full authentic regalia. These volunteers, these individuals, through their own money, their own effort, create these garments and these costumes. They have tents set up; there are fires burning; there are muskets roaring. It's quite an amazing site to see. I think it's June 2 this year. It's a Saturday, right after the Flag Day parade in Stoney Creek. I invite you all to come and spend the day in Stoney Creek to see the battle of Stoney Creek.

I have to just take a moment: The re-enactment happens at Battlefield House Museum and Park—32 acres in Stoney Creek of nature, trails, herb gardens, a lovely monument and two early-19th-century houses which are impeccably restored. It's amazing, the work that is done by the staff and the volunteers who keep this house—there are two houses, because they moved Nash-Jackson House there, and it's spectacular. I was very privileged to be able to take a cheque for \$300,000 from this government to Battlefield House Museum and Park recently to make sure that they are ready for the big anniversary coming up.

I'm very quickly going to try to capture some of the excitement of that battle, because nothing goes as planned, does it? We all think back—oh, there was a battle; these guys went over here and they won, and then these guys went over there and they won. But it doesn't always work that way. Actually, it's a little of: you're on, you're off, and things get messed up.

On May 27, the Americans had captured the British position at Fort George and the British, under Brigadier General John Vincent, retreated to Burlington Heights. The Americans, under the overall leadership of General Henry Dearborn, were slow to pursue, but when they finally did so, a force numbering 3,400 under Brigadiers General John Chandler and William Winder advanced to



Stoney Creek, where they encamped on June 5. The two generals set up headquarters at the Gage farm, which is now Battlefield House, and you can see it.

One of Vincent's staff officers, Lieutenant Colonel John Harvey, reconnoitred the American position and determined that it was badly placed and inadequately protected. He recommended making a night attack. The British column, 700 men from the 8th and 49th regiments, were guided to the American camp by a local farmhand—Billy Green, the scout, already remarked on by the member from Hamilton East—and I can tell you, there's a Billy Green Elementary School in my riding which is taking part in the healthy schools challenge, which is a much better battle to be involved in, but I digress.

So the British arrive, and little Billy Green had been able to find out the American password and the American challenge, which was brilliant work on his part. The British arrived in position at 2 a.m. on June 7, and began advancing towards the American campfires, but in the darkness they stumbled into American soldiers. Either Indians or the British—we're not sure who—raised the Indian war whoop immediately and the Americans were alerted. Harvey had already ordered the flints to be removed from British muskets so that there wouldn't be any premature firing, no mistakes to alert the Americans, and some of the units had actually even unloaded their muskets. So the small party, under Major Charles Plenderleath, rushed forward to capture four American guns with the bayonet, but most of the British were still back there, trying to get their flints going, their muskets going, and they were more surprised than the Americans, because there they were in the heat of battle and they didn't even have their guns ready to go. So, you see, it doesn't always go very smoothly.

Now, where are we here? Winder mistook British troops for his own men and he got captured, so there was another misstep in all of this. Major Joseph Lee Smith of the 25th US Infantry saw the capture of Winder and he alerted his men and was able to reverse.

Even though things were going so terribly for the British, this actually did end up being the turning point, because the casualties in this confused fight had been about even, and the Americans had been shaken by this. With their general's capture, the American colonels decided that Dragoon Commander James Burn was the man to go ahead, but he was already criticized for having made a mess of a previous attack, and he made a bit of a hash of his next step. The American flotilla on the lake that had been supplying all these guys got wind of things going badly, so they retreated, and eventually it was this big skirmish at Stoney Creek that got the Americans into retreat mode, and finally they retreated all the way back across the river.

Despite my enthusiasm in describing this great battle, I am conflicted to a certain extent in promoting the celebration of a war. But in our modern-day celebrations of these things, we do focus more on the vagaries of war, and we focus on the need to find alternatives to solving our differences and our conflicts, other than through war

and through violence. In fact, over the centuries we have learned that sitting down and talking to each other actually is a very effective manner and method of resolving our differences. If it was not a very effective means of resolving our differences, then the history of mankind would indeed be very different. In fact, if war and violence were the only solution, we would not be here at all at this point.

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** Let me start my remarks by saying that I'm pleased to stand today and support the resolution on the creation of a War of 1812 bicentennial commemoration commission by my colleague sitting right beside me, the member from York North.

The War of 1812 was a defining moment certainly in our history as Canadians, and indeed for those now living in the province of Ontario. I phoned my brother, who is quite a history buff and a history teacher, to get a follow-up, and I could not, of course, in the time we are allowed, say all the things that he told me about the War of 1812. But his theme was that there is not enough emphasis put on the history of our great country that is being taught to our children, and on the noticeable achievements of our ancestors before us. It is taking a backseat in our schools. Our students can name past US Presidents, but they can't name maybe the heroes of the War of 1812, and I think that is quite a tragedy that we should start to rectify.

So despite the fact that many causes of the War of 1812 were geographically far removed from our colony of Upper Canada at that time, our lands proved to be the immediate battleground of much of the war, and many of my colleagues have mentioned what battles took place in their ridings. They didn't come as far north and east as my riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock. But it was a significant demonstration by Canadians to remain independent of the United States and loyal to the British crown. The war of 1812 was the first time that native Canadians, French Canadians and British colonials fought together in defence of their land. I believe there were even some regiments from as far away as Newfoundland that were sent to help the United Empire Loyalists up here in Ontario.

The numbers would not exceed 100,000 in total, but in the face of adversity, Canadians of all backgrounds proved themselves and heroes emerged, heroes such as Sir Isaac Brock. To many, the hero of Upper Canada is best remembered as a brilliant leader and strategist in battle. He was promoted to Major General of the "49th foot" in 1811 and was made provisional administrator of Upper Canada.

**1150**

Despite Brock's early preparations for the upcoming war, his men were gravely outnumbered. He was concerned about the loyalties of some of the people to the British crown, but the province's inhabitants consisted at that point, as I said, of United Empire Loyalists and of "late Loyalists," who had just recently arrived from the United States. Brock's immediate superior, the Governor of Canada, Sir George Prevost, urged Brock to remain on

the defensive and not risk battle, but Sir Isaac Brock would go to lead his men to fight valiantly on behalf of the crown. And even when fatally wounded, he encouraged his York volunteers to push on. So Brock's memory as the fallen hero and saviour of Upper Canada has remained extraordinarily strong in Ontario's history, and we must ensure that those efforts are not forgotten.

Similarly, we must remember the efforts of another great hero, Ms. Laura Secord, whose portrait hangs in this very building. While billeting American soldiers in her home, she and her husband overheard the American plan to attack the British forces, and with help from the native forces, who were allies of the British, Laura Secord was able to complete the arduous, I believe 20-mile journey, to warn the local British commander, Lieutenant James FitzGibbon of the impending American attack. So the courage and tenacity displayed in the efforts on this occasion, June 1813, places her certainly in the forefront of the province's heroines. I believe there's a simple frame building, restored in 1971, that remains as a memorial to the exceptional patriotism that she showed.

We want our children to understand and preserve stories like those of Isaac Brock, Laura Secord and native leaders like Tecumseh, and we need to commemorate those people who fought so valiantly to defend people of the province that we as MPPs now work so hard to represent.

So the creation of a War of 1812 bicentennial commission would be a significant step towards adequately honouring and celebrating our history in this province. I want to commend the member from York North for bringing this forward and look for all-parties' support on that. Thank you.

**Mr. Hudak:** I'm pleased to rise and support my colleague from York North, Ms. Munro, on her resolution today. I think we all know Ms. Munro as a dedicated educator who spent a good part of her life in instilling in her students an appreciation and a deep understanding of Canadian history and a pride in civic life. As an MPP in her second career, she continues to walk that talk with her resolution before the assembly today, which I as a Niagara member stand in proud support of.

My colleagues from Stoney Creek and Hamilton East paid great tribute to the Battle of Stoney Creek and the roles of Canadian heroes like Billy Green and of course Isaac Brock. We all in Niagara know Sir Isaac Brock very well and the role he played, sadly dying relatively early on in the War of 1812 at the Battle of Queenston Heights. Sir Isaac Brock, of course, has a highway named after him now and our university, a fine university, in St. Catharines-Thorold.

I'll talk a little bit about the Battle of Fort Erie, which is the town I was born and raised in. Growing up in Fort Erie, we always spent time, as kids, at church picnics or hanging out at the fort. At that time, as a child, it was an interesting place to try to sneak into, over those walls, where you'd see the occasional redcoat pass by. I think my colleague probably may have done the same. You'd try to sneak by the redcoats. We all knew of a friend of a

friend of a friend who swore that they'd shoot at you if they saw you, but I don't think there was ever any evidence of the redcoats turning on the students.

But as you grew older, you had a greater appreciation for that institution and the role that Fort Erie played in the War of 1812. Of course, before the battle it was simply a small British military post, not even a fort, that became an important site. The Americans took control in July of 1814, which led up to a siege lasting until mid-September of 1814. Both sides saw massive casualties, and we'd argue that Fort Erie was among the bloodiest battlefields during of War of 1812, and ever on Canadian soil.

On November 5, 1814, the US troops then retreated after this long siege into Buffalo, but on their way blew up the fort, sending some 25% of it totally destroyed. It sat, as a matter of fact, in rubble for over 115 years and then was restored as part of a massive project in the 1930s. It's now part of the Niagara Parks Commission, one of the great sites along the parkway. I'm pleased to see the Minister of Tourism here for this debate this morning because I know of his dedication to the parks commission, and I'm pleased to see that the old fort in Fort Erie remains one of its key attractions.

A notable hero, just to connect the two parts of my riding, was Lieutenant Colonel Robert Nelles. He was one of the heroes of the British side at that time, of course a United Empire Loyalist, and his group, comprised of 40 Loyalists, founded the town of Grimsby, in the west end of Niagara, known then as "The Forty." Nelles of course was a very brave lieutenant colonel and, under his leadership, many of the war strategies and planning sessions took place at his home in Grimsby in preparation for the war.

I'm pleased of course to see Tecumseh recognized as well today. If not for the role of First Nations peoples under the brave Tecumseh at the time, we may have had a different outcome. The British were engaged in a full battle with Napoleon in Europe at the time, which engaged most British forces. The British regulars were tremendously outnumbered by the Americans across the way, the Americans, of course, hoping at the time that Canadians, or those who had recently left the States to settle in Upper Canada, would join their side and rally against the crown. Of course, an important part of our history, something we should take great pride in, is that the vast majority of Canadians rallied to the British side and took up with them and, with the great support of Tecumseh and the First Nations people, helped to win many of the major battles that have been referenced in the assembly here today.

My last point is, I'm very pleased to hear that some work is currently under way. It's hard to imagine a day when Lake Erie and Lake Ontario were both part of pitched naval battles not that long ago. I look forward to working with Ms. Munro and members of the assembly of all three parties in helping to commemorate what was a sad time of course, full of death and destruction, but also a point that helped forge us as a nation and

something worth celebrating for the Canadian heroes and First Nations heroes mentioned in the assembly today.

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I wanted to say that this is precisely how this hour should be used, and the member for York North is to be commended in bringing forward—it used to be the way private members' public business was. It was relatively non-partisan, something that was of specific interest to a person. I'm delighted, knowing that all three parties have changed that somewhat now, but this is a nice exception today. I don't know whether the commission itself—some people look at that as bureaucratic—is the answer, but I want to really commend the member for bringing that suggestion forward. I know she would be willing to work, because I look at this as a non-partisan issue with people from all three parties probably in trying to establish a way of celebrating the War of 1812-14.

My parliamentary assistant, the member for Cornwall and other places, has already said what the ministry is doing, and we're engaged in some of that. The member's quite right in saying that there are some additional steps that have to be taken as we get closer. The commission might be it; it might be an all-party committee of the Legislature. There may be some mechanism.

The member deserves credit for bringing this forward. It definitely has to be commended. I was with the American Consul in Niagara Falls. I got blessed with some award for tourism by national tourism, and he was presenting it. I said at the time to our American friends, just be to accommodating, that when they came over here to visit, we would tell them they won the war as long as when Canadians went over there, they would admit that Canada had won the war.

This is going to be a great occasion. It offers great opportunities for tourism and heritage and history. I was a history teacher at one time as well, so those of us who have been teachers recognize how important this is and those of us from the Niagara region know how important this is. So thank you very much for bringing this forward to the House for consideration.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Notwithstanding the non-partisan position of the Chair, I'm sure someone in this debate wanted to mention historic Fort Malden in Amherstburg.

Mrs. Munro, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mrs. Munro:** First of all, I want to thank all of you who have taken part in the debate today. What you did, in using your time to highlight the work that is being done in your own communities, is precisely what I hoped would happen because in the opportunity that I had, obviously it would be impossible to demonstrate the kinds of good work that is done in so many of our communities. I think these projects and activities, quite frankly, underline the importance of having a commission whose scope would be province-wide. Certainly I appreciate the comments, particularly of the minister, in recognizing the fact that we need to be going from the

individual communities and the work they are doing to be able to have some province-wide scope.

My vision in bringing this forward is quite frankly based on the assumption that as more and more communities look into their roots, they in fact are going to find that they have an opportunity to participate in this as well. I think that's extremely important, again, to have a provincial framework. As I mentioned in my remarks, other governments are working on this. And I guess I would want to conclude that just as we did 200 years ago, we have to be ready to go toe-to-toe with our partners.

MUNICIPAL AMENDMENT ACT  
(DIRECT ELECTION OF DURHAM  
REGIONAL COUNCIL CHAIR), 2007

LOI DE 2007 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES  
MUNICIPALITÉS (ÉLECTION AU SCRUTIN  
GÉNÉRAL DU PRÉSIDENT DU CONSEIL  
RÉGIONAL DE DURHAM)

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The time provided for private members' public business having expired, we shall first deal with ballot item number 75 standing in the name of Mr. Ouellette.

Mr. Ouellette has moved second reading of bill 172. 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. It's carried.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, I would request that the bill be referred to the general government committee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr. Ouellette has asked that the bill be referred to the standing committee on general government. Agreed? Agreed.

WAR OF 1812

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** We shall now deal with ballot item number 76 standing in the name of Mrs. Munro.

Mrs. Munro has moved private members' motion number 50. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

*The House recessed from 1202 to 1330.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ONTARIO LOTTERY  
AND GAMING CORP.

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** Despite a scathing report by the Ombudsman and numerous media reports revealing the shameful extent of the OLG lottery scandal, this government continues to dodge leg-

itimate and explicit questions about their lack of leadership on this issue. Rather than doing the honourable thing and taking responsibility for the actions, or inaction, of this government that have worked to create this large-scale scandal in Ontario's lottery system, you are busy at work creating a cover-up and communications strategy. While innocent Ontarians were being cheated out of their legitimate lottery winnings, you and your political advisers were involved in an attempt to spin the scandal by discrediting the CBC report.

If, as you claim, you did nothing wrong and you did everything you possibly could from the moment you were made aware of insider lottery wins, then why are you refusing to make public the information that we are requesting? You claim to want a more transparent and reliable lottery system that will properly protect the public, but at the same time you are refusing to provide the public with the information they deserve. They have a right to know why it took this government so long to respond to reports of insider lottery wins and why, when a response did finally come, it was in the form of a scandal cover-up rather than a sincere attempt to clean up this disturbing mess.

If you have nothing to hide, as you claim, then you should respond to our freedom of information request and order paper questions and provide the people of this province with the information they so rightly deserve.

#### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** The residents of west Toronto and the St. Clair revitalization group have a great planning idea that the city of Toronto and the federal government should take seriously.

Go Transit is presently working to tunnel an area just south of St. Clair Avenue West and west of Old Weston Road, making it easier for GO trains to pass a major rail crossing; it's called the "diamond grade."

As you know, the TTC is presently constructing a TTC right-of-way along of all St. Clair Avenue West, including the bottleneck caused by the dilapidated St. Clair-Old Weston Road bridge. The road—that is, St. Clair Avenue—passes under the bridge. It will be too narrow for the planned TTC right-of-way, since it will leave only one lane for traffic. It also creates a divide, a barrier, a no-man's-land between Old Weston Road and Keele Street. This was acceptable when the area consisted of slaughterhouses, but now it has 900 homes.

The residents are asking that the present tunnelling extend beyond St. Clair Avenue so that trains will pass under St. Clair Avenue, thus eliminating this barrier. Since the province is ready to support this proposal, I'm asking the city of Toronto and the federal government to do their part as well.

#### ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** I speak for the people of Ontario, and Halton in particular, when I express my

outrage, disappointment and disgust with this government's handling of Lottogate.

The Premier and his minister responsible for lotteries are hiding behind a Maginot line of silence. For weeks now, this government has shown us that direct questions do not receive direct answers. In fact, no question receives the dignity of an answer from this government. That fact is also being addressed by the press, thanks to Murray Campbell in today's *Globe and Mail*.

Yet the Premier and his Lottogate minister continue to play the waiting game. They think that if they just wait long enough, this issue will go away. Well, that's Peter Pan politics. Peter Pan politics is when you all sit in a circle, you hold hands, and you wish really hard that the problem will go away.

That is a very dangerous tactic. Too many questions remain unanswered, questions like: What is going to happen to the Lanark-Carleton constituent who may be out \$12.5 million? Who was at these secret meetings? What was discussed? Why did it take so long to start implementing change? How do we know if anything has changed, and how will we ever know that it's changed? When is this Premier going to face up to the facts and finally start giving taxpayers the answers they deserve?

We all know the fate of the Maginot line: a massive flanking movement rendered it irrelevant. Eventually, the waiting game will be over. The memos and the e-mails and the truth behind the secret meetings will come out. Eventually, taxpayers will get the answers they deserve.

#### POLICE OFFICERS

**Mr. Paul Ferreira (York South-Weston):** Each and every day across Ontario, thousands of men and women in uniform put their lives on the line to protect our safety and enforce our laws. The 24,000 police officers of our province perform brave and courageous service on behalf of all Ontarians. I've had the privilege in the past of joining them for ride-alongs and have witnessed firsthand the hazards they face on a daily basis.

Tonight, I shall be attending a special function celebrating the conclusion of the lengthy careers of five officers who have a combined service of more than 150 years as dedicated members of the Toronto Police Service. I want to recognize not only these fine gentlemen, but also their families, who have given up precious family time to support their loved one's chosen career of exemplary community service.

I proudly recognize from the Toronto Police Service, 12 Division, Sergeant Bruce Bolitho, who served for 31 years; Staff Sergeant Christopher Hobson, who served for 33 years; Police Constable Robert Muckle, who served for 30 years; Police Constable Glenn Sluman, who served for 31 years; and Police Constable James Terry, who served for 33 years.

I ask all members in this House to join with me in saluting these five officers and in wishing them a very happy and lengthy retirement.

ORLEANS YOUNG PLAYERS  
THEATRE SCHOOL  
THÉÂTRE JEUNESSE D'ORLÉANS

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans):** On Saturday, March 31, I had the pleasure of announcing that the Ontario Trillium Foundation has awarded an \$18,000 grant to the Orleans Young Players theatre group. This theatre school has been teaching youth about all aspects of theatre work since 1989. With more than 240 students, it is helping young people in Orléans develop their theatrical skills and talents, while teaching them valuable life skills such as team-building, communications and self confidence.

Kathi Langston is the artistic director at the school and she says the grant will be used to provide students with voice training from radio experts. It will also give them the opportunity to work with Rag & Bone Puppet Theatre and let the students create productions featuring the work of James Rainey, an acclaimed Canadian author and playwright. The students at this school will be able to showcase their work in almost 30 different productions to an estimated 10,000 people this year alone. They will also be able to produce DVDs of their work which can be shown in local schools for many years to come.

La Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario, organisme relevant du ministère de la Culture, reçoit chaque année du gouvernement 100 \$ millions provenant de l'initiative des casinos de bienfaisance de la province.

With the help of this funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, these children will be able to expand their work and become an even more integral part of the culture of our community. I would like to congratulate the Orleans Young Players and wish them a very successful season.

ONTARIO LOTTERY  
AND GAMING CORP.

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** I looked in the Gage Canadian Thesaurus this morning to see what synonyms appear under “Liberal government.” Here’s a report of my findings: “stonewall, block, gain time, hem and haw, hold out, hold up, obstruct, play for time, resist, stall, thwart, use delay tactics.”

Any one of these verbs describes how Dalton McGuinty and David Caplan operate when our leader, John Tory, and members of the PC caucus ask them “Who, what, why, when and where?” questions about secret meetings involving ministers’ office staff and Liberal election campaign staff to cover up Lottogate.

It’s the same game, a scandal that even has the same player: Warren Kinsella. Yes, folks, it’s the same Warren Kinsella who testified before the Gomery inquiry about the federal sponsorship scandal. Now he’s back, like a recurring rash, as one of several people associated with the cover-up to keep the lid on Lottogate. I wonder, will there be more secret meetings so people like Warren

Kinsella, Wilson Lee, Don Guy, Jim Warren and Bob Lopinski can all sit down and get their stories straight?

1340

YMCA OF PETERBOROUGH

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** I am pleased to rise in the House to recognize the grand opening of the Peterborough YMCA on March 2, 2007. Founded in 1868, the Peterborough YMCA continues to be a stalwart of our community, providing services to each and every township within Peterborough city and county.

I wish to acknowledge the hard work of Bob Gallagher, CEO of the Peterborough YMCA, as well as the board of directors, staff, community partners and countless volunteers for their tireless work on the Building New Memories capital campaign to raise funds for the \$13-million sport and recreation facility.

On February 12 this year, I had the distinct pleasure of announcing, with my colleague the Honourable Jim Watson, Minister of Health Promotion, an investment of \$3 million for the new Peterborough YMCA. These funds are part of our government’s \$190-million economic stimulus plan to foster a strong workforce and a strong economy in the riding of Peterborough.

I would ask that all members join with me in recognizing the efforts of the many individuals and organizations that have helped the Peterborough YMCA realize their dream of a new sport and recreation facility in the great community of Peterborough.

CLARKE ROAD SECONDARY SCHOOL

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe):** I rise in the House today to congratulate Clarke Road Secondary School in my riding of London–Fanshawe for accepting the Ontario government’s healthy schools challenge. I am proud that Clarke Road Secondary School has accepted this challenge, because research shows that a healthy school environment supports student success. I am proud that the McGuinty government has taken the initiative to implement programs within our public schools to promote and encourage active and healthy lifestyles.

The healthy schools challenge is a wonderful program, and I would like to thank the Minister of Health Promotion and the Minister of Education for implementing this program in our schools across the province of Ontario.

I believe that the teachers and students of Clarke Road Secondary School will benefit greatly from this wonderful program. Again, I would like to congratulate Clarke Road Secondary School on accepting the healthy schools challenge. I think it’s a great initiative.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak in support of this program.

TRICIA CUMMINGS

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh):** I would like to acknowledge a remarkable young

lady of great courage from my riding of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh. Petty Officer Second Class Tricia Cummings of the Royal Canadian Sea Cadets was recently honoured with the medal of bravery for her act in leading three children she was babysitting out of a burning house.

This award holds great distinction, as it has only been awarded to six cadets in the past 112 years. This medal is usually reserved for soldiers and firefighters and those who risk their lives every day. To have it bestowed on one of my constituents, and at the young age of 16, fills me with a great sense of pride. In addition to this wonderful acknowledgement, she was also awarded the fire safety award certificate by the Ontario Fire Marshal's office.

I would like to publicly acknowledge Tricia and her actions, and to thank her on behalf of all constituents for her outstanding action and achievement. This young woman embodies the spirit and courage of the citizens of this great province and also of my riding. I am proud to say that of the six past cadet recipients, two are from my riding. This pays tribute to my constituents: people who do not panic, who use their heads, who are not afraid to get their hands dirty and who get the job done. I would also like to salute the Royal Canadian Sea Cadets, whose commitment to duty and discipline, I'm sure, helped Tricia as she faced this dangerous situation.

Tricia was faced with circumstances that most of us dread, and she performed admirably. I wish to congratulate her for a job well done.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### PROTECTION OF MINORS IN AMATEUR SPORTS ACT, 2007

#### LOI DE 2007 SUR LA PROTECTION DES MINEURS PARTICIPANT À DES SPORTS AMATEURS

Mr. Ouellette moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 201, An Act to provide protection for minors participating in amateur sports / Projet de loi 201, Loi visant à protéger les mineurs qui participent à des sports amateurs.

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

The member may wish to make a brief statement.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** There are tens of thousands of volunteers in the province of Ontario participating in volunteer sports on a daily and weekly basis. As mentioned in debate earlier on, I happen to coach hockey. Although managers, trainers and coaches are all require criminal record or vulnerable persons police checks, somebody approached me at an arena one day and said that a convicted sex offender was refereeing

six-, seven- and eight-year-olds. Upon checking and verifying, we found out that, yes, this individual should not be out there, and we checked, to follow through, that there was no vulnerable persons police check required for individuals refereeing sports. Subsequent to that, we checked around the province and it applies to a lot of other sports in the province. We are following through on cleaning up a few holes to make sure that kids are safe in the province of Ontario.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(d), the following change be made to the ballot list of private members' public business: Mr. Bisson and Mr. Kormos exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr. Kormos assumes ballot item number 77 and Mr. Bisson assumes ballot item number 78.

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

### MEL SWART

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent for all parties to speak up for to five minutes to remember a former member of the House.

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

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** It is an honour to be able to speak about our former colleague Mel Swart.

This is one of those times when you could not possibly have enough time to say everything you want to say. When I was first elected to this House in 1987, Mel was a veteran. He had already been here 12 years. It was the beginning of his fifth term. He was one of the people who had been here for many of the historic battles.

I had heard a lot about him from about 1975 on, because I had worked in election campaigns and had been an unsuccessful candidate in a couple of campaigns. Always, you heard about the work and the advocacy of Mel Swart. What absolutely amazed me when I was first elected was that I thought, when I came in to work at 7 in the morning, that I would somehow be setting the bar. I would come in at 7 in the morning, and Mel Swart would

already be at his desk. Not only would he already be at his desk, but he'd have papers here, he'd be on the phone to somebody and he'd have some other project going on the work table beside his desk. Similarly, I thought on the evenings when I'd go home at, say, 11 o'clock that I was setting some kind of bar, only to look down the hall and see Mel Swart in his office on the phone, making notes—little yellow stickies all over the bulletin board reminding himself of the five, six or seven things he had to do. Occasionally I would come into the office on a Sunday night and there again, getting ready for Monday—perhaps it was a special project he had under way—would be Mel Swart. He was an absolutely tireless worker, and he worked just as hard, even more so, in his constituency than here at Queen's Park.

1350

I used to marvel at him in caucus meetings. Mel never tried to lecture anyone. He never, ever spoke down to anyone. His conversations with you were always that: open, earnest and honest conversations. Occasionally, someone in the caucus would pretend, or thought for a second or so, that they were smarter than Mel. Mel would listen to them quietly and politely. Meanwhile, you could tell that the wheels were turning, and at the end of the caucus meeting or the question period meeting, the person who inevitably came out on top was Mel Swart. Mel was not someone to boast; he was not someone to talk about his own accomplishments. He was always engaged in the next part of the plan, the next project that had to be undertaken. So he didn't take the time to boast.

Mel came honestly by his advocacy for working people. He was one of those people who was a child of the Depression. He knew what it was like to grow up at a time when almost everyone was poor. And he saw some of the great contradictions of the Depression. One of his jobs was to deliver milk, as a milkman. At the same time that he was delivering milk, and saw that many people could barely afford to buy a quart of milk even though their families needed it badly, farmers would be pouring out milk that they couldn't sell—the big contradictions. But Mel was not the kind of person to cry over spilled milk. He was the kind of person to say, "This is wrong and we need to do something about it." That's what he dedicated his life to: making the world a better place for ordinary folks, for working people.

And what a job he did. His achievements include preserving the rich fruit-growing lands of Niagara by helping to found the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and the Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society. He also helped to create the St. Johns Conservation Area. He helped to found Brock University so Niagara's working families could send their kids to university within their community and not have to send them far away.

But the thing I miss most about Mel and which I remember the most about him is not necessarily the accomplishments, but it is the sincerity: always open, always sincere, always honest, often quiet conversation, but an openness and an honesty behind which, if you

didn't look carefully, you'd miss the conviction, the steely conviction, to make a difference.

Mel would come here to the Legislature—and we now have this rule that you're not allowed to use props. That's a shame, because Mel Swart made this place into a living theatre with his props. He would bring fruits and vegetables and even toilet paper to make a case of how consumers were being ripped off. Every night on the news you'd see him make the case, and it was such good theatre. Everyone at home appreciated and understood the message, and it was so effective. He would make the case, and three or four days later you'd see changes happening. Companies had been identified, retailers had come under the pressure and it made a big difference for working people. And it made people smile. It made people appreciate the kind of work that an elected representative could do for people. It made people come around to Mel's way of thinking. Mel always asked the question, "What is this going to do for the ordinary working person? What difference is it going to make for the ordinary working person?"

Mel's family is here today. It's a large family: children, grandchildren and I understand a great-granddaughter. It's great to see them here. Mel was predeceased by his wife, Thelma, but his daughter, Melva, is here and her husband, Peter; his son, Orlen, and his wife, Elaine, and, as I say, his four grandchildren and a great-granddaughter.

Mel was a champion for Niagara. He was a champion for fairness. He was principled, he was pugnacious, he was a thundering voice of justice. He was a champion for ordinary people. This Legislature can be proud that Mel Swart served here. He made this Legislature a better place. He made it a meaningful place for ordinary folks virtually every day he was here.

We say to his family, thank you very much for sharing this wonderful man with us. He inspired many of us. He continues to inspire many of us today.

I'll give the final word to Graham Murray, a friend of this Legislature and a friend and colleague of Mel Swart. He said, "Watch out, God. Mel will be holding you to account five minutes after St. Peter waves [Mel] through the Pearly Gates." I think that is a very true assessment of Mel Swart.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** This is a day that you always hope doesn't happen, particularly when it's about a good friend, Mel Swart. I guess the real day that we hoped wouldn't happen—and it does in all of our lives—was the day the news came that Mel had passed away. We had watched him—those of us who were close friends and knew him well—as he had his major challenges with health, particularly in his latter days.

It was interesting to watch, and not surprising, as he maintained a schedule which most people of his age and in his circumstances of health could not possibly have kept up. In fact, Peter Kormos—I'm allowed to use his name today, I guess, in this instance—and I were going to be two of the speakers at a dinner for Mel to be held in March of this year. The dinner was always for something

good. It wasn't for Mel. Sometimes it was for the Mel Swart park, which was suitably located in Thorold—and great for the people of that community and other communities—or it was for the church. There was always something that it was for; it was never for Mel himself. We didn't have that dinner, but we had many dinners with Mel and many circumstances where we had the privilege to share his company.

When colleagues around the House heard that Mel had passed away, particularly those who had served with him, there was a genuine sadness. Monte Kwinter said to me at a cabinet meeting after that, "I see Mel Swart passed away. Mel was quite a character." You will remember, some of you who were here and those who watched on TV, that Mel used to wag his finger and wave various items at Mr. Kwinter when he was the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. Yet the affection we all had for Mel, whether he was tearing a strip off you or not over an issue, was legend. Those of us who had the privilege of knowing him personally and watching him personally could not help but admire him, as the leader of the New Democratic Party indicated. All of us admired his work ethic in particular.

Mel would sometimes—in fact, often—take the train from St. Catharines. We used to sit on Friday mornings, and we would make an arrangement where I would drive Mel back to the train station in St. Catharines. The problem was, the backseat of the car was always full of toilet paper and vegetables and a variety of other things that Mel was going to take to his next speaking engagement. But we had interesting discussions that went on during that. The odd time I would drop something off on Richmond Street, where Mel lived at the time, some envelope or something he'd asked me to drop off. He was a legend in this House and a legend in the Niagara Peninsula. I know the member for Niagara Centre, Peter Kormos, who followed in his footsteps, recognized how difficult it was to follow in a legend's footsteps of that kind.

**1400**

The thing you knew about Mel was, it was always about the issue; it was never about Mel Swart. He didn't care about personal publicity. The fact that he was getting on television or in the newspaper and so on was to accentuate something about that issue, not accentuate anything about Mel Swart. He didn't care about that. He didn't care about fame or fortune in any way.

A fact a lot of you don't know: he was a stock car race fan. I would listen to him sometimes before we were leaving, and he'd have a 15-minute description of a stock car race that had taken place the night before, obviously talking to his brother about that. More recently, I introduced him at a seniors' concert. He was there and I was on the stage. I spotted Mel out in the audience, and Mel was really thrilled to be there. And of course, again, in not great health, but the loudest cheer was when you introduced Mel Swart, bar none; the loudest cheer came then.

Then I had an opportunity to talk to him just a few weeks before he passed away. We were talking about the

future, of course, because Mel always thought about the future. At the age of 87 and with many health challenges, Mel was right with it. He knew what was going on. He was talking about the issues of the day and what would be happening at the dinner that was going to be held and where the proceeds would go. So he was genuinely a gentleman and genuinely concerned, sincere, honest.

There were a few things said about Mel Swart that I think bear repeating. There are people who are more famous than we are sometimes because they're in the media. But I will take a line or two because they just captured Mel. Jim Coyle, when he was at the Ottawa Citizen and Mel was retiring, said, "Swart's [political convictions] are rooted in hard times, grown strong through adversity, nurtured in the heart." James Wallace, when he was with the Toronto Sun: "Swart is everything attractive and infuriating about the NDP—idealistic, passionate uncompromising on principle." Or William Walker, in The Star: "In his 13 years as an MPP, Swart's honesty and integrity were unquestioned at Queen's Park." And the Hamilton Spectator said of him: He "came through 33 years of politics with his integrity, wits and humor intact.... His record is a testament to prove that gentlemanly conduct, honesty, and humility still have a legitimate place in Canadian politics." And you know, the tributes went on when he retired and, I know, when he passed away.

Mel made an interesting observation himself that I thought captured what he was about. He said: "The highest challenge is not in the scientific world or the commercial world, or the world of productivity. Rather it is in the world of fairer distribution, of higher human values and of worldwide social responsibility to all of the human race." He went on to say, "I believe that politics can be the single greatest expression of a society's kindness, decency, and concern for human dignity."

So, as we pay tribute to him today, the leader of the New Democratic Party stated most appropriately, you could spend an hour talking about Mel Swart in this House. We're somewhat limited. We've steered over a bit the five-minute limit that's there, but he's a genuine loss. Let me tell you something that I think all of us know: He was a man very close to the family that you see here today, very close to Thelma. He and Thelma were a team. They were universally loved wherever they happened to go. Some people, when they leave this world, will leave this world having made a contribution. I can assure you that knowing him as I do personally, as so many here know him personally, the province of Ontario and the region of Niagara and indeed our world is a much better place because of our friend Mel Swart.

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** On behalf of the leader of the official opposition, John Tory, and the Ontario PC caucus, I have the privilege of paying tribute to our former colleague Mel Swart.

Melvin Leroy Swart served in this Legislature as a New Democrat from 1975 to 1988. Popular, as we've heard, with his constituents to the end, Mel's path that eventually led to the Ontario Legislature was not an easy one.



Beginning in 1950, when he was a member of the CCF, Mel campaigned in Welland for a seat in the federal House of Commons five times and suffered defeat each time. His determined persistence unabated, Mel campaigned provincially in 1967 and again in 1971 and was defeated both times.

Mel, the consummate Scotsman that he was, would compare his early political defeats to an episode in the life of Scottish King Robert the Bruce. Having suffered multiple military defeats, King Robert went into hiding from his enemies in a cave. As he cowered in fear, he noticed a spider attempting to climb up a candle nearby. The spider fell off the candle, but then continued to climb again. After the spider's eighth attempt to mount the candle, Robert the Bruce said out loud, "Give it up." But then on his ninth attempt, the spider reached his destination. Then, with tears in his eyes, Robert the Bruce said, "I have not yet been defeated eight times." And neither was Mel Swart. He was elected in 1975 in the provincial election and was re-elected in 1977, 1981, 1985 and again in 1987.

Throughout his tenure in this Legislature, Mel was renowned for his relentless hammering of the government of the day during question period on the issues he so passionately believed in.

On the issue of auto insurance, Mel earned the respect of his peers in all parties with his penetrating, sharp and often entertaining manner and mode of questioning.

He once confronted Premier David Peterson in this House and said, "You got my report on this last year with its several recommendations, and you should have listened to what it said—but you did not listen, did you? You refuse to listen, you don't want to listen, you're incapable of listening..." Indignant, Mel sat down, forcing himself to say no more, physically shaken, to loud applause even from the government benches.

In his riding of Welland-Thorold, Mel Swart was an effective advocate on behalf of his constituents. He was known as the "people's man" and with very good reason.

One of his constituents once said that he contacted Mel after hours with a problem that he needed resolved immediately. Rather than wait to the next working day, Mel invited the constituent to come to see him at his home to discuss the issue. Mel resolved the constituent's problem and turned him into an ardent personal supporter for the rest of his political career.

To the constituents of Welland-Thorold, Mel Swart was not only their representative whom they could turn to with their problems at any time, he was a true legend who constantly earned their admiration, their esteem and their votes.

During the by-election in 1988 that saw the election of his successor, Peter Kormos, Mel Swart was approached by a group of PC campaign workers who tried to win his vote for the PC candidate. Mel smiled and assured them that he would give very serious thought to whether he would vote PC or not—always a gentleman.

Mel Swart was truly the political mentor of the current member for Welland-Thorold and passed on to him his

passion for the issues he fought for throughout his political career.

A leading advocate for public auto insurance in Ontario in the 1980s, Mel was especially critical of the Rae government's decision to go back on its promise in this regard, and in 1994, Mel Swart publicly called on Bob Rae to resign as NDP leader. He was a truly a man whose principles transcended partisan politics.

In closing, the passing of Mel Swart fills us all with sadness and gives us pause to reflect on the greatness of this man who followed his political vision with whole-hearted dedication and single-minded purpose. He wanted to make a difference in the lives of people, especially his constituents, and he did. Just ask the people whose lives he personally touched.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of John Tory and the Ontario PC caucus, to extend my sincerest condolences to the members of the family of Mel Swart who are joining us in the House today.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker:** I extend the condolences of the House and assure the family we will see that the Hansard of this afternoon's proceedings is delivered to you.

1410

#### VISITOR

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** On a point of order, Speaker: I would like to introduce a guest in the east members' gallery today. Kerry Doughty is a resident of Peterborough and principal of Doughty Aggregates, who won a charitable lunch: Have Lunch with the MPP Day.

#### ANNIVERSARY OF VIMY RIDGE

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent for all parties to speak for up to five minutes in recognition of the 90th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge.

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

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** Next Monday—Easter Monday—we will commemorate an historic event that occurred on an Easter Monday 90 years ago. The battle of Vimy Ridge began at dawn on April 9, 1917.

History records Vimy Ridge as a critical Canadian military triumph, a remarkable victory that stoked national pride and helped form an emerging Canadian identity. Soldiers from coast to coast to coast fought shoulder to shoulder and captured more ground than on any previous British offensive in the Great War.

It was a turning point in the long struggle. While the war still had a year and a half to run, the battle of Vimy Ridge was the beginning of its end. The cost, as we all know, was high: Nearly 3,600 Canadians gave their lives, and another 7,000 were wounded. This sacrifice was part of Canada's enormous contribution to the First World

War. By war's end, Canada had nearly 620,000 personnel in uniform. This was a huge army for a nation of fewer than eight million people. More than one in 10 Canadians who fought in the war did not return. In all, 66,655 Canadian soldiers were killed, and of the nearly 173,000 who sustained injuries, many never recovered.

Vimy Ridge was the scene of many acts of gallantry. One of those gallant soldiers was Lance Sergeant Ellis Welwood Sifton, one of four winners of the Victoria Cross at Vimy Ridge. Sergeant Sifton was a farmer from Wallacetown, Ontario, who enlisted in 1914 at the age of 23. He perished in an attack on enemy trenches, but only after he had single-handedly charged a machine gun that was inflicting heavy casualties, took the gun out of action and then held off the advancing Germans until his company occupied the position. As his Victoria Cross citation reads, "His conspicuous valour undoubtedly saved many lives and contributed largely to the success of the operation."

While the troops of the Canadian corps were skilled in warfare, their dreams were of peace. As the inscription on monuments across this country reads, "They died that we might live." Unfortunately, the Great War did not turn out to be the war to end all wars. Many of its ideals are still to be achieved. We are still trying to make the world safer for democracy.

In 1936, the Canadian National Vimy Memorial in France was unveiled. It has come to symbolize Canada's commitment to peace in the world and our stand for freedom and democracy. It proclaims from a past era the principles we still revere today.

Next Monday, the newly restored Vimy memorial will be dedicated during a ceremony of remembrance overseas. It will be a fitting tribute to what was achieved there. The Vimy anniversary will also be marked by an event at the National War Memorial in Ottawa and by a ceremony of remembrance on the front lawn of the Ontario Legislature.

I believe it is especially important for our younger generation to witness these ceremonies and heed their message. It is heartening that 5,000 Canadian students are planning to make the trip to France for the activities there. We recall the words from *In Flanders Fields*: "To you, from failing hands we throw / The torch; be yours to hold it high." Let us all, young and old, take up the challenge of those who sacrificed so much on our behalf, and always cherish and live by the ideals that are their bequest to us.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo):** I'm pleased to rise and speak on behalf of my leader, John Tory, and the Progressive Conservative caucus as we commemorate the 90th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge.

Once a year, we are called upon as individuals to proudly wear our poppies and reflect upon the significance of Remembrance Day, of which the battle of Vimy Ridge is a part. Once a year, we are reminded that our freedom and our peace can never be taken for granted. Indeed, over the last 100 years, thousands of

brave and courageous Canadians have left family, home and country and made huge sacrifices to give us that freedom and that peace. However, each year there is a growing concern that these courageous individuals who valiantly fought and paid the supreme sacrifice may be forgotten. Indeed, I remember that last November, when I spoke at the cenotaph, I addressed the need to pass the torch to our children and our grandchildren so that we would never forget these courageous individuals. Thus, I was thrilled to learn, as were many others, about the 3,600 Canadian high school students who would be travelling to France to take part in the 90th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge.

As a former history teacher, I am overjoyed that these students will have the opportunity to be part of history, since not only are they travelling to Vimy, but each one of these students will represent one of the 3,600 soldiers who lost their lives in this battle. On April 9, each student will stand proudly in front of the leaders of Canada, Britain and France. Each one will wear a replica World War I Canadian uniform shirt bearing the name of a soldier who died at Vimy. This experience will be a significant and emotional event for these young people. Their excitement was obvious this week as we watched on TV as they were preparing for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be a part of history.

But what is the history of Vimy Ridge? Why is this assault on Vimy Ridge on April 9, 1917, such a memorable moment in Canadian history? It was on that day, after months of planning and a week of relentless bombardment, that the Canadians launched their daring attack on this ridge in northern France. It was the strongest-held position by the Germans on the Western Front, and they had already withstood British and French attacks. Now it was Canada's turn on this Easter Monday, and their four-day assault succeeded in taking the ridge.

This epic battle was key in the development of our great country. It solidified Canada's presence on the world stage. It signified a coming of age for our country, and it helped to forge our own national identity. I was informed by the member for Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford that his grandfather, Herbert Jacob Miller, was one of the participants.

Just as the Canadian troops began the assault on the ridge 90 years ago, on Easter Monday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper will join Queen Elizabeth, the French Prime Minister and an expected crowd of 20,000 people, including some 7,500 Canadians, in a commemorative ceremony on the ridge this Easter Monday.

**1420**

This ceremony will mark the 90th anniversary of the battle and the rededication of the recently restored Vimy monument, which was first unveiled in 1936 to pay tribute to the valour and the sacrifices of Canadian soldiers who fought, were wounded, and died in World War I.

Although the World War I veterans will not be there, as they were at the 1936 unveiling, 3,600 high school

students from across Canada will take their place as they represent the soldiers who lost their lives in the battle of Vimy Ridge—soldiers like Private Alfred Henry Libby of the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, who actually lived only about 20 minutes away from this building with his wife May and worked as a peddler. He was killed in action on April 9, 1917, at the age of 22. He will be represented by Seana Baker, a 17-year-old grade 11 student from Whitby. Like the other students, she has extensively researched as much as she could so that she would know Private Libby a little better. She even got others to help her. She now says, “I have learned about my soldier, Private Libby. I feel like I actually knew him. He isn’t just a man who was born 100 years ago. He had a wife and a family. He had hopes and dreams. I will represent him with pride.”

It is this symbolic passing of the torch to these enthusiastic high school students from across Canada who are taking part in the 90th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge that gives hope to people throughout Canada that those who served our country in past wars to give us freedom and peace will never, ever be forgotten, for these students, our future generation, have answered the call. They have accepted the torch, to hold it high, so that we will never forget.

To these students and others, I say thank you. Let us join them in remembering those who served this country so proudly.

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** This Monday, April 9, is perhaps one of the most important dates in Canadian history. Many people today likely do not appreciate what Vimy Ridge stood for in the spring of 1917. In the very flat part of northern France and Belgium, it is a hill that jumps out of nowhere to a height of 450 feet, and whoever holds the hill dominates the landscape for miles around. The German army realized that in 1914, and it was one of the strategic points that they were determined to take so they could dominate the battlefield.

What is so incredible for Canadians is that the French had twice tried to take Vimy Ridge and failed and had something in the neighbourhood of 40,000 casualties in trying to do that. The British had tried to take Vimy Ridge and failed and had suffered thousands of casualties. The German army suffered something in the range of 80,000 casualties trying to hold Vimy Ridge.

The taking of Vimy Ridge is also significant because, as one historian put it, Canadians, when they went to the First World War, were regarded simply as British soldiers or, to put it in a less appreciative term, British colonial soldiers. As one historian put it, Canadians started up Vimy Ridge as mere colonial soldiers; when they emerged at the top, they emerged as Canadians. It was the first time that the four Canadian divisions fought together as the Canadian Corps. It was the first time that the battle was truly under the leadership of Canadian generals, and it was a very novel battle. Hard-rock miners from northern Ontario and Quebec and British Columbia were employed to dig tunnels so that the German army

wasn’t aware that, in fact, they were facing not just one division, but four divisions, because most of the Canadian soldiers were hidden underground.

For the first time, some science and some thought was brought to how artillery should be used. Before that, the British army had simply blasted away. The supervisor of artillery was a McGill scientist named Andrew McNaughton, and McNaughton, straight out of McGill University, had the foresight to steal three brilliant physicists from the British. The British army had ignored their invention of flash spotting and sound ranging techniques on how to use artillery. McNaughton put it to work, so that on the day the attack actually happened, 75% of the German guns had been destroyed by Canadian artillery.

There was also a breakthrough in terms of training. The British army’s attitude was that the men in the ranks should simply be told what to do and not given any responsibility. At Vimy Ridge, even corporals and privates were given the maps and shown the terrain and given the responsibility to make decisions. It was one of the first times that the attack was actually made by platoons working together, rather than simply sending waves of soldiers over the top.

So it was not just a celebration of the first victory for a British army in two and a half years. It was not just the taking of this dominating physical feature on the flat lands of northern France. It was not just that superior German divisions were defeated. It was so much of the innovation, so much of the thought, and the fact that in military terms, there were relatively few casualties.

About 3,500 Canadians were killed and another 7,000 were wounded. That is a heavy price to pay at any time. But in comparison to the losses of the British and the French and the Germans—German armies in earlier battles—it was enlightened soldiering.

The international press noticed it. A Paris newspaper called it “Canada’s Easter gift to France.” The New York Times—one of the few times that the New York Times actually noticed that Canada was in the war—said, “Well done, Canada.”

Canadians were not used to this sort of international recognition. It was something completely out of character. We were supposed to be treated just as British colonial soldiers. So, in many ways, historians say this was one of those places where Canadians came together for the first time as Canadians.

I think it’s especially appropriate that students now have the opportunity to learn some of this very significant history. I wish I could be there when these students actually see the Vimy Ridge memorial. It is a very haunting memorial. It is something that you see over and over again in your mind’s eye, after the first time you visit it. It’s very fitting that these students should have this opportunity.

I wish all Canadians had this opportunity to see the sacrifice that was made, to see the incredible preparation and work that was made by thoughtful generals who were concerned that they not lose literally tens of thousands of

soldiers in this battle. It was, in many ways, a turning point in the war. German soldiers who were captured said, "If you can take us off this hill, then we have indeed lost the war."

So I hope that those students who have the opportunity to make this journey will appreciate everything that's involved in the incredible sacrifice that was made.

**The Speaker:** I would ask that members and our guests stand for a moment of silence as we recognize the sacrifice of the Canadians at Vimy Ridge.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

1430

### VISITORS

**Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm sure all members of the assembly would want to join me in welcoming Ginny Levine, mother of Hayley Levine, to the chamber today. We had her father and grandmother here today. I think this completes the Levine clan. So, welcome.

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to acknowledge the presence with us in the gallery today of guests John Huh, president, Ontario Korean Businessmen's Association; Dave Bryans, the president of the Ontario Convenience Stores Association; and a number of their colleagues.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo):** My question is for the minister responsible for the lottery. For two weeks now, we've been trying to get to the bottom of the lottery scandal. We've been trying to find out who knew what and when they knew it. For two weeks, we have been stonewalled by your government as they continually try to cover up their involvement in this. Perhaps today you're going to enlighten us and provide some information. Will you tell us whether or not you plan to appoint an independent investigation so that we can finally see what went on in the Premier's office and your office with respect to the lottery scandal and the subsequent cover-up?

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** I disagree with the premise of the member's question. First of all, the allegations that the member makes are unsupported. But of course we have had an independent investigation. An independent officer of this Legislature, unbiased, non-partisan—unlike members of this legislative chamber—did do quite an extensive investigation, where he says on page 8 of his report—the Ombudsman:

"The special Ombudsman response team carried out the investigation. We received more than 400 complaints from members of the public after the probe was announced. In addition to Mr. Edmonds, 25 complainants were interviewed in detail, either face to face or by telephone.

"The investigative team interviewed 28 OLG staff and conducted telephone interviews with seven others."

The Ombudsman goes on to indicate the scope of his investigation. I understand that the members opposite have difficulty accepting the Ombudsman's findings, but in light of his conclusions—

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

**Mrs. Witmer:** We accept the Ombudsman's findings. In fact, we're overjoyed that he uncovered this scandal. What we want now is the appointment of an independent investigation, because there's so much more that we do not know. We want to answer the questions about whether the Premier's office knew about that August meeting that Wilson Lee attended, about which he and his apparent spokesperson, Ben Chin, can't get their stories straight, so that we can answer the question as to whether or not anyone in the Premier's office knew about the October 29 meeting, attended by the Liberal campaign team—Don Guy, Warren Kinsella, Bob Lopinski and Jim Warren—so that we can finally answer the questions about why the minister didn't react to fix the problems at OLG, or at least ask some questions.

If there's no cover-up, if you have nothing to hide, why won't you appoint an independent—

**The Speaker:** Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** This is the first time I've heard that the official opposition accepts the Ombudsman's report. So I know that the member accepts the Ombudsman at his word when he says, on page 68, "I commend the minister and the government for its openness and responsiveness to my report"—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I hear them complaining now—"and recommendations and for their immediate and resolute commitment to ensuring change."

In fact, the Ombudsman goes much further. He says, "I conclude that they"—the OLG—"put profits ahead of public service. I think there was a point, a crossroads, in 2002." I would note that this member was a member of the executive council of cabinet of the province of Ontario during that period. The Ombudsman goes on: "At that point, the OLG could have gone two ways. It could have said, 'We'll apply the law and take the measures to act diligently.' One month later, Bob Edmonds surfaced, and they pretended that binding law from the" Superior "Court didn't apply. Then it became a slippery slope."

I'm glad that the member has finally taken account of—

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary?

**Mrs. Witmer:** I think it's important that you remember that the only reason you've done anything is in light of the CBC program. The OLG responded, as you know, to that report by downplaying its revelations. This is what it says on page 5 of the Ombudsman's report: "There are disturbing signs that the culture that led to the difficulties in the first place is not gone. It was not conscience or self-criticism that smartened the OLG up—it was a public relations nightmare, played out on the public airwaves despite its best efforts at suppression. A profound cultural shift has yet to occur."

So I would say to you, Minister, all we're seeing here is your attempt to cover up. You have the ability to clear the air by appointing an independent investigation. Will you today finally acknowledge and appoint an independent investigation—

**The Speaker:** Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** In fact, I quite agree with the Ombudsman that the OLG did not treat the CBC allegations—rather tried to deal with it as a public relations exercise. I quite concur with the Ombudsman's finding. My determination was to get to the bottom of the matter. That's why I engaged board chair Michael Gough and why we brought in KPMG, I believe one of Canada's leading auditors, of the Progressive Conservative Party, to make recommendations. The Ombudsman indicates that that was the appropriate step. He indicates that his recommendations, taken together with KPMG's, will ensure that Ontarians will have full trust and confidence in their corporation.

I want to let the member know that 17 of the recommendations that were made by the Ombudsman and KPMG have already been implemented. Unfortunately, when it came to the corporate culture, it was nurtured in 2002 and earlier by the member opposite and her colleagues, but this government, this minister, my colleagues—we're not going to take the same approach and try to sweep these matters under the rug. We are taking action—

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

## CONVENIENCE STORES

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, the latest attempt by the Premier to shift the blame and deflect responsibility for the lottery scandal to the owners and operators of convenience stores was cowardly, it was offensive and insulting to the more than 10,000 business people who own and operate convenience stores in this province, and whom the Premier has referred to as untrustworthy.

In the gallery today are representatives of the Ontario Korean Businessmen's Association and the Ontario Convenience Stores Association. They are deeply offended by the Premier's comments on Tuesday this week, when he stated that people working in convenience stores could not be trusted to sell beer and wine, as proven by the lottery scandal.

Will you do the honourable thing today and extend a public apology, on behalf of the Premier and on behalf of your government, to these hard-working people for their reckless comments made by the Premier?

1440

**Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** As a former retailer myself, I have absolutely no difficulty whatsoever in this place, in the presence of those who are mentioned and indeed sending out from this place to all of those who are hard-working small business people in the province of Ontario, that we thank them for their dedication to enhancing the vitality of our province, and indeed the vitality of their families.

What's very, very clear is that it's only political muck-raking on the part of the honourable member that could seek to stir the pot on this basis. Of course, no blanket indictment was prepared, but indeed yesterday, if we look at the language offered by the Leader of the Opposition himself with respect to an alleged circumstance related to a \$12.5-million ticket, we find indeed that if there is anyone who has been up to that game at all in this Legislature, it's the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Klees:** Why does it not surprise me that rather than extend an apology to these people, you continue to insist that you did nothing wrong or that the Premier did nothing wrong?

Here is the transcript of Dalton McGuinty's own words when asked why the responsibility for selling beer and wine in convenience stores would not be given to these people. I quote the Premier: "If you want a good reason why, it's a lot easier for us to ... maintain security with the LCBO and the Beer Store than to give power to thousands of convenience stores found on our street corners as was proven with this issue with the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp." In other words, according to the Premier, these people cannot be trusted.

I ask you one more time: Rather than paint all of the convenience store owners in this province as untrustworthy, will you stand in your place on behalf of the Premier and on behalf of your government and extend an apology to hard-working business people who—

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

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I appreciate the clarity and the endorsement by the Progressive Conservative Party today in the Legislature for their support for beer and wine in corner stores. This is new policy, and we're interested to see it today.

But on the issue of quotes, let's read one: November—oh, you'll think this is silly. November 23, 2006, from John Tory: "Ontario should consider banning lottery retailers from buying tickets in light of mounting accusations that clerks are winning a disproportionate number of prizes."

I say with respect to individuals who work in a dedicated way on the front line in a retailing environment, which we know to be very, very challenging, that there are no blanket accusations made except by the Leader of the Opposition. We believe in and are grateful for the

dedicated work that small business people are doing in the province of Ontario. If there has been any accusation made about the underlying fundamental trust of these individuals, it has been by the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Klees:** I want to point out to the Deputy Premier that it was the Premier of Ontario who referred to convenience store owners as people who could not be trusted.

I want the Deputy Premier to listen to a call that I received but a few minutes ago: "Please ask if Mr. McGuinty slept well Tuesday night, because I did not." This is from the wife of a convenience store owner after hearing the remarks by Dalton McGuinty.

Regardless of how much you want to spin this, Deputy Premier, it was the Premier of this province who called into question the integrity of honest, hard-working people, more than 10,000 employers in this province. Will you not do the right thing and extend an apology on behalf of the Premier and on behalf of your government?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** To any honest and hard-working Ontarian who has, as a result of the muckraking of the opposition party, been misled, we make an apology. We acknowledge fully the hard work that is done on the part of those—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I don't like that word. You might want to rethink.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I will withdraw the use of the word "misled," Mr. Speaker, because the following quote, another from the esteemed John Tory, helps to make the point rather well to these gentlemen: "Is it more important to let those 140,000 people buy their tickets and have some of the revenue from that, or is it to maintain the integrity of the system? I think that integrity always comes first." John Tory, since November of last year, has said that lottery retailers should not be allowed the opportunity even to engage in the purchase of these tickets. He's the one who has underlined questions of integrity related to these very hard-working individuals.

*Interjections.*

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

**Mr. Klees:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: John Tory trusts them to sell tickets—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Sit down. New question.

#### ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** This question is for the minister responsible for lotteries. Minister, earlier today you omitted two key facts when you appointed an interim chief executive officer for your scandal-plagued lottery corporation. You omitted that Michelle DiEmanuele is a former Liberal political staffer and you omitted that she has made generous financial contributions to the Dalton McGuinty 2003 election campaign. Minister, given the lottery corporation's scandal and given the McGuinty government's attempts

to cover up the scandal, will you order Ms. DiEmanuele before the government agencies committee so MPPs from all parties can ask her the questions that need to be asked?

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** This is a new low in the House. The leader of the third party attacks an incredibly well-respected member of Ontario's public service. I must tell you that Ms. DiEmanuele has extensive executive experience and she brings integrity, honesty and strong work ethic to her new role. I am very supportive of the board's decision to install her as the interim CEO at Ontario Lottery and Gaming. She has a proven track record of improving accountability and transparency in the private sector and here in the public sector. Ms. DiEmanuele brings great experience and expertise, and the government and I are confident that she will be effective in overseeing the progress on implementing the Ombudsman's recommendations and KPMG's recommendations.

I do think that the member from Kenora–Rainy River should stand in his place and apologize to Ms. DiEmanuele, because she has an incredible reputation.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Order. Supplementary.

**Mr. Hampton:** Minister, literally hundreds, if not thousands, of innocent Ontarians have been ripped off to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars because of insider lottery winning at the lottery corporation. Who did the McGuinty government bring in? They brought Warren Kinsella, insider Liberal fixer; they brought in Don Guy, the Premier's re-election chair; and they brought in Jim Warren, the Premier's former director of communications.

Now who do you want to bring in to run as the interim CEO? Somebody else who has partisan connections to the Liberal Party. If you care about those innocent people who are ripped off, if you have nothing to hide, if you've got nothing to cover up, will you at least allow the people of Ontario a transparent appointment process, have Ms. DiEmanuele come before the committee, and ask the questions that need to be asked and you refuse to answer?

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I could spend all of question period talking about the characteristics and character of Ms. DiEmanuele in very glowing terms.

Between 1988 and 2001—I believe that covers the period when Mr. Hampton was Attorney General or Minister of National Resources—she worked in the cabinet office, Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ministry of Citizenship, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of the Attorney General, and as an assistant deputy minister in the Ministry of Health. Of course, we lost her expertise when she went to Brookfield Properties as a vice-president and to CIBC between the period of 2001 and 2004. She is well-noted and well-regarded for her work there.

**1450**

We were very fortunate to have her come back into the Ontario public service in 2004 as the Deputy Minister of

Government Services. I know that my colleague Minister Phillips remarked to me that he feels that Ms. DiEmanuele is perhaps one of the most capable and able deputy ministers within the government. I agree with that assessment.

**Mr. Hampton:** This is the minister who, only a few short months ago, was telling us what a wonderful job Duncan Brown was doing.

Your Liberal Party insiders have had their fingers all over this. When it was first disclosed by the CBC, what was your first instinct? It was to call in dirty-tricks man Warren Kinsella, to call in the Premier's re-election chair, to call in the Premier's former director of communications, to try to spin a line to undermine the CBC story. Now when you've been caught once again, who are you bringing in as the interim CEO? Somebody who has partisan connections to the Liberal Party.

I'm simply saying to you that if you care about the people at all, if you care about the people who have been fleeced, have her come before the committee and answer the questions that you and your Premier refuse to answer to the people of Ontario.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I've only been a member of this place for 10 years, but that is one of the lowest moments that I've seen in this period of time.

I disagree with the premise of the question to begin with. I can tell you, and as the Ombudsman indicates in his report, that the action that was taken by myself was to direct the board chair to get to the bottom of the matter. That's why KPMG was brought in. That's why the Ombudsman, in his report, talks about the work that they did in order to provide some 40 recommendations so that Ontarians could have full trust and confidence in the lottery corporation.

Ms. DiEmanuele—because the board is supportive of her and knows the kind of work that she has done—will be instrumental and excellent in helping to implement the Ombudsman's and KPMG's recommendations so that Ontarians in this House and right across this province will have full trust and confidence that their corporation will be an excellent one, will change the culture that was developed by the third party, nurtured by—

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. New question.

#### BRUCE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Today's auditor's report on the Bruce nuclear boondoggle provides more proof that your addiction to private nuclear power is going to cost Ontario hydro ratepayers a lot of money. The real cost of electricity under your deal is 7.1 cents a kilowatt hour, as the Auditor General calculates and demonstrates. That means that hydro ratepayers will be paying 44% more than the going rate under your deal.

Minister, how do you justify forcing people to pay 44% more than the going rate? Is this another one of those deals where friends of the McGuinty government

do well and the ratepayers, the hydro bill payers of Ontario, pay the freight?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy):** As is always the case, the member opposite doesn't tell the whole story. It's not complete. Let me add the complete part of the story. The auditor did say that under certain circumstances that could happen, that might happen. In fact, what has actually happened since we signed the deal is that the price has been below the deal. The price is at 6.1 cents for the first 18 months. He forgot to mention that.

He also forgot to mention that the auditor acknowledges on page 8 of the report that the government achieved its objective; that is, to shift the risk of capital from the ratepayer to the corporation. This is a good deal for Ontario; it's a good deal for ratepayers.

**Mr. Hampton:** Here's the complete story, and the auditor lays it out in his report: announced price, \$63 a megawatt; additional reduction in annual lease payments—something you tried to slide in without mentioning it—\$2.48 a megawatt; pre-refurbishment subsidy, unit 3, \$1.73; subsidy for unit 4 energy, \$3.74; price with trade-offs incorporated, \$71.33 a megawatt. The Auditor General's figures do not lie. They're there in black and white.

My question again, Minister: Is this what the McGuinty government calls a good deal for all those people out there trying to pay their hydro bill? You're going to charge them 44% more than the going rate for electricity just so you can feed more private, profit-driven electricity into the system?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** Again, I'll re-emphasize that the leader of the third party has used creative licence in interpreting what is essentially a good report, and I'll remind the leader of the third party that this government posted that contract when it was signed. Everything was fully disclosed at the time the deal was done.

I will remind the member opposite that the price has been called a fair price by outsiders. The auditor himself has said that this deal, in terms of shifting the significant risk associated with developing nuclear power and running nuclear power, has been moved away from the ratepayer.

This is a good deal for the ratepayers of Ontario, it is a good deal for Ontario, and this government is going to continue to ensure that we have a reliable, safe, clean supply of electricity now and into the future.

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

**Mr. Hampton:** The McGuinty government is only going to ensure that hydro ratepayers pay 44% more than the going rate for your botched privatization deal at Bruce Power. Some of the auditor's quotes are excellent. He says, "The ratepayer is required to share in paying for any overrun in the cost of steam generators that Bruce Power had planned to purchase months before it approached the province." They were going to pay for these anyway. That's an additional \$250 million that ratepayers are on the hook for.

Minister, do you know what this sounds like? This sounds like Bruce Power won the fixed lottery—fixed by the McGuinty government—and innocent hydro ratepayers are going to pay for it over and over again. How do you call that protecting the hydro ratepayers, the hydro consumers of Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** Let's read what else the auditor said, clear and concise on page 8: "Provisions were negotiated that successfully transferred most of the ongoing operating risks of Bruce limited partnership."

I'll remind the member opposite that on his watch, hydro prices went up 40%. I'll also remind the member opposite that the price of electricity in Ontario is lower today than the day this government took office. By the way, what do you have against the 3,000 people in Ontario who are working on this project? Why don't you speak up for their jobs? Why don't you do that?

This deal ensures a clean, reliable, renewable supply of electricity today and into the future. We are continuing to move with prudence and responsibility to protect Ontarians today and into the future.

#### ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby–Ajax):** My question is for the minister responsible for the lottery. For several days, now, we've stood in this House and asked you to come clean about what you and the Premier knew and when you knew it. Your repeated refusal to answer strongly suggests that your government is engaged in a cover-up. As Murray Campbell writes in today's *Globe and Mail*, "It's too patronizing for words. The performance by Mr. McGuinty and his minister suggests they care more about spinning their way out of the OLG controversy than they do about the people who were defrauded of jackpots after the lottery corporation knew the CBC had it in its sights."

Minister, why don't you just announce today that you're appointing an independent investigation into what the Premier's office and the minister's office knew and when they knew it?

1500

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** Members can quote members of the media. I would suggest to the member for Whitby–Ajax where Mr. Campbell points out in his article: "The opposition don't have much evidence to back up their contention that the government knew of the irregularities before a CBC program..."

Of course, the Ombudsman, an independent officer of this Legislature, did comment on the critical time when I believe the member's husband sat at the cabinet table and looked the other way and swept this matter under the rug. The Ombudsman said that 2002 was the crossroads: "At that point, the OLG could have gone in one of two ways. It could have said, 'We'll apply the law and take the measures to act diligently.' One month later Bob

Edmonds surfaced, and they pretended that binding law from the" Superior "Court ... didn't apply ... then it became a slippery slope."

This member and members of her family, of her party, sat back and did nothing and put these matters away in a closet. That's not the way this government will treat it. As the Ombudsman says—

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

**Mrs. Elliott:** Dodge and deflect, dither and deny. That's what this minister is doing. We need an independent investigation, because regardless of what the OPP and the Toronto police are doing, nobody is looking at what went on in the Premier's office and in the minister's office.

The people of Ontario know something isn't right when the Liberal campaign team of Don Guy, Jim Warren, Warren Kinsella and Bob Lopinski gathered on a Sunday in October to devise ways to cover this up. Why doesn't the minister just come clean, truly take to heart the notions of integrity, accountability and responsibility and appoint an independent investigation so that we can truly get to the bottom of this?

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** Taking responsibility means rolling up your sleeves and implementing the recommendations of the Ombudsman, not ignoring them the way that previous governments did. I trust the Ombudsman, an independent, non-biased, non-partisan officer of this Legislature. I understand the members opposite. Even members on this side of the House have their own partisan perspective.

Unlike the member opposite, I trust the Ontario Provincial Police, to whom I've asked that all materials be referred. They have subsequently decided to call in the Toronto Police Service to review them. I trust that they are the appropriate ones to get to the bottom of these matters, to conduct the appropriate review and to take the appropriate next step.

I guess the questions for the member opposite are, why does she not have trust in the OPP, why doesn't she believe the Ombudsman, why doesn't she have confidence? I believe the reason is that she knows she and her colleagues who were here at the time will be found to have done nothing, to have swept these matters—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

#### MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** I have a question for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Last night at the Ontario Mining Association function, you were waxing eloquent about how the McGuinty government believes in consultation with the mining industry. Just a couple of short weeks ago, the McGuinty government increased the royalty on diamond mines from 5% to 13%. Can you tell people across northern Ontario what consultations there were with the diamond miners before you tripled the royalty rate?



**Hon. Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** I don't know that the member of the third party and I were at the same reception, but I was at a reception where a whole bunch of mining companies were celebrating the facts of the mining industry. Let's go through them for a little while. I want to quote right from the document they gave out to members who were interested enough. We talked about Canadian mineral production. Ontario's share is 28%, higher than any other jurisdiction in Canada. Let's talk about value of minerals produced in Ontario: Nickel is 64% of the Canadian total, Canadian ranking, 1; gold, 60%, Canadian ranking, 1; platinum group, 85%, Canadian ranking, 1; cobalt, 62%, Canadian ranking, 1.

What were we celebrating last night? We were celebrating the success of a government that cares about mining—

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

**Mr. Hampton:** I'm not sure—maybe the minister wasn't there when the diamond mining spokesperson got up, because he said, after you waxed eloquent about consultation, that there had been no consultation—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. It won't surprise anyone to know that I'm having great difficulty hearing people place and respond to questions. I'm sure that would be the case for many of the members here. It would be wise, I think, to provide some sense of decorum for the rest of the afternoon, if not longer.

Leader of the third party.

**Mr. Hampton:** Maybe the minister didn't hear the spokesperson for the diamond mining sector say that there had been no consultation. So I want to ask the minister this: After you waxed eloquent last night about consultation, can you tell the First Nations of Ontario how much consultation you had with them before you tripled the royalty rate on diamond mining?

**Hon. Mr. Bartolucci:** I have to say that we also celebrated the wonderful understanding of the McGuinty government when it comes to mining tax. First of all, we mourned, of course, the fact that between 1990 and 1995, the standard mining tax rate was 20%. We of course mourned the fact that while the NDP were in power, 13 mines closed and six metal mills closed. But then we celebrated the fact that the standard mining tax in Ontario is now half of what their tax was, at 10%, and that we have the distinction of opening more new mines in this jurisdiction than anywhere else in Ontario. And we celebrated the fact that next year, we will have another banner year in mining because we and the miners work jointly.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** You're a piece of work, buddy.

**The Speaker:** Minister of Finance, that's not helpful. *Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I can wait. New question?

## SPORTS AND RECREATION FUNDING

### FONDS POUR SPORTS ET LOISIRS

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell):** My question is for the Minister of Health Promotion. Minister, last week you came to my riding to announce \$3 million in funding for the city of Clarence-Rockland's new culture and recreation project. Let me tell you that the city of Clarence-Rockland is very pleased that the McGuinty government made this investment. When this recreation complex is completed, local residents will be able to stay active in their own community instead of making the long drive to Ottawa. Minister, why has this government made a commitment to fund local sports and recreation infrastructure projects?

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):** Let me begin by thanking the honourable member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, one of the great advocates for eastern Ontario, who delivers for his community.

I was pleased to be there with a \$3-million contribution from this government to the good people of Clarence-Rockland, because they had their act together. They worked hard; they informed the ministry; they had not-for-profit support through the Optimist Club and the local municipality. But who was missing in that equation? They had the not-for-profit sector, the community fundraising, the local municipality, the province of Ontario—the federal government. Our famous hockey-dad Prime Minister has still not come up with a stand-alone sport and recreation infrastructure program. But Premier McGuinty has, and I was pleased that that \$3 million is going to good use in Clarence-Rockland.

1510

**M. Lalonde:** Monsieur le ministre, encore une fois merci pour cet investissement dans ma communauté. Je sais que les gens de Clarence-Rockland et des communautés environnantes apprécient la vision du gouvernement McGuinty et son engagement à créer des Ontariens et Ontariennes en bonne santé.

The total cost of the Clarence-Rockland recreation complex is \$18.5 million. While your investment is a big step forward, the city is working hard on fundraising but will need more funds to complete the project. Minister, are there any other programs available to help keep Ontarians healthy by using preventive measures such as the Clarence-Rockland project, making it easy for Ontarians across the province to have access to such recreational projects?

**Hon. Mr. Watson:** Thanks to Minister Greg Sorbara and our government, we have invested over \$70 million in sport and recreation infrastructure, because we know that there is a huge deficit. Parks and Recreation Ontario have estimated a \$5-billion deficit dealing with outdated and dilapidated arenas and swimming pools and com-

munity centres. I'm pleased that our government has come to the table. I'm pleased that when these investments are made, we see an increase in those individuals who are coming forward to take part in sport and recreation opportunities.

My friend in Peterborough, the member for Peterborough, Jeff Leal, was able to secure \$3 million for their Y project. What happened? They had a 108-year-old Y. When the new one opened, they went from 3,500 members to over 7,500 members. Build it and they will come, because these kinds of investments mean a lot to small communities throughout the province of Ontario.

Every single sports minister in Canada has continuously asked the federal government to come to the table to create a sport and recreation infrastructure fund. We're still waiting, but while we're waiting, the McGuinty government is delivering.

#### ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** My question is to the minister responsible for the lotteries. Minister, yesterday we asked the Premier about your government's cover-up of the lottery scandal. We asked specifically about a meeting in August 2006, attended by your chief of staff, Wilson Lee, in which he is reported to have said that the Premier's office saw nothing of the scandal. Mr. Lee's spokesperson, Ben Chin, says it never happened, no recollections—shades of Mr. Lafleur at the Gomery inquiry saying, "I don't remember" to every question. But Wilson Lee said that it may have happened. The Premier wouldn't answer. Minister, could you give us a straight answer today? Did that meeting happen?

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** Earlier a member of your caucus raised Mr. Campbell, the columnist for the Globe and Mail. He went on, by the way, to say that the opposition doesn't "have much evidence to back up their contention ... or that it somehow conspired with the lottery corporation to limit the damage." These kinds of innuendo and unsubstantiated allegations are below this member and below his party.

In fact, what I have been doing is what the Ombudsman has indicated should be done, which is, in order to restore public trust and confidence, to implement the recommendations that he made, starting with, just after the CBC raised the matter on the program the Fifth Estate, calling in KPMG, your party's own auditor, to get to the bottom of the matter and to make recommendations as to the security procedures that ought to be in place so that the public could have full trust and confidence. Those are the responsible actions. This member, too, once sat at the cabinet table and, I can only conclude from the way he and his colleagues have dealt with this, looked the other way, slid these matters under the rug—

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

**Mr. Hardeman:** Dodge and deflect, dither and deny—that's all we're getting from this minister. Min-

ister, that wasn't the question. If this minister is really interested in the truth, if he's interested in protecting the public interest, if he's interested in restoring confidence in the lottery system, he'll come clean and appoint an independent investigation to look into the Premier's office, into your own office and into this scandal: when you knew it, what you knew and what you did about it when you found out. Minister, will you do that today?

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** Members of this government have decided to shine a light on these matters, where members opposite, when they were in government, chose to look the other way. Taking responsibility means rolling up your sleeves and dealing with the problem, as opposed to sweeping it under a rug.

I would hope that this member would have read the Ombudsman's report, where he says—

**Mr. Hardeman:** I did.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** The member says he did. Well, on page 68, he says, "I commend the minister and the government for its openness and responsiveness to my report and recommendations and for their immediate and resolute commitment to ensuring change."

What did happen previously, certainly under another government, I can't reply. I have asked members of the Conservative Party to stand in their place and hold an account for themselves. I've asked them to apologize to Bob Edmonds for the way he was treated. I have apologized. Unfortunately, members opposite will never have that opportunity, and I think that the Edmonds family is the worse for it. It's regrettable that members opposite—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth):** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, yesterday the Environmental Review Tribunal threw cold water on your incineration agenda. It has given concerned citizens the green light to appeal the approvals given under your watch to Lafarge Canada to burn tires in Bath. The tribunal found that this incinerator is potentially hazardous to public health and the environment, and that's exactly—exactly—what community and environmental experts have been telling you for months.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** We need the member for Oxford and the Attorney General to sit down.

**Mr. Tabuns:** Why did you let the interests of a multinational company trump protecting Ontario families and the environment?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment):** As my friend knows well, the matter is now obviously before the Environmental Review Tribunal, and it would be inappropriate for me to comment on that specific matter.

My number one priority as Minister of the Environment is to ensure the health and safety of Ontarians. We

are guided by a public discourse and guided by good science. The hearing before the Environmental Review Tribunal will provide another opportunity for the community to come together to bring that good science forward, and I look forward to the matter being before the ERT so that we can all move forward, being guided by the best science that's available.

**Mr. Tabuns:** The minister talks about protecting public safety, but she did not require Lafarge Canada's tire incinerator to undergo an environmental assessment. She forced the citizens to put out money and time to protect themselves. Two weeks ago, you changed the rules so you could fast-track incineration in this province so people could get around the environmental assessment process. The decision that was handed down by the Environmental Review Tribunal yesterday signals that these projects must be scrutinized, that those claims that they're safe are spin and not substance.

Minister, when can Ontarians count on you to actually start protecting the air they breathe from incineration?

**Hon. Ms. Broten:** I know my friend wants to play politics with many diverse issues, put them in a pot. I know that you have an absolute unwillingness to examine any type of new technology. That's why the rules have been put forth: 14 mandatory steps, many opportunities for public consultation. Those are the issues that we talked about last June when we said we would help get to a faster yes or a faster no and make sure that the environmental assessment process did protect Ontarians.

The matter now before the Environmental Review Tribunal is with respect to a certificate of approval, and I know that you know that those matters are very distinct. But in all of those issues, the guiding principle is to be guided by good science, to have public consultation, to meet with the community—which I have done in all of these instances—and to make sure that together as a jurisdiction we progress into the 21st century making sure that every citizen in Ontario is protected, and that's what I'm committed to doing.

1520

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, I know that our government has committed to moving forward with the closure of the last three remaining institutions in Ontario for adults with developmental disabilities. I think it's great that we're transforming Ontario's developmental services system to support the full inclusion of Ontarians with developmental disabilities in all aspects of our society.

It is important, though, that these individuals have the community supports they need before they become integrated into the community. Minister, can you tell me how our government is building these community supports?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for franco-**

**phone affairs):** First of all, let me thank the member from Northumberland, and I would also like to recognize his continued advocacy for the developmentally disabled.

Our government is building stronger, more inclusive communities for all Ontarians, including those with a developmental disability. We continue to hear success stories of former facility residents who have transitioned into the community. This transition can only be successful if the necessary community supports are in place, which is why the McGuinty government has made unprecedented investments in the sector.

In 2006, we made the largest one-year investment in developmental services in Ontario's history, \$84 million, which brought our government's four-year commitment to a record \$276 million. In our 2007 budget, we have invested an additional \$200 million. This totals more than \$500 million in new funding in—

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

**Mr. Rinaldi:** Thank you for your answer, Minister. I've met with constituents in my riding, folks like Campbellford-Brighton Community Living, who were concerned about this issue, and they would like to know what all of this new funding will mean. It is clear that the McGuinty government has increased its financial commitment, but can you please explain how exactly this increased funding will translate into a better quality of life for the developmentally disabled?

**Hon. Mrs. Meilleur:** The additional \$200-million investment announced in our 2007 budget will help agencies sustain and enhance residential and community services, and increase supports to families caring for family members with developmental disabilities at home. Agencies can also use this money to address salary and other operating costs as they continue to provide high-quality community-based supports. All of our new funding will enhance agency sustainability, and, as a result, individuals and their families will be better supported. Our investments will also fund nearly 1,000 new residential spaces for residents of the three facilities and provide additional funding for our special services at home program.

I would also like to mention that our 2007 budget provides an additional \$7 million, on top of the \$200 million I mentioned, in capital funding for community agencies serving people with developmental disabilities.

#### ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean-Carleton):** My question is for the minister of lotteries. We want to give the minister one more chance to put an end to his four years of stonewalling, because we're fair-minded on this side. We want to see an end to the cover-up happening over at OLG.

You'll appreciate that when the Liberal campaign team of Don Guy, Jim Warren, Warren Kinsella and Bob Lopinski meet on a Sunday in October, it will raise

eyebrows. It will get people wondering what kind of cover-up is being cooked up. But so far we've been stonewalled in trying to find out what went on in this meeting, proof again that we need an independent investigation. Will the minister today, before we go away on a four-day break, call an independent investigation so we can find out what went on and when it went on with respect to this lottery scandal and the cover-up?

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** Once again the members opposite engage in speculation and unsupported allegations. In fact, we've had an independent investigation from the Ombudsman. I know the members opposite don't like the fact that the Ombudsman indicated that 2002 was the crossroads, when many of them either sat in cabinet, had loved ones, or worked for members opposite at that time. I can appreciate that.

But after the Ombudsman made his report known back a couple of weeks ago, I instructed that all of the materials be given over to the Ontario Provincial Police for their review. I hope the member opposite isn't claiming that our police are not independent, because they certainly are. I know that members opposite have often asked this government to direct the police into investigating or into taking other kinds of actions, but that's not the responsible approach. I have trust and confidence in the lawful authorities, in the police in this province to conduct the proper review—

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

**Ms. MacLeod:** All I can say to that is, if he were half the minister that half of these people were when they were in government, he would be having an investigation today. And if he were half the woman that his mother was, he'd resign.

But I digress. He can continue, he can dodge, he can deflect, he can dither and he can deny, but that's all the minister is doing.

Don Guy, Jim Warren, Warren Kinsella, Bob Lopinski—I'm not going to kid you—all of them in them same room for a meeting to talk about the lottery scandal and the cover-up looks bad. The minister is refusing to grant this simple request, a request being made not only by the members of the official opposition; a request that would prove a commitment to transparency and accountability, something that party campaigned on four years ago when it was running for office.

People are right to think that he's got something to hide. Will he come clean today? Why doesn't he prove he's got nothing to hide by calling today for an independent investigation into OLG?

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I must say to the member for Nepean–Carleton that the Ombudsman disagrees with you. He says, "I commend the minister and the government for its openness and responsiveness to my report and recommendations and for their immediate and resolute commitment to ensuring change."

This member and her colleagues who served on the executive council of government—I would note the

member for Erie–Lincoln, a former minister at the time responsible for the OLG—in the opinion of the Ombudsman, looked the other way. They swept these matters under the carpet. They refused to roll up their sleeves and deal with the problem, and actually, in fact, nurtured this culture which the Ombudsman says must change. That's why I, and this government, have taken action. That's why 17 of the Ombudsman's and KPMG recommendations have been implemented; 25 more by the end of June. The other 18 are a work in progress and are ongoing.

I know that members opposite don't like to hear—

**The Speaker:** New question.

## ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, while you're willing to give billions of dollars to the nuclear industry, you aren't helping ordinary Ontarians with upfront capital costs for their own home solar or wind power. But beyond that, Minister, you aren't giving people a break on property taxes.

Your answer to Max Woschnigg, a Guelph area resident who recently learned that he was going to be stuck with a \$3,000 increase in his property taxes because he put in a wind turbine—your comment: "We all pay property taxes."

Minister, why don't you take action to protect Ontarians who go green rather than having them penalized with higher property taxes?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy):** Again, the member opposite didn't finish what I said when I responded to that, and the property tax issue is one that is important. The Minister of Finance's responsibility for MPAC has indicated a willingness to look at those rules, and we're going to.

I'd also like to read a quote from somebody I know is a colleague and friend of the member opposite—Chris Winter of the Conservation Council of Ontario. Here's what Chris has to say: "Ontario's conservation movement is starting to get the recognition it deserves. Buried in a traditional budget ... are ... announcements that we have been pressing for ... including consumer subsidies and support for community outreach programs."

This government is a leader in conservation and renewable power. We are defending those interests. Your party, your government closed down conservation. We'll show you how it's done, and we're getting it done.

**Mr. Tabuns:** Minister, telling us that you're putting these considerations under review tells us that it's going into the never-never. You don't seem to have any difficulty saying that you're going to go ahead putting all of this money into nuclear power. When it comes to actually dealing with obstacles that people are confronting today, when they make decisions about green power, it's off into the never-never.

**1530**

My constituents in Toronto–Danforth who are investing in green power are worried that they're going to get

hit with property tax increases because they're doing the right thing. When is your government actually going to deal with this problem and make sure that there are not disincentives for investments in green power?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** Let me quote from a couple of other eminent Canadians about what they have to say about this government's renewable energy program. Here's what Keith Stewart of the World Wildlife Fund of Canada says, speaking about our standard offer: "We love the idea. The small stuff adds up. This model should be taken right across North America." Your leader doesn't even like compact fluorescent light bulbs. Those are those light bulbs that save people energy. Let's see what he had to say: "It's a good PR gimmick but it's not going to give you energy conservation."

Let's talk about the record. What happened? Let's see. Power saver month, which encouraged customers to purchase energy-efficient products in the early 1990s: What happened to that project? It was cancelled. The refrigerator cashback program in the early 1990s under the NDP: What happened to that program? Cancelled. Energy-efficient lighting in the early 1990s under the Bob Rae government: What happened? Cancelled.

That party doesn't understand energy, it doesn't understand the environment and it doesn't understand conservation. This Premier and our government do, and we're fixing the mess they and our other predecessors—

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

#### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** My question is for the Minister of Education. As I know you are very aware, Minister, one of the issues facing the Grand Erie District School Board is the decision as to whether to replace the original Brantford Collegiate Institute, BCI, or rehabilitate and retrofit the school.

As an educator in Brantford for over 25 years, I certainly understand and appreciate the attachment staff, students and the community have towards the schools they teach and learn in. The community at large has also got strong feelings about this issue. I have arranged an information sharing session between ministry staff and representatives of the BCI school community. I have also asked you, Minister—and I know you're responding to this—to contact the school board directly to clarify what's happening and why.

Minister, can you clarify for my constituents, and particularly those who are entrenched in this issue, the situation with respect to BCI and your role with the government and with the school board? I'd appreciate that.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education):** Thank you to the member for his question and for his advocacy in Brant. My staff have contacted the school board. BCI was originally built in 1910. Early last year, the trustees established a committee to review the options for the future development of BCI. The options were

either the status quo, redevelop and renovate or build a new school.

The BCI committee of the whole gave tentative approval to renovate both the 1910 and 1963 wings and demolish and rebuild the rest of the school, with the project to begin in July 2007 and end in December 2008. I understand that the trustees had second thoughts about rebuilding on the current site after hearing how the 18-month construction schedule would affect students. Based on our information, trustees were also faced with a larger-than-expected estimate for the redevelopment of BCI.

Recently the trustees dropped plans to rebuilt BCI on Brant Avenue after they heard that land for a new school would be available within a year—or could be, depending on council selling the land.

I know the debate on the future of BCI is challenging for the Brant community. These are decisions the trustees have to make in their communities.

#### PETITIONS

##### ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It was on my desk in Woodstock, and the constituents are coming in, signing it on a regular basis.

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and David Caplan ignored stories of millions in rip-offs within Ontario's lottery system for months, if not years;

"Whereas they acted only after they were caught and their first attempt was to 'spin the scandal' rather than fix the problems;

"Whereas Ontarians have every right to expect leadership from their government; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and David Caplan have failed to protect the integrity of the lottery system in Ontario;

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

"That Dalton McGuinty start upholding the standards of integrity, responsibility and accountability, make the protection of the interests of all Ontarians a priority, and demand the resignation of David Caplan, the minister currently responsible for the lottery system."

I affix my signature as I agree with the petition.

#### TUITION

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale-High Park):** I'm reading a petition from University of Toronto Students' Administrative Council:

"To Stop Tuition Fee Hikes and Improve Access and Quality In Post-Secondary Education

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I absolutely agree with this and affix my signature hereto.

#### GTA POOLING

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It is entitled, very clearly, “End GTA Pooling: Pass Ontario Budget. I’d certainly like to thank the staff and clients of Intercultural Neighbourhood Social Services for having collected the signatures. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the city of Mississauga faces a long-term labour shortage, resulting in some 60,000 more people commuting into the city of Mississauga than leave Mississauga to earn their living and support their families each and every day; and

“Whereas 10 years ago the Ontario government of that day introduced the concept of GTA pooling, whereby funds are taken from the municipalities surrounding the city of Toronto and channelled into the city of Toronto without benefit or accountability to the taxpayers of those fast-growing cities, which face big-city needs and issues of their own; and

“Whereas GTA pooling places an additional tax burden on the municipal property tax bases of some \$40 million each and every year to the city of Mississauga; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario in its 2007-08 budget proposes to completely eliminate GTA pooling during a seven-year span beginning in fiscal year 2007-08, and that as pooling is phased out, Ontario will take

responsibility for social assistance and social housing costs currently funded by GTA pooling;

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

“That all parties within the government of Ontario support the swift passage of the 2007-08 Ontario budget and ensure that its provisions ending GTA pooling are implemented.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition. I affix my signature and ask page Jacob to carry it for me.

#### LABORATORY SERVICES

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** I have a petition to do with Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare lab services. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the residents of the communities served by Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare ... wish to maintain current community lab services; and

“Whereas maintaining community lab services promotes physician retention and benefits family health teams; and

“Whereas the funding for community lab services is currently a strain on the operating budget of MAHC; and

“Whereas demand for health services is expected to continue to rise with a growing retirement population in Muskoka-East Parry Sound; and

“Whereas the operating budget for MAHC needs to reflect the growing demand for services in the communities of Muskoka-East Parry Sound;

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

“That the McGuinty government and the Minister of Health increase the operating budget of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare to permit continued operation of community lab services.”

I support this petition.

1540

#### GTA POOLING

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville):** I have a petition here. It says:

“End GTA Pooling: Pass Ontario Budget

“Whereas the city of Mississauga faces a long-term labour shortage, resulting in some 60,000 more people commuting into the city of Mississauga than leave Mississauga to earn their living and support their families each and every day; and

“Whereas 10 years ago the Ontario government of that day introduced the concept of GTA pooling, whereby funds are taken from the municipalities surrounding the city of Toronto and channelled into the city of Toronto without benefit or accountability to the taxpayers of those fast-growing cities, which face big-city needs and issues of their own; and

“Whereas GTA pooling places an additional tax burden on the municipal property tax bases of some \$40

million each and every year to the city of Mississauga; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario in its 2007-08 budget proposes to completely eliminate GTA pooling during a seven-year span beginning in fiscal year 2007-08, and that as pooling is phased out, Ontario will take responsibility for social assistance and social housing costs currently funded by GTA pooling;

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

“That all parties within the government of Ontario support the swift passage of the 2007-08 Ontario budget and ensure that its provisions ending GTA pooling are implemented.”

I agree with this and affix my signature.

#### STEVENSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

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

“Whereas Stevenson Memorial Hospital needs \$1.4 million in new funding over the next three years to get its birthing unit reopened and to ensure that they can recruit enough obstetricians and health care providers to supply a stable and ongoing service for expectant mothers in our area; and

“Whereas forcing expectant mothers to drive to Newmarket, Barrie or Orangeville to give birth is not only unacceptable, it is a potential safety hazard; and

“Whereas Stevenson Memorial Hospital cannot reopen the unit under its current budget and the McGuinty government has been unresponsive to repeated requests for new funding;

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

“That the McGuinty Liberal government immediately provide the required \$1.4 million in new funding to Stevenson Memorial Hospital so that the local birthing unit can reopen and so that mothers can give birth in Alliston.”

I've signed this petition and, of course, I agree with it.

#### REGULATION OF ZOOS

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale–High Park):** I present a petition to the Ontario Legislature regarding regulating zoos to protect animals and communities:

“Whereas Ontario has the weakest zoo laws in the country; and

“Whereas existing zoo regulations are vague, unenforceable and only apply to native wildlife; and

“Whereas there are no mandatory standards to ensure adequate care and housing for zoo animals or the health and safety of animals, zoo staff, the visiting public or neighbouring communities; and

“Whereas several people have been injured by captive wildlife and zoo escapes are frequent in Ontario; and

“Whereas these same regulatory gaps were affirmed recently by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario in his annual report;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support MPP David Zimmer’s bill, the Regulation of Zoos Act.”

I agree with this petition and affix my signature hereto.

#### GTA POOLING

**Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale):** This petition is to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

“End GTA Pooling: Pass Ontario Budget

“Whereas the city of Mississauga faces a long-term labour shortage, resulting in some 60,000 more people commuting into the city of Mississauga than leave Mississauga to earn their living and support their families each and every day; and

“Whereas 10 years ago the Ontario government of that day introduced the concept of GTA pooling, whereby funds are taken from the municipalities surrounding the city of Toronto and channelled into the city of Toronto without benefit or accountability to the taxpayers of those fast-growing cities, which face big-city needs and issues of their own; and

“Whereas GTA pooling places an additional tax burden on the municipal property tax bases of some \$40 million each and every year to the city of Mississauga; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario in its 2007-08 budget proposes to completely eliminate GTA pooling during a seven-year span beginning in the fiscal year 2007-08, and that, as pooling is phased out, Ontario will take responsibility for social assistance and social housing costs currently funded by GTA pooling;

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

“That all parties within the government of Ontario support the swift passage of the 2007-08 Ontario budget and ensure that its provisions ending GTA pooling are implemented.”

I agree with the petitioners so I will put my signature on the petition.

#### ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline (Burlington):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty and David Caplan ignored stories of millions in rip-offs within Ontario’s lottery system for months, if not years;

“Whereas they acted only after they were caught and their first attempt was to ‘spin the scandal’ rather than fix the problems;

“Whereas Ontarians have every right to expect leadership from their government; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty and David Caplan have failed to protect the integrity of the lottery system in Ontario;

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

"That Dalton McGuinty start upholding the standards of integrity, responsibility and accountability, make the protection of the interests of all Ontarians a priority, and demand the resignation of David Caplan, the minister currently responsible for the lottery system."

I wholly agree with the intent of this petition and I affix my name thereto. I will give it to Katrina.

#### GTA POOLING

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge):** A petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

"End GTA Pooling: Pass Ontario Budget

"Whereas the city of Mississauga faces a long-term labour shortage, resulting in some 60,000 more people commuting into the city of Mississauga than leave Mississauga to earn their living and support their families each and every day; and

"Whereas 10 years ago the Ontario government of that day introduced the concept of GTA pooling, whereby funds are taken from the municipalities surrounding the city of Toronto and channelled into the city of Toronto without benefit or accountability to the taxpayers of those fast-growing cities, which face big-city needs and issues of their own; and

"Whereas GTA pooling places an additional tax burden on the municipal property tax bases of some \$40 million each and every year to the city of Mississauga; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario in its 2007-08 budget proposes to completely eliminate GTA pooling during a seven-year span beginning in fiscal year 2007-08, and that as pooling is phased out, Ontario will take responsibility for social assistance and social housing costs currently funded by GTA pooling;

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

"That all parties within the government of Ontario support the swift passage of the 2007-08 Ontario budget and ensure that its provisions ending GTA pooling are implemented."

I'm going to sign this and pass it on to page Craig.

#### ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

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

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and David Caplan ignored stories of millions of dollars in rip-offs within Ontario's lottery system for months, if not years;

"Whereas they acted only after they were caught and their first attempt was to 'spin the scandal' rather than fix the problems;

"Whereas Ontarians have every right to expect leadership from their government; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and David Caplan have failed to protect the integrity of the lottery system in Ontario;

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

"That Dalton McGuinty start upholding the standards of integrity, responsibility and accountability, make the protection of the interests of all Ontarians a priority, and demand the resignation of David Caplan, the minister currently responsible for the lottery system."

I have signed that petition.

#### GTA POOLING

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East):** A petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly to end GTA pooling and pass the Ontario budget:

"Whereas the city of Mississauga faces a long-term labour shortage, resulting in some 60,000 more people commuting into the city of Mississauga than leaving Mississauga to earn their living and support their families each and every day; and

"Whereas 10 years ago the Ontario government of that day introduced the concept of GTA pooling, whereby funds are taken from the municipalities surrounding the city of Toronto and channelled into the city of Toronto without benefit or accountability to the taxpayers of those fast-growing cities, which face big-city needs and issues of their own; and

"Whereas GTA pooling places an additional tax burden on the municipal property tax bases of some \$40 million each and every year to the city of Mississauga; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario in its 2007-08 budget proposes to completely eliminate GTA pooling during a seven-year span beginning in fiscal year 2007-08, and that, as pooling is phased out, Ontario will take responsibility for social assistance and social housing costs currently funded by GTA pooling;

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

"That all parties within the government of Ontario support the swift passage of the 2007-08 Ontario budget and ensure that its provisions ending GTA pooling are implemented."

I agree and sign my name to this petition.

1550

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to standing order 55, if I might, I'd like to rise to give the Legislature the business of the House for next week.

On Tuesday, April 10, 2007, in the afternoon, second reading of Bill 187, the budget bill; in the evening, third reading of Bill 155, the referendum act.



On Wednesday, April 11, 2007, in the afternoon, NDP opposition day; in the evening, second reading of Bill 187, the budget bill.

On Thursday, April 12, 2007, in the afternoon, second reading of Bill 198, Safeguarding and Sustaining Ontario's Water Act.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Thank you. Perhaps you could provide a copy of that to the Clerk, please.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### DEFERRAL OF VOTES

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to allow for the deferral of any recorded divisions on the budget motion until Tuesday, April 10, 2007, at deferred votes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Is there unanimous consent? It's carried.

### 2007 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 27, 2007, on the amendment to the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo):** I am certainly pleased to join the debate regarding the 2007 budget. I would begin by saying that we have a budget here, the McGuinty Liberal budget, where we saw a spending spree of some \$22 billion, but as far as the results were concerned the people in the province of Ontario certainly did not see better results.

I'm going to focus my remarks primarily on the lack of results in the area of health care. Ontarians deserve better. They are forced to pay, every year now, a health tax. It's a tax that was implemented in the first McGuinty Liberal budget. It's a tax that in some cases amounts to almost an additional \$1,000 per year, and it's a tax that Premier McGuinty indicated in 2003, during the election campaign, he wasn't going to introduce. In fact, he said nightly, daily—every hour of every day, it seemed, he was on TV telling people, "I won't raise your taxes and I'm not going to lower them either." Then, in the very first budget, we saw the introduction of the health tax and we also had the largest tax increase in the history of this province. Certainly people are paying more when it comes to health care but they're not seeing the results that they were promised or that they deserve.

I want to begin with emergency departments. There was a promise made by this government in 2003, an election promise. That promise by the McGuinty Liberals was to take the pressure off our hospitals in order that

Ontarians would not have to wait long hours in overcrowded emergency rooms for necessary care. Despite the fact that they made this promise, we haven't seen much progress. They said this in 2003. They totally ignored the province until finally, last fall, they were forced to make some sort of response. In the meantime, we have had emergency rooms throughout the province overcrowded, unable to respond to the needs of their communities. In fact, people have been turned away from the emergency rooms, and emergency rooms have had to close down because they haven't had enough physicians to address the needs of patients.

Emergency room overcrowding has caused problems that go far beyond the emergency rooms. We have also seen that part of the reason emergency rooms are overcrowded is because we don't have enough long-term-care beds to move people to, who need that type of care. We don't have the home care services that people need; we don't have the supportive housing that people need. We also don't have the acute care beds that people need.

We have not seen the relief that was promised in 2003 by Premier McGuinty when he said, "We will take pressure off our hospitals so" Ontarians "will not have to wait long hours in overcrowded emergency rooms for necessary care." In fact, he was totally unresponsive when the emergency room doctors came here. They pleaded, they begged for additional resources to help deal with the situation. They even travelled here to Queen's Park. At that time, the Minister of Health said, "Do you know what? You people don't really count. You don't represent the doctors in the province of Ontario. There's no big problem." Well, there is a big problem.

In fact, the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians said that there are five million Ontarians who visit our emergency departments on an annual basis. They go on to say that for many of these folks, it is an entirely unsatisfactory experience. They have to wait for an unconscionable length of time in crowded, uncomfortable waiting rooms for routine emergency care. They also have indicated, and we know first-hand, that many people who come into emergency rooms are left to languish on stretchers in corridors for long periods of time. And you know, by doing so, these individuals who need care are in pain and are robbed of their dignity while they wait in those corridors for a bed to become available. This was recorded in the Toronto Sun in a letter to the editor in November 2005.

I think it's important to recognize that when it comes to health care, when it comes to responding to the promise Premier McGuinty made to make sure that people have the services they need and are taken out of overcrowded emergency rooms, that simply hasn't happened. It hasn't happened in this budget, and it hadn't happened before the budget. So people are not seeing better health care in Ontario. In fact, we seem to have a very dysfunctional system, if you take a look at different hospitals throughout the province, where from time to time there are not enough beds to accommodate those in emergency rooms or there aren't enough human resour-

ces, whether it's nurses or doctors. We know that the wait times are excessive, and that problem has not been dealt with.

This budget also failed to respond to the concerns of the long-term-care sector. This is primarily older people who need assisted living in long-term-care homes. This government, despite the promises they have made, has virtually ignored the needs of some of our most vulnerable citizens in the province of Ontario. They promised \$6,000 to each resident for an additional 20 minutes of care, and they have not delivered. I'm going to say something about that just a little bit later, but where else they have failed Ontarians is in the provision of new long-term-care beds. Part of the problem in the emergency rooms is created by the fact that people in emergency rooms cannot be accommodated in acute care beds because those beds are being occupied by people who more appropriately belong in long-term-care residences and there are simply no rooms for them. We need to keep in mind that that is a very, very serious problem and it needs to be addressed.

#### 1600

If we take a look in the Quinte region alone, there are about 967 people on a wait list for long-term-care beds. Yet what did this budget provide? No new beds. The only beds that were announced were the 1,750 long-term-care beds that had already been announced in the fall, and that was only after the situation became desperate. But there is no plan for the further construction of new long-term-care beds. Furthermore, these 1,750 beds, which are really a drop in the bucket when you consider that Quinte alone has a wait list of 967 for long-term-care beds, are not going to become available until 2009. So there is no plan whatsoever to address the needs of our older residents who need these beds. I'll tell you, this re-announcement of only 1,750 beds offers little comfort to families in the province of Ontario.

This government also, in its platform, promised to build a seniors strategy that guaranteed that seniors would be treated with respect and dignity. I've made reference to the fact that we don't have enough long-term-care beds, so obviously we aren't guaranteeing that seniors are going to be treated with respect and dignity. Some of them are, unfortunately, languishing in acute care beds in hospitals, which certainly is not where they should more appropriately be accommodated. They should be in the more home-like environment of long-term-care residences.

The government also promised, as they were talking about respect and dignity, that they were going to provide seniors with an additional \$6,000 in order that they could be provided with 20 minutes of additional care. But after four budgets, that promise to our seniors has been broken. What we have instead is money provided in this budget turning into a mere one minute of additional care per resident per day—about 50 cents more per resident per day. I can tell you that the people in the long-term-care sector were disappointed. In fact, that would be an understatement. The associations were disappointed, the

residents were disappointed, their families were disappointed, their caregivers were disappointed and those who own and operate these homes were extremely disappointed, including in my own community, where our regional municipality had asked for additional funding and the additional level of care.

I want to read what the two organizations that represent the 75,000 long-term-care residents had to say about the 2007 McGuinty Liberal budget. These remarks, by the way, are from Donna Rubin, CEO of the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors: "For long-term care, the cupboard is bare.

"Unless the Liberals have a sudden conversion on the way to the polls on October 10, they will have to explain another broken promise—a promise made to long-term-care residents and their families across this province....

"In the leadup to the last election, the Liberals identified increased funding for long-term care—funding that would go directly to improving the level of care of residents—as one of their top priorities. Today, they failed to keep their word. This is a huge disappointment, especially after the Liberals promised after coming to power that they would lead a revolution in long-term care.... Homes have been given about 50 cents a day more to hire new nurses, but we needed over \$2 a day just to keep the ones we have. We will be laying off three nurses to hire one.... Sadly, this budget"—referring to the 2007 McGuinty Liberal budget—"will mean layoffs and service cuts."

Now we have another quote, from Karen Sullivan, executive director of the Ontario Long-Term Care Association, and she says:

"We feel that residents in long-term-care homes in the province in this budget have been forgotten.... The budget investment translates to 50 cents a resident a day, which is one minute of additional care. We were looking for 30 more minutes of care for our residents in this province; 50,000 people signed petitions over the last three weeks to say that's what was needed.... I think the message is that they have been forgotten and I think that's hugely very concerning for the 75,000 people who live in these homes and their families.... We were looking at \$300 million in additional funding and we got \$14 million.... With the one more minute of care funded in today's budget, staff will be run off their feet to meet basic care needs. The double standard of physical comfort and privacy between old and new homes will continue with no commitment to a capital renewal and retrofit program. Government has repeatedly said that more needs to be done in long-term care and care levels and capital renewal were described as budget issues when they were repeatedly raised just over a month ago during the public hearings on the new Long-Term Care Homes Act (Bill 140)."

This budget only delivered \$14 million. They didn't get the additional funding for personal care. But if you listen to Karen, there was also no plan for capital renewal in order that we could rebuild half of the long-term-care beds in this province, about 35,000 or 36,000, where we

still have people living in homes that are three- and four-bed wards and that don't have washrooms and are not wheelchair-accessible.

When we were in office, we built 20,000 new long-term-care beds to new 1998 design standards. We did renew and we did rebuild the oldest homes, the D homes, and we have 16,000 additional residents who now live in homes that meet 1998 design standards. But this government has refused to take any action. Certainly, they have not been responsive, and people are not getting better health care under the leadership of the Dalton McGuinty Liberal government. In fact, in some cases where we haven't had enough beds in the province of Ontario, like in Kingston General, they actually said that when there was a shortage—and I quote—they were going to be “forced to take the horrible step of charging long-term-care patients about \$800 a day if they don't accept a similar bed elsewhere in the province.”

So we do have some problems when it comes to long-term care. There are not more beds being built that are needed. There is no renewal plan for the B and C beds that would make all homes wheelchair-accessible and would allow all people to live in a one- to two-bed room with an ensuite bathroom. So this budget failed the long-term-care sector.

Also, if you take a look at nurses, this government has promised to add an additional 8,000 full-time nurses. Well, I can tell you, most recently an announcement was made offering new nurses only short-term, seven-and-a-half-month contracts. There is no guarantee of a full-time job. Again, I believe that the Liberals are not going to be able to keep their 2003 promise to hire 8,000 new full-time nurses, and that's disappointing. We need nurses in this province. We know that about 53% of the registered nurses employed in Ontario are over the age of 45. We need to retain those nurses; we need to have a plan to retain those nurses. Nurses are a critical and key component of the human resources within our health system, and we also know that nurses have an impact on increasing positive outcomes for patients. Again, this budget isn't going to help the need to recruit more nurses.

**1610**

This budget also, despite the new health tax, failed to address the doctor shortage crisis. We still have over one million people in this province without a family doctor. We know the situation is not getting better. In fact, in 2005, Ontario, for the first time in recent history, had a net loss of 14 doctors to other provinces, whereby provinces like BC and Alberta are gaining. We know that nearly 30% of Ontario medical grads leave the province within two years of finishing medical school. The other concern we have is that 20% of our doctors are over the age of 60. We need now to develop a plan to retain those doctors, or the one million people without a family doctor are going to increase. We also know that as of January 2007, under the leadership of Dalton McGuinty, we have 136 underserved communities in this province. We have a huge issue when it comes to physician supply. Most of the initiatives where we've seen some improve-

ments are as a result of initiatives we undertook between 1995 and 2003. Recently, the College of Physicians and Surgeons indicated that under our watch, 1995 to 2003, the number of licences for international medical graduates increased by 130%. That is important, because we did work hard, and we are now seeing the result of some of those labours.

I'm going to conclude my comments by saying that despite the new health tax, despite the additional about \$2.5 billion, we are not seeing improvements when it comes to health care for people in the province of Ontario. We still have a crisis. We have a shortage of doctors. Wait times in the province for all procedures are not going down. Long-term-care people are not getting the additional money for front-line, hands-on services or additional new beds. I know that when we take a look at diagnostic equipment, we still don't have the PET. So this budget did not deliver better health results for people in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** It's time for questions and comments. The Chair recognizes the member for York South–Weston.

**Mr. Paul Ferreira (York South–Weston):** It's always a delight to be able to listen to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. I can't say that I agree with her on many points, but it is good to listen to her wise words.

I do want to thank the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. Upon my election, she was kind enough to send me a very nice note, congratulating me on my victory. That certainly was a nice touch in welcoming me here to the House.

I listened to her comments closely and I was intrigued by what she said towards the end of her comments around foreign-trained medical professionals. It's my belief that we have not done enough to integrate these foreign-trained professionals into our health care system. I don't think her government can take much credit for what they did between 1995 and 2003. Obviously, she'll disagree.

I am interested in finding out from her what her party would propose to ensure that we are able to better utilize the vast talent we have in this province, talent from foreign-trained medical professionals. In my riding, I speak to many who are relegated to working in professions that do not make use of their vast education and their vast talents. As she rightly pointed out, there is a serious shortage of medical doctors in this province, not just in rural jurisdictions but in this very city of Toronto. So I would like her to expand a little bit on that. I realize her time will be limited and there will be other comments, but I'd like her to tell us more about what her plans entail to ensure that these international medical graduates are given the opportunities they should expect to receive once they arrive in Ontario.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland):** It's a pleasure to make a few comments on the 20 minutes or so of the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, who has spent a lot of time in this place. I do respect her for a lot of things she does. She was a Minister of Health, after all, and I'm sure

they did a few things. But she touched on some issues pertaining to my riding: the shortage of long-term-care beds. She's right that there is a shortage of long-term-care beds in the Quinte area. We're not going to deny it. We can't run away from it. And she's right that they built 20,000 beds under their watch. They put them in the wrong place—none in the Quinte area. You can't build long-term-care beds overnight, but what did our government do? Yes, it's not enough and we need to do more. We've announced 197 new beds, 100 some-odd in Hastings and 60 some-odd in Quinte West. So we are trying to address this situation.

She commented that with the money we're spending on health care, we're not seeing results. Let me bring her up to speed for a minute: a rehabilitation of the Belleville hospital, and they got three or four rubber cheques. They can never put in the shovel under their watch. The shovel is in the ground now and the building is starting to go. They presented "Go" three or four times but they never got a go because they never got any money.

What did we do with the rest of the money? Let me tell the member: a CT scan at the Trenton Memorial hospital, an MRI at the Northumberland Hills Hospital, an MRI at the Belleville General Hospital, and do you know what? A community health centre in the municipality of Port Hope, where they closed a hospital.

With that in mind, I would ask what they are going to do or what their plan is if they plan to cut \$2.5 million out of the health care budget, to cut it to its guts?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I want to thank the member from Kitchener–Waterloo for her very good presentation on the budget, particularly as it relates to health care and the long-term care in our society. I don't think there's anyone in the Legislature who could do a better job of that and who understands the problem in health care as acutely as the member from Kitchener–Waterloo does.

I find the comment from the member for Northumberland rather interesting, first of all, in suggesting that, yes, it was very nice that the previous government built 20,000 beds, but that they built them in the wrong place. I would just like to ask him where he has heard that we have an oversupply? We don't have any oversupply anywhere. What I think is important is that this budget does nothing to deal with the problem. It's not looking to add long-term-care beds anywhere. It's just saying that the status quo was good enough and that, in my opinion, is not good enough. I had the opportunity to go to some of the public hearings on Bill 140, the bill that deals with the restructuring of the health care system to some extent, and particularly as it relates to long-term care. All the people coming in were saying, "We need more. We need things put in this bill, because this does absolutely nothing to improve the cause of long-term care in Ontario."

What we need is to upgrade the C and B facilities so that they all can live in the standards that some are living in today, yet there is nothing in this budget that does that. I think it's a very apt question to answer. Since the

McGuinty government came to power, we are spending \$4,500 more per household than we were when they started. Are we getting that level of service? Has our health care system, has our education system, improved to that extent? I think it's, on behalf of my constituents, a resounding no.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale–High Park):** I look forward to a few minutes to comment on the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. I have to say she is one of the best-dressed members in this House and I've always admired her for that. I also have the say, of course, that there's no doubt that a scandal is happening in our long-term care. We have seniors who have to eat on \$5.46 a day. This is a scandal. We have a quality of care being paid for by this government that is scandalous in terms of the number of hours per week per patient. Yes, that is a scandal.

**1620**

I hope in my 20-minute span, though, to speak about some other issues that are pertinent in this budget and actually represent a number of voices in our community. They are the voices of labour leaders and union members, the voices of anti-poverty activists, the voices of legal aid clinic staff, the voices of small business owners, the voices of artists and educators, the voices of the leaders of our cities and environmentalists, all of whom have serious issues with what is more spin than substance in this budget. I look forward to taking some time to do that.

I was at a town hall last night in Etobicoke–Lakeshore on the minimum wage, and some of the comments about this budget from that town hall—this is post-budget—were "snow job," "smoke and mirrors," "an insult to our intelligence" and "birdcage liner." I actually wrote those down because I thought they were good. So I look forward to expanding upon those comments and the sentiment behind them and all of those who expected so much and received absolutely so little from what I've called before the "fudget." I'll go into more detail, of course, particularly on a subject close and dear to my heart, which is Bill 150, the minimum wage bill: \$10 an hour now. Not in three years—now.

**The Acting Speaker:** Time for response.

**Mrs. Witmer:** Thank you very much to those who just spoke. To the member for York South–Weston: I'd love to have a long-time discussion with him around foreign-trained physicians. Certainly there continues to be more that we can do in order to facilitate their entry into practice, but as I mentioned, between 1995 and 2003 we were able to increase the number foreign-trained professionals to practise in this province by 130%, and that was a remarkable feat.

To the member for Northumberland: I am concerned about the lack of beds for those who require long-term-care homes. In 1998, we had to build and have a plan for 20,000 additional beds because in the previous 10 years, beginning with the Liberal government and continuing through the NDP, there were no plans for new beds for our older residents. We're starting to see the same thing

happening now. This government does not have a plan for any new long-term-care beds. They are only responding when there is an emergency. As far as the rubber cheques, I can say to the member for Northumberland that we have not yet seen any cheque for Cambridge Memorial Hospital. There have been politics being played with a hospital that is old, that is in desperate need of expansion and renewal, and we have seen absolutely no cheque from this government despite some sort of commitment from time to time from either the Premier or the minister, and then they renege.

As far as the member for Oxford goes, I appreciate his remarks. Again, he spoke to long-term care.

The member for Parkdale–High Park: I appreciate her passion for those less fortunate.

**The Acting Speaker:** Time for further debate.

**Ms. DiNovo:** Perhaps I'll start with a story. This comes from one of the dozens of town halls that we've conducted around Ontario on the issue of the \$10 minimum wage and the reality of those who are the working poor, and the other reality that we need this now, not three years from now.

This was a young woman, a woman of colour, the daughter of an immigrant family, who talked about the joy of getting her first part-time job after high school. She went home with great glee to her parents and said, "I just got my first job." Her father said to her, "And how much are you earning, dear?" She said, "Eight dollars an hour." She said a shadow passed across his face and he said, "That's what I make."

This was a gentleman who was looking after a family, worked 40 hours a week; his wife made minimum wage as well. They used a food bank at the end of the month and they barely were able every month to feed their children and to pay the rent. So women like that—those are the voices I would like to bring forward to this community.

I think Murray Campbell said it best in the *Globe* article when he said that this government, the McGuinty government, talking about poverty is a sort of deathbed conversion. I was hoping that it was, but what we received in this budget is not a conversion moment by any stretch of the imagination. What we received were promises for next year, sometime never promises, and nothing that affects the lives of those that I speak for today immediately.

So rather than deal with promises in the future—because they say that the prediction of future behaviour is past behaviour. The past behaviour of the McGuinty government in 2003 was to make a lot of promises and not to keep very many of them. So rather than look at what they promise for the future, including a \$10 minimum wage some time three years from now, let's look at what Ontario actually received two weeks from when the budget was first announced.

What's happened to the average Ontarian? Well, this budget has not raised their minimum wage to \$10 an hour, despite the ballyhoo. We didn't pick that number out of the air. That is the low-income cut-off. That means

that if you make below that, you are poor. If you make \$10, you're just slightly above the poverty line. This has been fought for by poverty activists like Campaign 2000, by unions and by a number of people for a number of years now, and Bill 150 gave it expression.

What they have done instead is bring in a phased-in raise that won't be really realized for three years. Every single stage of that raise keeps those making that amount of money below the poverty line. So not only do they not fulfill the spirit or the letter of what we asked for with the raise-the-minimum-wage campaign—and it is a campaign, a campaign that's seen thousands of Ontarians send us e-mail and come to our town halls from here to Ottawa to Sudbury to Kingston. We're still holding those town hall meetings and we're still getting the same passion and the same excitement. When you see your paycheque at the end of the week, you don't believe the spin that you hear in the dailies. When you get your paycheque at the end of the week, you know what you receive, not what the government promises. And we know what promises are worth from politicians.

This budget has not ended the clawback of the national child supplement either, despite the spin, and I quote here from an anti-poverty activist from Income Security Advocacy Centre. I had the honour of serving on this panel last night with Sarah Blackstock. The question: "Does the new Ontario child benefit end the clawback of the national child benefit supplement?" Answer: "No. When fully implemented in 2011, a single parent on Ontario Works with one child will be better off by \$50/month—not \$122, which is the value of the clawback." And that's in 2011. Remember, this is money that comes from the federal government and goes to the poorest children in the province, and the McGuinty Liberal government claws it back and keeps it. They are not going to return it, not ever, and only \$50 of it in 2011. That's shameful.

This budget has not raised ODSP or OW rates. How can I say that? Well, they says they raised them by 2%. Whoop-de-do: 2%. That's not even the inflation rate. We had a disabled individual last night at the town hall, sitting there, and he was angry. He was absolutely angry. This is someone who cannot work. People on ODSP cannot work and we do not pay them enough to live. That is the reality of one of the wealthiest jurisdictions in the world. We should be ashamed and appalled at that.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. DiNovo:** Absolutely. My friend from York South–Weston pointed out the fact that, on the other hand—I will get to that—one of the things this budget has provided is what amounts to a 31% increase for the politicians sitting before us. Those at home know this. They know how much money they've received: \$40,000 for Dalton McGuinty alone, which is way more than twice what someone makes on minimum wage. I have to say, on that note, to my colleague from York South–Weston, that when Mr. Sorbara, Minister of Finance, stood up to announce the budget, his shoes, which cost \$256, were more than the poorest children in this

province will receive this year from this government. They get \$250; he gets \$256 shoes.

**1630**

**Mr. Ferreira:** He gets new shoes and the poor get the boot.

**Ms. DiNovo:** Absolutely.

This budget has not put one provincial penny into housing or child care. The great amounts ballyhooed, \$25 million for child care: The federal government gives them \$100 million. They're actually clawing back child care dollars that come from the federal government. In 2003, they promised \$300 million for child care, and now, six months before an election, we get \$25 million of federal dollars—not one penny from the province, again despite the fact that we live in one of the wealthiest jurisdictions in the world.

What about small business? When I first read this budget, I thought, "Oh, maybe they've passed my resolution." What was my resolution? The resolution was to reform the business education tax for small, suffering business, I might say, across Ontario. Then, of course, like others, I took the time to read the small print. Here's what small business tells us about this budget. This is from the website of the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas. Lionel Miskin of TABIA is an excellent representative for small retailers and small business.

"Lionel Miskin, TABIA vice-president and tax committee chair expressed disappointment that the Ontario budget, once again, fails to address the dilemma of Toronto's small retailers. 'While the government has recognized that the huge disparities in education tax rates across the province need to be addressed, the budget proposal will have no'"—and I say it again, "no"—"significant effect on Toronto's small retailers for years to come," he states.

"The provincial government taxes Toronto's commercial property to the hilt, with education levies that it uses elsewhere in the province. This overloads our membership, most of which is comprised of small retailers, with tens of millions of dollars in property taxes. Ever since the provincial government introduced current value assessment, most of these retailers have seen their property taxes increasing annually at rates which are double and triple the inflation rate. Between the annual assessment increases, usually 5%, plus the city's rate increases, 1.5%, many of these retailers are struggling to stay afloat.

"The provincial levy is hurting Toronto very badly," adds Mr. Miskin. 'It is contributing to the erosion of the city's commercial base, making it more and more difficult for the city to raise the revenues it needs.'"

I thank him for that and for all the hard work that he and TABIA do for small business in this province.

Who else is affected by this budget? Certainly, others who are near and dear to my heart are, of course, artists. What does this budget do to artists? Remember that artists are among the poorest individuals in our province. They make, on average, around \$26,000 or \$27,000 a year. This government, again, in 2003 promised status-

of-the-artist legislation. What have they received? Certainly not status-of-the-artist legislation. What they received was the status-of-the-artist act. What does the act say? Actually, the only concrete thing it says is that they're going to have a Celebrate the Artist Weekend in June. "Well, wonderful," say the struggling artists who can't feed their children or pay the rent. "That's not going to help." What do they need? What do they want? Here is what they want; this was written by the cultural workers of the Ontario Federation of Labour. This is what they're calling for:

- protections for child performers, as my Bill 191 would put into effect, if it were passed;

- access to training and professional development programs and funds;

- tax measures favourable to artists, such as income averaging and/or exclusions of certain incomes from provincial taxes;

- protections for senior artists and housing; and

- bargaining procedures for all professional artists and producers/engagers in the province of Ontario.

Again, they received absolutely none of this. In fact, the amounts of money that were received by various arts communities were always less than asked for—in the case of the Ontario Arts Council, half of what they asked for—and this in light of a \$90-million slash-and-burn to the culture budget that happened last year. So what have artists received? Absolutely nothing.

What about housing activists? There's an interesting question. What have housing activists got? Well, through a freedom of information act, we actually pushed this government to give us an answer to a question that we had been asking over and over, and that is, how many affordable housing units with rents between \$300 and \$500 a month had this government provided? We finally got the answer: 285. They promised 20,000 in 2003. My resolution asked them to provide what they promised in 2003, the 20,000. That amount of money is 30% of anybody on OW, ODSP or minimum wage, so truly affordable housing. The bulk of housing units they provided, around 2,000 in total, are for those making \$30,000 to \$70,000 a year, hardly what most Ontarians would call affordable housing. Again, what did we get? We didn't get much. We didn't get anything.

Here are some voices on what we didn't get. This is the centre for policy research talking about ODSP. They say that they're actually receiving less—that's people on ODSP—in provincial benefits when inflation is taken into account than they were under the Harris-Eves government when the McGuinty government was elected in 2003. That's with the whopping 2% increase.

Something else, of course, is education. This is the government that prides itself on being the education government. What was delivered in this budget? This budget delivered a \$781-million increase, which amounts to a funding cut if inflation is more than 1.5%. Post-secondary funding increased by \$100 million, roughly—only matching inflation. Tuition at colleges and universities still climbs 36% from 2005 to 2009. A little earlier I read a petition from the Canadian Federation of

Students and also from SAC at U of T. They are appalled at the rising student debt. Our students now take an average of debt of about \$28,000 for a BA, and then at the end of it can't find any jobs. My son is moving to China to find a job. Go figure. So that's education under this government that prides itself on education.

What about the environment, one might ask? What has this budget done for the environment? Let's just look at the figures here. The total budgeted on the environment is \$125 million. The Liberals promise to spend \$200 million later. Again, I draw the attention of the viewers at home to what "later" means for the McGuinty Liberals when we look at the promises that they came into this government with in 2003 and how many have actually been fulfilled, but still, they'll spend \$200 million later. That equals \$325 million or only about half of the \$586 million the federal government gave Ontario for climate change. The rest, the Liberals say, will go to existing initiatives. So here again, just like with child care, just like with the national child supplement, this government is spending less than they receive from the federal government in its budget.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Where's that money going?

**Ms. DiNovo:** One has to ask where the money is going. A couple of things. There were people who woke up this morning and did benefit from the McGuinty Liberal budget. Who were those people, one might ask? Certainly large corporations benefited because this is tax time and they continue to get some capital gains accelerated benefits from this government. Certainly Magna corporation, which walked away this morning with \$50 million from this government, gained from this budget.

Ian Urquhart wrote an interesting article about fund-raising for the Liberals and Tories. Do you know that the same corporations fund both? They hedge their bets. So who do the Liberals and Tories represent? They represent the same corporate interests. There's no question about that.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Aren't CEO salaries up?

**Ms. DiNovo:** CEO salaries, my colleague from York South-Weston, are at an all-time high: \$9 million a year. The gross domestic product portion of corporate profits is at an all-time high: 14%. We've never seen those kinds of figures since Confederation.

Obviously, some people are doing well, but not the one in six children in this province who live in poverty and who are still living in poverty; not the 15% to 17% of households who are living in poverty. No, they're still living in poverty. Compare that to Ireland's rate of poverty of 8%.

What about all those people who have been working so hard, for example, in our legal aid clinics, who supposedly just got \$51 million from the government? It's interesting that Parkdale legal aid's clinic director, Kevin Smith, sent me an e-mail today: "I had mentioned to you then about the Liberals' disingenuous claims regarding the increase to legal aid funding. This had everyone fooled, including," he says, "the Toronto Star and the head of the Ontario Bar Association," and basically he goes into an explanation which I won't go into because

it's lengthy. At the end of the day, what did they get? They got \$19 million. Many legal aid clinics are in danger of actually closing their doors. That's the reality of this budget.

**1640**

What does this budget do for the 122,000 households that are waiting for affordable housing? Absolutely nothing. What does it do for the 67,000 households waiting for affordable housing in the GTA? Absolutely nothing. There are \$100 rent supplements: We all know how far a \$100 rent supplement a month will go in the city of Toronto—

**Mr. Ferreira:** Not far at all.

**Ms. DiNovo:** —not very far at all.

When we look at the situation here for climate change, we should be appalled at the federal dollars they're not spending on the environment. Where is the money going? Well, \$40 billion to \$45 billion is going to nuclear reactors. There's a progressive step: \$40 billion to \$45 billion on nuclear reactors, and they still haven't closed the coal-fired plants, which they promised to do in 2003. Nanticoke is still out there polluting—one of the biggest polluters in Canada. Does this government do anything about it? Absolutely not.

It's sad, at this holy time of year for many faiths, to speak about spin over truth. It's hard to speak about the growing prosperity gap between the haves and the have-nots, the rich and those who are suffering, but what better time of year to speak about it than when we're called to do justice, when we're called to turn to our brothers and sisters and actually do something for them as legislators, what we were elected to do, not to line our own pockets with pay raises—that, they've done extremely well—not to pay off our wealthy and powerful corporate friends—that, they've really done well—but to actually help the poorest among them? We remind you that this government never spoke about poverty six months ago. What made the difference? A huge grassroots movement. We get e-mails every day calling for a raise in the minimum wage.

**Mr. Ferreira:** They're worrying in York South-Weston.

**Ms. DiNovo:** Yes, a very telling by-election. Again, my colleague from York South-Weston interjects, where we beat a 13,000-vote spread.

Ontarians are not stupid; Ontarians know spin when they see it. What they get in this budget is spin; what they want is real action. They want a \$10 minimum wage and they want it now, not three years from now when it's not worth the paper it's printed on. They need it now. They want housing now; they need jobs now; they need action on the environment now; they need a fully funded educational system now; they need to have the flawed funding formula fixed now—another broken promise from 2003. They certainly need action on the clawback. They need to end the clawback right now so that the poorest children in our province get the food they need. Of course, those who suffer on Ontario disability need to be able to actually pay their rent and feed themselves at this point.

I'm running out of time but, as you can tell, I'm certainly not running out of energy. I truly do wish, in a very non-partisan way, that I could say something at all reassuring about this budget, but I cannot. The only reassuring statement I can make really is this: We've got them talking about poverty out there in Ontario. Now on October 10 let's show them how to do something about poverty. On October 10, the 10th day of the 10th month, let's have a \$10 minimum wage brought in then, not in 2011. The New Democrats will do that for you.

**The Acting Speaker:** It's time for questions and comments.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge):** I appreciate the couple of minutes to respond to the speech by the member from Parkdale–High Park. A couple of things: I know everyone would like, in a non-partisan fashion, to do everything now, but we don't live in that world. Let's work with the world we live in, at least in part.

In three out of four budgets, we've increased Ontario Works and ODSP—in three out of four budgets, there has been an increase. The minimum wage commitment was from \$6.85 to \$8 during the mandate, and that's what we did. It seems to me that the NDP platform called for \$8. It may have been that they were promising \$8 in one step at the beginning, but their platform commitment coming into 2003-04 was for \$8.

They changed their mind along the way. The new member comes. She has a resolution; she has a private member's bill. That now becomes party policy. I didn't hear that in 2003. I didn't hear that from Campaign 2003, as it was being referred to. I didn't hear it in their campaign platform, but we heard it when the new member came, and it now becomes the mantra of her resolution of a private member's bill, but it's not a party platform.

The \$100-a-month housing allowance: If I was in a situation where I needed support for housing and the government offered me \$100 a month in support for my housing needs, I think I would take that. I certainly wouldn't be saying, "No, thank you. I can't use that." It may not be quite enough for everybody, but it goes a lot farther than having nothing available.

There were complaints about: we didn't spend more than the proposed inflation rate for education this year—an additional \$781 million. That's up near a billion dollars. We weren't exceeding the inflation rate. If we exceeded the inflation rate in everything the government does, we'd end up—

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr. Hardeman:** I want to thank the member for Parkdale–High Park for the presentation on the budget. Obviously in some areas their concerns are different than I would highlight in my speech, but I think it's very important to recognize that the essence of her presentation was the same as mine would be. I find it most interesting that the primary purpose of this budget appears to be, "We're going to try and deal with the promises we made in the last election so when we go back to the polls, then the people might believe us that we will somehow come

through on the promises we're making for the next election."

The member spoke to the issue of the clawback of the federal child tax benefit. I think it's most interesting. That was a commitment that the Liberals made prior to being elected in 2003: that they would stop doing that. Now, of course, this being the last budget—this is on a deathbed—we're going to say, "We're going to come through on that commitment. We're going to do it this way because we don't want it to look like all of a sudden we're doing it for this purpose. We want to put a program in place that looks like it's something we've spent three years developing and that will reach the commitment of the platform in 2003."

Nothing could be further from the truth. The promise wasn't in 2003 that they would stop the clawback in 2014; the promise was that, if elected, they would stop the clawback.

**Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre):** Your clawback.

**Mr. Hardeman:** That doesn't matter. The truth of the matter is that that's not what they're doing. With a lot of other areas in this budget they're putting it off so far that even though they're promising it in this budget, in one or two cases they have to get elected twice more in order to be able to see it implemented to what they promised in 2003. That's where they're going wrong: They're not delivering on the promises they made in 2003 to get elected.

**Mr. Ferreira:** My colleague for Parkdale–High Park is a passionate firebrand for the poor of this province. She deserves a lot of accolades for the work that she has done in this place over the past six or seven months. I'll say this: The \$10-minimum-wage campaign has captured the imagination of a whole slew of Ontarians, and it cuts across socio-economic demographics. It has captured their imagination largely because of her efforts and the work that she has done on this issue. As she mentioned in her speech, it was the issue that determined the results in my riding in that by-election on February 8. I'm immensely grateful to her for leading the charge on this issue.

As we know, the government has come forward with a plan to give the working poor 75 cents per year, not even this year, but starting next year. So they're saying to the poor, "You're going to have to wait three years to get the \$10.25." Yet, while they say this, each and every month on the last day of the month they go to the bank to cash their own raise. It is shameful that members on the opposite side of this House—and, I should say, on the official opposition side as well—gladly put out their hands and took the money and ran four days before Christmas.

**Interjection:** Give it back.

1650

**Mr. Ferreira:** I'm giving mine back. I am giving mine back, and I am proud to do that every single month: to give that money back to the people of my riding, where it belongs.



The actions of this government were shameful on December 21. I will gladly show you a list of the community organizations receiving my money every month. This government takes for themselves and they offer crumbs—

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions and comments? The Chair recognizes the member for Scarborough Centre.

**Mr. Duguid:** Talk about holier than thou. My goodness. People watching today must be just shaking their heads and going, “Wow, these people. They think that they can save the world—just ‘holier than thou’ on everything they talk about.”

The member for Parkdale–High Park said that she wishes she could say something in a non-partisan way; that was the last thing she said. I do too, because the whole time she has been here she has never said anything in a non-partisan way. She’s so fixated in her partisan thinking that she can say so incorrectly that there’s nothing in this budget for low-income people. Talk about partisan. A child benefit—

**Ms. DiNovo:** Fifty dollars in five years.

**Mr. Duguid:** —an historic benefit that’s going to deliver \$2.1 billion over time to assist 1.3 million—she’s heckling me because she’s so holier than thou, she doesn’t even think that’s a good thing. Unbelievable.

Increases in supports for ODSP, minimum wage increase—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Duguid:** —I think they must be opposed to that too; \$51 million for legal aid help; more money for child care; investments in affordable housing. We’re going to build 15,000 more units of affordable housing. Five thousand housing allowances are going through. Of those 15,000 units, 6,700 are already either occupied, under construction or in planning. That’s three and a half times more in three and a half years than they, the NDP, did in five years; three and a half times better than the holier-than-thou party did when they were in office. They’re all talk; very little action.

This budget does more for low-income people, this budget does more for the vulnerable, than any budget in a very, very long time in this province—in decades. We’re proud of this budget. It’s good for the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** The time for questions and comments is over.

It’s time for a response. The Chair recognizes the member from Parkdale–High Park.

**Ms. DiNovo:** Mr. Speaker, you can certainly feel the passion.

I want to thank the members for Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge, Oxford, York South–Weston and Scarborough Centre.

A couple of things that were raised that I’d like to comment on: First of all, the member for Scarborough Centre says they’re going to build 15,000 units of housing. In 2003, they said they were going to build 20,000. Now we’re now down to 15,000—so actually

we’ve lost 5,000 units, even according to the promises, not according to the reality.

**Raise:** We always get this from the opposition. “What do you do with your raise?” I’ll tell you what we did. The first raise went to Ground Level Café, a wonderful organization on Queen Street. The second raise went to Ukrainian Social Services, which works with recent immigrants. The third raise went to a breakfast program at Masaryk-Cowan, a wonderful community centre. Every single raise I get, from here on in, is going to somebody in my riding who really needs it, because that’s where the money was stolen from by the McGuinty Liberal government. That’s the reality.

I’d like to ask what they’re doing with their raise. That would be an interesting question.

If you would like to get the press out, I’m happy to show receipts to anybody who would like it. This makes them very angry—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would ask you to determine if the word “stolen” money by Mr. McGuinty is parliamentary language.

**The Acting Speaker:** Proceed.

**Ms. DiNovo:** I withdraw the word “stolen,” Mr. Speaker, and say “withheld”—the withheld money from the poorest among us in our ridings. Quite frankly, they get their backs up when we talk about what it actually looks like to be generous. I would think that’s more of a comment upon them that we get heckled when we talk about giving money.

But thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It’s always a delight.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** I appreciate the opportunity to speak today to our budget and to the good news that we’ve provided to many people across this province.

I want to start by just addressing some of the concerns that were raised earlier by the member from Kitchener–Waterloo when she spoke about our long-term-care homes and really didn’t address the great progress we’ve made in our homes.

There was a sense of irony in the room again today as she spoke about the lack of investment that our government has made, when in fact we’ve invested over \$750 million more in long-term care over the last three years. We’ve also reinstated a number of the minimum standards that the previous government eradicated when they were in government. We’ve also started to institute some planning in the system, which was sorely lacking and noted by the Auditor General a couple of times during the Conservative government rule.

We’ve really made some great strides in long-term care, together with Bill 140 and the investments that we’ve made. We’ve certainly invested in more staff. We’ve seen 4,800 new staff in our long-term-care homes over the last couple of years, including 1,100 new nurses.

We've seen more money in this budget addressed to nurses in long-term care, nurses which I would note the previous government's leader used to refer as hula hoops. We value the work of our nurses across the province.

While I'm talking about the value of nurses across the province, I want to acknowledge the member for Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, who today in our legislative dining room assisted a gentleman who was in crisis. It was a heroic moment. All those of us present who were rather panicked by what was going on were very happy and relieved to have that member in our midst, a nurse who was able to assist in a crisis moment. So thank you, and I salute you for your coolness that was about you during that time.

**Mr. Leal:** She's an outstanding nurse. Not a hula hoop, an outstanding nurse.

**Ms. Smith:** Absolutely.

Having said that, I just wanted to take the opportunity to address some concerns that have been raised by some of other members, in particular the member for Parkdale–High Park, who talked at some length, and quite passionately as she always does, about poverty issues. She actually raised some concerns that Campaign 2000 has raised, and I just wanted to address that by quoting from Jacquie Maund, the Ontario coordinator of Campaign 2000, who with respect to our 2007 budget noted, "There are a number of steps forward taken in this budget that are key areas that we have been calling for: improved child benefit, increased minimum wage, and investments in affordable housing and child care."

Michael Mendelson, a senior scholar at the Institute of Social Policy, noted, "It lays some foundations for an adequate income security system by introducing an Ontario child benefit. Now there's a basis in terms of some program structure for continuing development of an income security system for low-income people ... it's a great day and a great change."

Again, there are people who are deeply concerned about poverty issues who are addressing our budget in a positive way.

When I began, I was so intent on thanking the member from Haliburton–Victoria–Brock that I forgot to mention that I will be sharing my time with the member from Thornhill. So I apologize for the delay in mentioning that, but I will be sharing my time with him.

I want to just address a couple of other poverty issues that were addressed in this budget. I had the privilege on Tuesday of being back in my area and spending some time with Lana Mitchell. Lana Mitchell is the executive director of Low Income People Involvement or, as we call it at home, LIPI. Many in this House have heard me speak about Lana's work on the front lines, dealing with poverty issues and social activity, a number of times here in this House. I'm privileged today to speak a little bit about her front-line work and her reaction to the budget.

I thought it would be useful and helpful and perhaps beneficial to her to have Lana come down and hear the budget first-hand here at the Legislature. She joined us on budget day, and I was delighted that she was able to

do that. She was really delighted with a number of the elements of our budget. She was thrilled to see that we are moving our minimum wage to \$10 over the next three years. She thinks that's an important step and she's very pleased that we're taking that action. She was thrilled to see increases to ODSP and Ontario Works because she does a great deal of work with those people. She was really excited about the housing allowances, and on Tuesday had the opportunity to talk about the housing allowance program with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who was in the riding, and discuss first-hand how those housing allowances are going to impact the day-to-day lives of those people living at or below the poverty line in my community.

**1700**

She was also very complimentary about our rent bank program. She is the administrator of the rent bank program in my riding and as such was able to speak first-hand to the impact that that program has had on the day-to-day lives of those living in poverty in my community.

She was really positive about our Ontario child benefit. She thinks that this is a really great step in the right direction to address poverty issues, not only for those who are living on ODSP or Ontario Works but for our working poor. The program, which is going to cost \$2.1 billion when it's fully implemented, will assist 1.2 million children living in poverty across the province. It's a program that I'm incredibly proud of that the women's caucus here and the McGuinty government have worked hard towards developing. We are very proud to see its implementation in Ontario through our 2007 budget.

We've also made some great strides through this budget in my community in particular. Through the rural infrastructure initiatives, a program which was doubled under this budget, we're seeing \$4.2 million invested in my rural communities. These are important rural infrastructure investments that are going to really benefit my rural areas in Nipissing.

We've got a bridge replacement in Bonfield. We've got a sewer line replacement in Callander for \$1.6 million—money that the city of Callander was hard-pressed to come up with and is delighted to receive. Calvin is seeing some infrastructure investments, as is Chisholm—\$1.1 million to do road upgrades to ensure that our children are safely bused to school from our rural areas. In Mattawa we're seeing about \$500,000 invested in sewer reconstruction as well as \$3.1 million on highway reconstruction. These are very important investments and really key to the infrastructure of those communities. In Powassan we're seeing more infrastructure investments in roads, and in Mattawa as well as the town of Nipissing. And through our transit trust transfer, we're seeing the city of North Bay receive \$1.175 million, which they weren't expecting, which will allow them to invest in infrastructure and capital and address some of the concerns that they have about some shortfalls.

We're also seeing, in my community, \$3.78 million to the District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board for affordable housing, another issue that was

raised by the member for Parkdale–High Park. In my community, we have 46 new housing units being built, as we speak, due to open this summer that will assist our low-income earners as well as those living with disabilities. It's an incredible project run by PHARA in my community. We're very excited about it, and that's a first step.

This \$3.78 million for low-income housing is another important second step that will really see some of the issues addressed in my community that have been long-standing and were not addressed by the previous government through 10 years of lack of investment in low-income and affordable housing.

The business education tax, which is really going to benefit small businesses across the province, will have a direct impact in my riding of \$3.1 million—a saving to my small businesses. We've heard from the chamber of commerce, which was also very pleased to see that initiative introduced in our provincial budget.

We're also seeing benefits in the area of education. We're seeing continued investment in education, and that's going to continue to benefit our children, our smaller class sizes, our young children in the early years. On that note, I believe my niece, Kate, is watching tonight. I wanted to say hi to her because she told me I didn't say hi to her the other day when I spoke in the House.

I also want to address some of the teachers who are pleased about the investments that we're making. Hilda Watkins, the president of the Ontario Teachers Federation, noted, "Teachers have been pleased to see this government's increased commitment to publicly funded education since its election in 2003. Today's budget recognizes responsibilities beyond the school playground for improving student learning."

We're seeing a cross-section of stakeholders, including those who are poverty activists, who are responding very positively to the 2007 budget, to the initiatives that we've undertaken to improve the quality of life for all Ontarians. I am particularly proud of the initiatives that we've made with respect to those living close to the poverty line, with respect to our children living in poverty and with respect to those living in rural areas, oftentimes afflicted by poverty as well.

We're particularly proud of the investments we've made in the north. We're seeing more investments in Ontario Northland, we're seeing continued investment through the northern Ontario heritage fund, we're seeing investment in rural infrastructure and we're also seeing, through the property tax reduction, education tax reduction, a benefit to our businesses across northern Ontario.

I'm particularly proud of the budget that we've presented and I look forward to hearing my colleague from Thornhill, who has further to say about the budget.

**Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill):** It's a pleasure for me to speak on the bill today. I will be speaking as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour in regard to the budget.

It is no secret that injured workers in this province have fought long and hard for reforms to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. We, as members, have heard their heartbreaking stories, their frustrations and their despair.

The concerns of injured workers are not new. Injured workers have been patiently waiting a long time for action. Successive governments have failed them, in particular the NDP. I would like to remind the House that it was the NDP government that in 1994 introduced the Friedland formula, beginning the indexation of most workers' compensation benefits. It was the NDP that first put its hands into the pockets of injured workers. Two successive Tory governments treated injured workers no better. In fact, in 1998, the former government introduced a modified Friedland formula, which further eroded most injured workers' benefits. For over 12 long years, injured workers and their representatives have been fighting for changes to the WSIA. At last they have a government that is listening to their concerns and has finally taken action.

The 2007 budget outlines several WSIA reforms that, if passed, will go a long way to repairing the damage done by the two previous governments, and reforms to the compensation system will, if passed, provide more than 155,000 injured workers with their first real benefit increase in 12 long years.

Our government's proposal for three 2.5% increases each year will more than double the total increase seen over the last 12 years. Further, we have created the flexibility to allow the government to provide fair increases in the future without the necessity of making legislative change.

The Office of the Worker Adviser will receive \$810,000 annually in additional funding to help educate, advise and represent more non-union workers. And other proposed changes include the following:

- replacing the controversial term "deeming" and adding the concept of "availability of employment" in order to better approximate a worker's post-injury earnings;

- making changes to the 72-month lock-in provision in order to allow the WSIB the ability to increase benefits to workers who suffer a temporary or permanent deterioration in their condition;

- changing the threshold amount of the loss of retirement income lump sum benefit to allow more workers to receive the benefit as a lump sum instead of as a small monthly payment;

- increasing the size of the WSIB board of directors and clarifying the separation of the positions of chair and president.

Our government is committed to a brighter future for injured workers and their families. That is why in 2004 we ordered an independent audit of the WSIB. We understood that restoring stability to the WSIB was an essential first step to enable our government to move forward with improvements to benefits for injured workers. A follow-up audit in 2006 concluded that the

board had made significant progress in implementing the initial audit recommendations.

#### 1710

The WSIB took action and put in place a number of initiatives to help address its financial challenges and improve its operational efficiency. As a result, even before the government's proposed WSIA reforms were announced, the WSIB had on its own announced increases to several injured workers' allowances in both the years January 2006 and January 2007. This positive change had already put money into the hands of thousands of injured workers. Our government is committed to an accountable WSIB that protects the long-term stability of Ontario's workplace insurance system now and for future generations of workers and their families. These proposed WSIA amendments are good news for injured workers and their families.

Of course, now I would like to address the change to the minimum wage which has been spoken about many times. In 2003, our government promised, if elected, to raise the minimum wage. I remind this House that under the Tory government the minimum wage had remained frozen for nine years. Immediately upon assuming office, our government kept its promise and raised the minimum wage. In fact, we have raised the minimum wage every year we have been in office—that is four times—an overall increase of 17%. By phasing in these increases we are able to help low-income and vulnerable workers while giving Ontario businesses the opportunity to adjust and remain competitive so they can create more jobs. It is exactly the same approach we will be using as we raise the minimum wage another 28% to \$10.25 an hour by the year 2010. This budget, if passed, will guarantee increases of 75 cents each year, on March 31, 2008, 2009 and 2010. We know it is in the best interest of Ontario to help low-income working people. Our government is raising the minimum wage again because we know it is right thing to do and we are doing it. We are not just talking about it; we are doing it.

We are committed to fair and balanced policies and we have proven to the citizens of Ontario that we are good and fair managers. In fact, the budget we are debating today is a balanced budget, balanced in the sense that the numbers on either side of the ledger match up and balanced in the sense that those who need help get it. I'm proud to be part of a government that knows how to balance the books while doing it right.

The opposition, when in government, chose to ignore our most vulnerable citizens during their hours of greatest need. When we took office, we inherited a large fiscal deficit and an even larger compassion deficit. We are correcting both, the compassion and the books. Of course, Bill 187 also provides additional funding of \$3.6 million to help the Ministry of Labour deal with its employment standards claims backlog. As a result of our government's improvements to service delivery, Ontario workers now have improved access to claims information. Consequently, claim numbers have risen dramatically. Although the vast majority—over 88%—of

employment standards claims are resolved, some claims take more time than others. These additional funds will relieve staffing pressure and help us to provide even better services to our vulnerable workers.

Our government has an excellent record when it comes to protecting vulnerable workers and enforcing the law. We have the statistics that can prove that. It's not just promises; those are facts. In 2004 we established the dedicated employment standards enforcement team to undertake proactive target inspections. In 2004 and 2005, that team undertook 2,355 inspections. When we took office, the number of targeted inspections was a mere 151. So from 151, we went to 2,355—quite an improvement.

We have done more to enforce the law in our first term than the two previous governments combined. Under both the NDP and the Tory governments, ES prosecutions totalled approximately six per year—six. That is a total of 97 from the year 1990 to the year 2003. Since 2004 there have been over 1,000 prosecutions completed. That means revenue for the province. That means taking care that the employees in Ontario are taken care of properly.

The 2007 budget is the fourth part of our plan to invest in people and expand possibilities for all Ontarians. There are many good things in the budget. I thank you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** I thank the member from Nipissing for her kind words when she spoke earlier. I hope everyone is feeling well in the Legislature at this moment, please.

**Mr. Ferreira:** But if we're not, we're in good hands.

**Ms. Scott:** "If we're not, we're in good hands": a good compliment to all nurses. You saw that at two sporting events this week, where nurses came to the rescue and revived people. So, well done, all the nurses. Nurses are great, and certainly an integral part of our health care system.

But this afternoon we're speaking on the Budget Measures Act, April 2007, and some feedback that I've received in my riding and some criticisms—we are in opposition—of the budget, in a helpful way. I'm sure the government will take it as very helpful.

We've seen this government increase spending by \$22 billion annually, which is a large amount of money, taxpayers' money, coming out of their pockets. We're pretty concerned how they're spending it. Some would say "reckless." I would tend to agree. In a lot of areas, some reckless spending.

The statistics of how much the debt has risen, how much spending there is, saying anything to get elected—we are in an election year. We see that Ontario has lost over 120,000 high-paying manufacturing jobs over the past two years alone. We see that disposable incomes in Ontario are growing at the slowest rate in the country. They've grown annually by 4% over the previous four years, so fully 0.8% slower than the national average. Total program spending by the McGuinty government has skyrocketed by an average of 7.9% each year.

Those are a lot of numbers, but we're just saying that you're spending a lot of money. Are people getting any better services, especially in the health sector, which we'll start with?

We've seen the long-term-care association, in respect to their great disappointment in the budget, saying, "The cupboard is bare for long-term care." They brought in a bill, the Long-Term Care Act. It was consistently said out there: "Where are the capital dollars to upgrade our B and C homes?" They were said by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to be a budgetary item: "We'll deal with it in the budget." But the budget has come and gone, and the long-term-care homes and the association are not happy at all; very upset. We've got rural communities that are upset. Is there any stability for long-term-care centres to be set up and to stay there? Will all of a sudden the government say, "We don't want you there; we want you somewhere else"? Very unstable for residents and families. There have been many caring, concerned staff come in to me to say, "The workloads are incredible. We can't provide the care we want to." Those men and women who work in long-term-care centres take those patients in like they are their family. They treat them really well. They're just overburdened. The present McGuinty government said that they would promise \$6,000 per resident. We saw them get maybe one more minute of care, I think, in this budget, as it's broken down here. So they're offering 50 cents per resident, one more minute of care, after they made that promise of \$6,000 per resident that they would increase their level of care to. Again, a broken promise. It's not a big surprise, but it's a continuing theme. At least they've been consistent in that.

The previous government invested a lot in new long-term-care centres. I know that most of the members of the Legislature saw new long-term-care homes go up in their ridings. That took the wait-lists away for a while, but they're back. I think in every riding we face the same situation, the wait-lists for long-term-care beds. That's not acceptable. We all knew the demographics. We all knew that we had an aging population and we needed more long-term-care facilities. The government has a leadership role to have a plan to deal with that. But again, a recurring theme with the present government: Where's the plan? Where's the plan for anything? In long-term care they have not delivered. The member for Kitchener-Waterloo has done a great job as critic for the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, has heard the demands from the long-term-care sector, their needs. And, rightfully so, they are disappointed beyond belief. And how could we treat our seniors, the people who built our province, that way? It's embarrassing. They said in their 2003 platform promise, "We will build a seniors strategy that guarantees our seniors be treated with respect and dignity." Well, they haven't planned how to do it—all words again, no action, no plan.

1720

When they made their promise to ensure we have enough nurses—"We're going to increase the nurses"—

they got seven-and-a-half-month contracts, I think, signed. That's not putting in a stable nursing environment. That's not doing anything to attract back nurses who have gone to other countries to work. That's not doing anything to encourage nurses to get into the nursing program, to know they'll have a full-time job when they graduate. There's no stability in that. As we've said before, they certainly are the backbone of the health care system. That promise, again, fell short. We're six months from an election and there are still not enough nurses out there. We hear, "nurse shortage, nurse shortage," and no guarantee of full-time employment in many of the areas, especially in rural Ontario.

The family health teams: We've had some family health team announcements. Are they up and running and fully staffed? No. Would they like a better system to get up and running? Yes. I hear that a lot from my riding. Two family health centres announced theirs. But they need some more incentives to get up and running and to be fully servicing the people in their communities that they want to. I thank those communities for applying and trying to get the health care to their citizens that they need. I know in my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, we have about 30,000 orphaned patients.

Back to the wait times: The wait times in the province are still bad. They promised, "We will work with experts to set and meet maximum needs based on waiting time for care." Well, wait times in the province are well above target: for MRIs, 28 days—provincial average, 105 days; knee replacement target, 182 days—provincial average, 307 days; hip replacement target, 182—provincial average, 257. It's very disappointing that they are not servicing the health care needs of Ontarians. I guess we will judge on October 10—coming soon—what the people of Ontario think. They're paying more. Are they getting better health care?

The majority of my riding is in the eastern Ontario region and is represented quite ably by the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus, who have done an outstanding job of representing the rural population of eastern Ontario. It represents 13 eastern Ontario governments. It includes all of my riding except the Brock townships. It includes the Haliburton, Peterborough and Kawartha Lakes area. They have been diligent in getting their message out to the government. They asked for specific things in the budget that would help rural Ontario. What did they say in respect to 2007 Ontario budget?

It "fails to address major problems that 'threaten the economic health' of rural communities in eastern Ontario'....

"The budget didn't even touch on two of our most serious concerns: The state of the region's roads and bridges, and the cost we incur to provide services to crown lands."

That's from Doug Struthers, who is the chairman of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus. He did say one good thing, and I have to say there was one good part in the budget, in respect to broadband, with which I agree. There's \$10 million for broadband services in rural

communities across southern Ontario. We have certainly had a need for more broadband infrastructure up in my riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock. I've written to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade and the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal for that assistance, because that is a huge economic boost to a community to have high-speed Internet broadband in their ridings. There were programs available before the 2003 election. Nothing has come to assist in any huge way these municipalities, these communities that need high-speed infrastructure. There was a pilot project that was done in the Apsley part of my riding in north Kawartha, for \$70,000. They took that and partnered with the municipality, with private enterprise. They grew that to well over \$700,000 in partnerships. They put more towers up in remote areas, because we're challenged for signals, in my riding, with rocks and trees. And they got a call centre in one of their areas. They created employment. Just an example of municipalities, that if you give them a little incentive, they can grow it. I commend the north Kawartha township and Apsley for their diligence and foresight in increasing their economic infrastructure up there. They just needed that little bit of an incentive, which is part of what the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus was asking for. I hope that there's some broadband monies coming to my riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock because we need that in rural Ontario. We need the economic boost. We really need it in eastern Ontario.

We asked for an eastern Ontario secretariat. I know that colleagues from this side of the caucus have asked for an eastern Ontario prosperity fund and an eastern Ontario secretariat to take the lead, similar to what is available to northern Ontario, because we have a region that's really hit hard by the loss of manufacturing jobs, by lower population, by more roads and bridges than other parts of Ontario. We've been diligent in asking for that. I know that Ric McGee, who's the city of Kawartha Lakes mayor now, said that the province needs to make a significant investment in the future of eastern Ontario by creating an eastern Ontario prosperity fund. "Our region is blessed with abundant natural resources, a location near major markets, many diverse communities, and great people. But we're also dealing with the harsh realities of declining industries, the out-migration of our young people and average annual family incomes 17% lower than the rest of the province." That's from the mayor of the city of Kawartha Lakes, Ric McGee, and I agree: This is a serious problem.

We're happy with the \$10-million broadband, but you certainly can do more with that infrastructure.

**Mr. Leal:** Good first step.

**Ms. Scott:** It's a good first step; let's carry it on.

**Agriculture:** It's certainly an urban budget—agriculture, small business, the backbone of rural Ontario's economy. You have said repeatedly that you were going to make agriculture a lead ministry; that's what we heard in 2003. It's the lead ministry in cuts, because for three straight years in a row you've cut the agriculture budget.

The farmers got together—the farmers forgotten by the Liberal government—and proposed a risk management program. They actually sat and created a solution. Did we see that come in in the budget? No. Has the Minister of Agriculture listened to the needs of rural Ontario? No. The farmers—the second-largest industry in Ontario is agriculture and agriculture businesses—should be a predominant ministry in a government. And what we've seen is cuts and cuts again. Association of Municipalities of Ontario president Doug Reycraft said, "There is still a need for better income protection for farmers."

We need to assist our farmers if we want to grow safe, secure food, be able to feed ourselves, buy more Ontario products, encourage people, educate people. The need for farming in the province of Ontario—we grow the best foods. We should be assisting the farmers the best we can so that they can stay in business.

In the city of Kawartha Lakes, in 2006, 50 farmers left the farm. Tragedy; I don't want to see that happening in my rural communities. It just erodes our rural infrastructure, our businesses. People have no idea what it does to rural communities. If you want an Ontario like that—I certainly don't want it. I want farmers to stay out there. I want my rural communities to succeed. This government has got to have a much more assistive, progressive, optimistic view towards agriculture. I think the Minister of Agriculture was in Peterborough the day after the budget, and I know that many farmers went there. I hope she heard their concerns and needs.

**1730**

Another topic is Best Start child care, and I know that the member from Peterborough is quite aware of this issue in that the city of Kawartha Lakes-Haliburton is the only service manager that got designated zero Best Start spaces. I kept saying, "Are you sure you've got that right? Can we help you with some more information about that?" It means a huge thing to the children in the area—no designation of Best Start spaces; zero, as I said before; the only service provider that did not get any in Ontario. I've asked the minister, and hopefully she will re-look at that. I know the member from Peterborough was trying to assist us in that way because it is about the children. If they are not looked after, what does that say about our future? I certainly don't want my area discriminated against as compared to the rest.

**Mr. Leal:** I'm going to help you.

**Ms. Scott:** The member from Peterborough says he's going to help me, and I certainly would appreciate any assistance in influencing the minister to reconsider her decision on that at all.

I know I don't have a whole lot of time left, and we could never touch all the areas in the budget, but we can talk about the environment. Would that be all right over there, with the members opposite?

What is this? The green government? Somehow I think that that got lost in some non-budgetary announcement. Where was the help for the environment? The federal Conservative government gave you money.

You didn't even spend that. "Coming soon to a place near you: We're going to address environment needs." Three and a half years into the mandate, six months before the election—extending the date again, I'm sure. Look at the coal-fired plants. They've broken that promise once, twice, three times. Do we really ever know when they're going to implement that promise to close the coal-fired plants?

The Clean Water Act—downloading to municipalities. Everybody wants clean water, but downloading to municipalities and landowners is no way to help the environment.

Climate change—it's like they don't even know the word over there. The federal government is going to provide nearly \$600 million. They increased the budget just such a little bit on the environment that it's negligible. Environment is right up there with health care as one of the top concerns of the people of Ontario, and they haven't addressed it.

Let me see. The Environment Commissioner addressed it. He said, "Neglecting Our Obligations." I'd have to say that the Ministry of the Environment was all but ignored in the budget. You'd think that she had been pleading with Minister of Finance to say, "We need to meet those promises that we made in the 2003 election campaign. We haven't met them yet, but we've got six months. We can at least introduce something."

We saw a bill introduced on Tuesday of this week that—again, who knows how long the legislative agenda will be, but it's two and a half months so far that we know of. So we'd be happy to see more details of that legislation. But the government does the legislative agenda. You'd think, if they were serious, they would have actually introduced this a little bit earlier. But what can we say? They had to wait until there was more pressure. They certainly got the money from the federal government, so we can't hear any more of that griping on that side about their failure to deal with the climate—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Scott:** Yes, it's all solved. The environment's okay. "Don't worry; be happy. We've got this in control."

Let's talk property assessments for a little bit. I've got a quote from the St. Catharines Standard here that says, "View from Across the Province...."

"The Liberal plan to reform property assessments will do little to bring accountability to a flawed system. Homeowners can still expect assessment increases, but they will just be averaged over a four-year term. At the end of the four years, the increase paid by the homeowner will still be the same.

"The Liberal plan avoids the systemic reform required to ensure property assessments are transparent and fair." That's from the St. Catharines Standard. I'm just reading a comment from them about property assessment.

It's a huge problem. I think that's the first thing that was on my desk when I got elected in 2003 was problems with property assessments. The government plan over

there was, "Oh, let's look into it. Let's get a plan, then let's freeze it while things are being implemented."

The member from Erie–Lincoln brought forward a good resolution to property assessments—a very positive response across the province—of establishing a 5% cap on property assessment increases for as long as the individual owns their home, including the transfer from one spouse to the other—very reasonable. I've got a lot of seniors and people on fixed incomes in my riding who can't afford to stay in their homes. It's awful. Affordable housing—we don't have enough affordable housing for them to go to. They are between a rock and a hard place.

Increasing electricity rates, increasing property taxes are forcing seniors and hard-working families and low-income families out of their homes. It's awful.

We have to have a better plan for Ontario. That's what we've seen consistently in this government: no plan; broken promises; say anything to get elected; spend, spend, spend. Where is the strategy? The people of Ontario deserve better.

I have to wrap up my comments on the budget. I have so much more to say, but we can say it yet again, hopefully in a time to come. Thank you very much for your attention this afternoon.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Ferreira:** I'm glad to be able to follow the wise words of the member for Victoria–Haliburton–Brock. Did I get that right?

**Ms. Scott:** Yes, you did.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Yes, and commend her for her actions, jumping to the rescue earlier today.

I have to say, this is my second consecutive tour of House duty on a Thursday afternoon and I'm rather enjoying the camaraderie and perhaps the rambunctiousness of the place as we head into the weekend. It certainly makes me feel warm and fuzzy and glad to contribute in any way I can.

This morning we know that members from the government side scurried and scampered across our city to various transit stops, subway stops, to try to sell their budget. I thought it was quite telling that what they were selling was contained on a postcard-sized piece of paper—pretty flimsy, if you ask me. What they were trying to sell, quite frankly, the people of Toronto, the people of Ontario and certainly the people of my riding of York South–Weston are not buying, because it is a flimsy budget. It is a budget that does not address the real needs of Ontarians.

I want to spend most of my time this afternoon speaking about housing. Housing is one of my critic areas and it's an issue that I've taken great interest in, not just since my election, but also before.

I want to start off with a story of why it is that we need considerable investment in affordable housing in Ontario today. I want to convey the story of a constituent of mine who lives on Keele Street. She came from Somalia in the early 1990s with her husband and her three young children. Shortly after they arrived, her husband sadly and unfortunately suddenly passed away and left her a widow with three young children.

My constituent works very hard. She's a personal support worker. She's a caregiver. In fact, she works two jobs to try to support her children, who are now in their—the eldest is 16, the youngest is 12 or 13. She works very hard to provide for these children, to provide them with nourishing food and with a good roof over their heads, and she struggles.

After her husband passed away, after his untimely passing, she realized she needed to get affordable housing to be able to make ends meet on a monthly basis, and back in 1995 she applied for affordable housing in the city of Toronto. Now, 1995 was 12 years ago. My constituent today is still waiting for her affordable housing unit and she is desperately trying to hang on. She's got three growing children—grown children; teenagers—and they are forced to live in a two-bedroom unit that costs \$1,100 per month, and that eats up a tremendous portion of her monthly earnings.

When we talk about this budget being flimsy, it's flimsy because it does not address the needs of this constituent of mine. I am certain that this story can be echoed in many other places across this province. Indeed, it can be echoed in many homes in my riding. We know that presently in Ontario more than 120,000 households are on a waiting list for affordable housing. In the city of Toronto alone that list is about 70,000. So what do we have? We have a government that was in opposition in 2003 and that campaigned on a promise—among many others—to build 20,000 units of affordable housing.

**1740**

I would have expected that between 2003 and 2007, within the mandate they received—it makes sense—the province of Ontario would get the 20,000 units of affordable housing that this government campaigned on, that they promised. But what have we seen instead? We heard earlier this afternoon from one of the members, I believe it was the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Housing. I believe he quoted a figure of 6,500. I studied journalism, not mathematics, but I can conclude that 6,500 is only about a third of 20,000—only a third. When you score 33%, usually that means a failing grade; at least that's the way it was when I was still in school. So what this government is saying, essentially, is that they deserve a failing grade in terms of delivering on their affordable housing commitment in 2003.

Now, they have made much—and I'm sure this morning at the subway stations, at the transit stops, they were making much and they were saying much, handing out their flimsy postcards—about the so-called money that they are putting forward for housing. They've quoted some kind of figure, \$392 million, that was in this budget: "In this budget we are providing..." That was the figure. That is entirely, completely, 100% federal money. To add, there is no provincial money there—not one cent, not one iota of provincial money—to address the glaring and urgent need for affordable housing. What really adds insult to injury here is that this money could have been used by this province well before the announcement was made in the budget in late March.

I should add that the real source of this money was my party's contribution to the federal budget back in 2005, when my colleagues in Ottawa worked very hard to ensure that Canadians received good value from their federal government, the government of the day in Ottawa. If the members of this House will recall, it was a series of bold initiatives by the federal New Democrats in Ottawa that crafted a very progressive, forward-looking budget in Ottawa, a federal budget that looked after the needs of many Canadians and included the \$392 million in federal housing money that is now, finally, after a year and a half, two years of much squabbling between this provincial government and their federal counterparts—but that was the origin, the genesis of that money.

The government has decided to roll out the money in a curious way. Perhaps it shouldn't surprise this House. The way that the government has decided to roll out this money, where they give out \$100 here and there through some kind of allowance that barely meets the needs of anyone needing affordable housing—in fact, their plan violates the federal government's operating principles for how this money should be spent. Just today, the Wellesley Institute, a non-partisan think tank that looks at important issues of the day, put out a release. They've been doing some good research into this, and I'm going to read from this:

"Ontario's \$185-million housing allowance plan, announced in the 2007 provincial budget on March 22 and funded entirely with federal affordable housing trust fund dollars, violates the operating principles tabled by federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty in the House of Commons in May of 2006. The federal housing dollars were authorized by Parliament in Bill C-48—that was the NDP budget amendment—"in June of 2005. The money was intended to increase the supply of affordable housing, including off-reserve aboriginal housing."

It goes on to say:

"Ontario's share of the affordable housing trust fund dollars was \$312 million (plus \$80 million for off-reserve aboriginal housing), but the money was delayed by a federal-provincial squabble."

Then, later on in their release of today they say quite succinctly:

"In addition to concerns about the adequacy of the Ontario program, the provincial plan contradicts the federal operating principles."

So what we have is this government's made-on-the-fly housing policy, which perhaps was made on the back of one of those flimsy postcards that they handed out at various transit stops and subway stops in Toronto this morning. In fact, their plan goes against the federal provisions on how this money can be used, and it falls far from meeting the real needs for affordable housing in this province.

One of those real needs exists in subsidized housing, and specifically repairing subsidized housing across this province. In Toronto alone there is a \$300-million shortfall for essential repairs at Toronto Community Housing Corp. properties—\$300 million just in the city of To-



ronto. In the budget, we hear that the government is going to provide roughly 40% of that sum to build and rehabilitate existing housing. You can tell, \$127 million for the entire province, yet in Toronto alone we're faced with a shortfall of \$300 million.

This is not new. I want to quote a tenant activist and Toronto Community Housing Corp. resident who says this: "For five years we have been waiting for action to address the \$300-million backlog in outstanding capital repairs. We know that the \$127 million for the entire province is insufficient"—

**The Acting Speaker:** Could the speaker please take his seat.

On March 22, 2007, Mr. Sorbara moved, seconded by Mr. McGuinty, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

On March 26, 2007, Mr. Tory moved that the motion be amended by deleting the words after "That this House" and adding thereto the following:

"Recognize that the budgetary policy put forward by the Minister of Finance continues the McGuinty government's legacy of broken promises and demands more and more from taxpayers while delivering less and less, and that this House condemns the McGuinty government for:

"Saying anything and paying anything that they think will get them elected;

"Increasing spending by more than \$20 billion since coming to office—an increase of \$750,000 every hour they've been in office—and having no results to show for it;

"Increasing spending by more than \$20 billion since coming to office and still failing to keep a huge number of campaign commitments including, but not limited to:

—"the broken promise to not raise taxes;

—"the broken promise to close coal-fired electricity plants by 2007;

—"the broken promise to balance the budget every year;

—"the broken promise to not add to the waste of taxpayers' dollars;

—"the broken promise to provide children with autism the support and treatment they need;

—"the broken promise to stop school closings;

—"the broken promise to ensure 75% of students meet or exceed the provincial standard on province-wide tests within their first mandate;

—"the broken promise to implement a hard cap of 20 students for early grades;

—"the broken promise to provide a new funding formula for rural and northern schools;

—"the broken promise to cap hydro rates at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour until 2006;

—"the broken promise to make the Ministry of Agriculture a lead ministry;

—"the broken promise to eliminate barriers to foreign-trained professionals within one year;

—"the broken promise to spend \$6,000 more per year for individuals in long-term care;

—"the broken promise to unclog emergency rooms;

—"the broken promise to divert 60% of municipal solid waste by 2005;

—"the broken promise to roll back tolls on Highway 407;

—"the broken promise to build 20,000 new affordable housing units;

—"the broken promise to create tens of thousands of new child care spaces; and

—"the broken promise to tackle gridlock.

"Continuing this government's ad hoc, one-off approach to funding key priorities, including a \$50-million last-minute handout to Magna when less than 24 hours later it was announced they were part of a \$4.7-billion bid to purchase DaimlerChrysler;

"Referring to tax relief as nothing but 'trinkets and baubles' for hard-working Ontario taxpayers, yet maintaining the government's long-standing practice of rushing money out the door at fiscal year-end to fund pet projects;

"Failing to provide tax relief to middle-class Ontarians despite manufactured deficits and massive spending increases over and above what was contained in their 2003 election platform;

"Overseeing the loss of more than 120,000 manufacturing jobs in the province and failing to respond to a motion passed in this House calling for a comprehensive jobs strategy; and

"Failing to provide the strong leadership to make the important decisions that will deliver results to the people of Ontario.

"Therefore, the government has lost the confidence of this House."

The first question to be decided is the amendment to the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that Mr. Tory's amendment to the motion carry?

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Pursuant to the earlier agreement of the House, this vote is deferred until Tuesday, April 10, 2007, during deferred votes.

It being approximately 6 p.m. of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 10, 2007.

*The House adjourned at 1754.*

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Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Justice Policy / Justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Maria Van Bommel  
Bas Balkissoon, Lorenzo Berardinetti,  
Christine Elliott, Frank Klees, Peter Kormos,  
David Oraziotti, Shafiq Qaadri,  
Maria Van Bommel, David Zimmer  
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

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

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Ernie Hardeman  
Ernie Hardeman, Jean-Marc Lalonde,  
Lisa MacLeod, Shelley Martel, John Milloy,  
Richard Patten, Liz Sandals,  
Monique M. Smith, Norman W. Sterling  
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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

Chair / Présidente: Andrea Horwath  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jeff Leal  
Gilles Bisson, Bob Delaney,  
Andrea Horwath, Jeff Leal, Dave Levac,  
Gerry Martiniuk, Bill Murdoch,  
Lou Rinaldi, Mario Sergio  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Social Policy / Politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Ernie Parsons  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal  
Ted Chudleigh, Peter Fonseca,  
Kuldip Kular, Jeff Leal,  
Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro, John O'Toole,  
Ernie Parsons, Khalil Ramal  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Continued from overleaf

## OTHER BUSINESS

### Wearing of flowers

Mr. Miller.....	7765
Agreed to.....	7765

### Visitors

Mr. Racco.....	7773
Mr. Leal.....	7787
Mr. McMeekin .....	7790
Mr. Klees.....	7790

### Mel Swart

Mr. Hampton.....	7784
Mr. Bradley .....	7785
Mr. Klees.....	7786
The Speaker.....	7787

### Anniversary of Vimy Ridge

Mr. Bradley .....	7787
Mrs. Witmer .....	7788
Mr. Hampton.....	7789

### Business of the House

Mr. Phillips.....	7802
-------------------	------

### Deferral of votes

Mr. Phillips.....	7803
-------------------	------

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Jeudi 5 avril 2007

### AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS

#### Loi de 2007 modifiant la Loi

sur les municipalités (élection  
au scrutin général du président  
du conseil régional de Durham),  
projet de loi 172, *M. Ouellette*

Adoptée.....	7781
--------------	------

### DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

#### Théâtre jeunesse d'Orléans

M. McNeely .....	7783
------------------	------

### PREMIÈRE LECTURE

#### Loi de 2007 sur la protection

des mineurs participant  
à des sports amateurs,  
projet de loi 201, *M. Ouellette*

Adoptée.....	7784
--------------	------

### QUESTIONS ORALES

#### Fonds pour sports et loisirs

M. Lalonde .....	7795
M. Watson.....	7795

# CONTENTS

Thursday 5 April 2007

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

<b>Municipal Amendment Act (Direct Election of Durham Regional Council Chair), 2007, Bill 172, Mr. Ouellette</b>	
Mr. Ouellette.....	7765, 7772
Mr. Prue.....	7766
Mr. Duguid.....	7767
Mrs. Savoline.....	7768
Mr. Marchese.....	7769
Mr. Balkissoon.....	7770
Mr. Chudleigh.....	7771
Ms. Horwath.....	7771
Mr. Rinaldi.....	7772
Agreed to.....	7781
<b>War of 1812, private member's notice of motion number 50, Mrs. Munro</b>	
Mrs. Munro.....	7773, 7781
Mr. Brownell.....	7774
Mr. Wilson.....	7775
Ms. Horwath.....	7776
Ms. Mossop.....	7778
Ms. Scott.....	7779
Mr. Hudak.....	7780
Mr. Bradley.....	7781
Agreed to.....	7781

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.</b>	
Mr. Miller.....	7781
Mr. Chudleigh.....	7782
Mr. Yakabuski.....	7783
<b>Public transportation</b>	
Mr. Ruprecht.....	7782
<b>Police officers</b>	
Mr. Ferreira.....	7782
<b>Orleans Young Players Theatre School</b>	
Mr. McNeely.....	7783
<b>YMCA of Peterborough</b>	
Mr. Leal.....	7783
<b>Clarke Road Secondary School</b>	
Mr. Ramal.....	7783
<b>Tricia Cummings</b>	
Mr. Brownell.....	7783

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Protection of Minors in Amateur Sports Act, 2007, Bill 201, Mr. Ouellette</b>	
Agreed to.....	7784
Mr. Ouellette.....	7784

## MOTIONS

<b>Private member's public business</b>	
Mr. Bradley.....	7784
Agreed to.....	7784

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.</b>	
Mrs. Witmer.....	7790
Mr. Caplan.....	7790, 7792, 7794, 7796, 7798
Mr. Hampton.....	7792
Mrs. Elliott.....	7794
Mr. Hardeman.....	7796
Ms. MacLeod.....	7797
<b>Convenience stores</b>	
Mr. Klees.....	7791
Mr. Smitherman.....	7791
<b>Bruce nuclear generating station</b>	
Mr. Hampton.....	7793
Mr. Duncan.....	7793
<b>Mining industry</b>	
Mr. Hampton.....	7794
Mr. Bartolucci.....	7795
<b>Sports and recreation funding</b>	
Mr. Lalonde.....	7795
Mr. Watson.....	7795

<b>Environmental protection</b>	
Mr. Tabuns.....	7796
Ms. Broten.....	7796
<b>Services for the developmentally disabled</b>	
Mr. Rinaldi.....	7797
Mrs. Meilleur.....	7797
<b>Energy conservation</b>	
Mr. Tabuns.....	7798
Mr. Duncan.....	7798
<b>School facilities</b>	
Mr. Levac.....	7799
Ms. Wynne.....	7799

## PETITIONS

<b>Ontario and Lottery Gaming Corp.</b>	
Mr. Hardeman.....	7799
Mrs. Savoline.....	7801
Mr. Wilson.....	7802
<b>Tuition</b>	
Ms. DiNovo.....	7799
<b>GTA pooling</b>	
Mr. Delaney.....	7800
Mr. Flynn.....	7800
Mr. Kular.....	7801
Mr. Arthurs.....	7802
Mr. Fonseca.....	7802
<b>Laboratory services</b>	
Mr. Miller.....	7800
<b>Stevenson Memorial Hospital</b>	
Mr. Wilson.....	7801
<b>Regulation of zoos</b>	
Ms. DiNovo.....	7801

## GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

<b>2007 Ontario budget, government notice of motion number 287, Mr. Sorbara</b>	
Mrs. Witmer.....	7803, 7806
Mr. Ferreira.....	7805, 7810, 7817
Mr. Rinaldi.....	7805
Mr. Hardeman.....	7806, 7810
Ms. DiNovo.....	7806, 7807, 7811
Mr. Arthurs.....	7810
Mr. Duguid.....	7811
Ms. Smith.....	7811
Mr. Racco.....	7813
Ms. Scott.....	7814
Vote deferred.....	7819

Continued overleaf