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Monday 3 December 2007

Lundi 3 décembre 2007

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 3 December 2007

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 3 décembre 2007

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

ESTIMATES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Speaker recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I have a message from the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, signed by his own hand.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2008, and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ELECTIONS

Mr. Bill Murdoch: First, I want to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your election. I know you will do a good job in your new role and provide appropriate support for all members in the House.

Having said that, I would like to bring to your attention a pressing issue and ask for your assistance in getting to the bottom of it. I would like to ask you to form an all-party committee that would lead a performance audit of Elections Ontario.

In my 17 years in provincial politics, I've never before seen or experienced such a poorly run election. I do not know how or why the problem started, but I certainly know that people in my riding did their best to deal with the problem. Scores of voters were given wrong polling station addresses. There was a couple from Warton who were told to vote in two different spots. One was told to drive 30 kilometres away to vote. She was actually being told to vote in a different riding. Another couple was sent to three different polling stations because no one could figure out just where they were supposed to vote. Needless to say, after the third trip to the polling station they gave up.

It's no coincidence then that Ontario had the poorest voter turnout rate in provincial history. Only 52.8% of eligible voters bothered to vote in the last election. I believe that, under your guidance, this committee would be able to travel the province, hear from some of these voters and make recommendations so this foul-up never repeats.

If it is not possible for you to do this, Mr. Speaker, then please advise what else can be done to rectify the decisions of Elections Ontario. It is time to ensure there are no surprises in the next round of elections: municipal, provincial or federal. Voting is our basic democratic right, and Elections Ontario should do everything in its power to ensure that it's a seamless process for all of us, rural and urban.

PUBLIC WASHROOMS

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: First of all, I want to start off congratulating you on your position as Speaker. I know you'll do a fair and equitable job for all sides here, and I wish you all the best during the next four years.

Today I rise to discuss a very important issue affecting a number of residents in my community. Many people suffer from various ailments, such as Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis and prostatitis, that require frequent usage of washroom facilities. These people use public facilities, such as in the TTC subway system, for many daily activities. Currently in my riding of Scarborough Southwest, there are three subway stations—Victoria Park, Warden and Kennedy—with no public facilities.

People with these conditions suffer considerably. The constant pressures and strains such afflictions put on their lives by having to deal with the day-to-day effects that such conditions produce are only exacerbated by the fact that not all public facilities, such as the TTC subway system, are equipped with public washrooms that can accommodate these people, because the Ontario building code requires that washrooms are only required at the end of a subway line and not throughout the subway line.

Over the past two years, the McGuinty government has given the city of Toronto millions of dollars for capital upgrades to the TTC. Some of this money has been dedicated to the expansion of subway services to York University, ending in Vaughan region. As a result, I strongly encourage the TTC to put some of these capital dollars aside for the construction of public washrooms at every TTC subway stop, and I stand today in support of this statement.

LICENCE PLATE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr. John Yakabuski: Mr. Speaker, I also want to congratulate you on your election.

I also want to take this opportunity to welcome Jim Bradley into his new role as transportation minister. He's

a fine gentleman. I expect he will do a great job in that portfolio.

One of his first acts should be to give some direction to the people who make up the personalized licence plate review committee. It is clear that the folks who approve these personalized plates have a different thought process than their predecessors. Reverend Ingrid Condie-Bennett, a United Church minister and constituent of mine, has twice been turned down by the committee for her request for personalized plates, once for "HOLYHSLR" and again for "THE REV2."

As it turns out, this committee is not only turning down requests that have a Christian connotation; they are also on a witch hunt to recall those that were okayed by those reasonable souls who used to approve such plates in the past. Reverend Joanne Sorrill of Whitby found that out when she tried to replace her rusty "REV JO" plates issued to her 19 years ago. One of the reasons given for those ridiculous measures was that the plates could be offensive to others. I would suggest that the minister refer to the many letters and opinion columns written since this whole thing began. What people find offensive is the attitude and actions of this committee, not the plates themselves.

Minister, stop this insanity now. There are real issues and priorities facing this province that require your attention. Surely, taking away the right of an ordained minister to use their proper title on a licence plate isn't one of them.

URANIUM MINE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I draw the assembly's attention to the presence of Donna Dillman in the members' gallery. Today marks day 57 of a hunger strike she has embarked upon as part of the struggle to stop a uranium mine proposal near Sharbot Lake. Close to a week ago, she moved this protest to Queen's Park. She is acting on behalf of a coalition of eastern Ontario residents and groups who for months have been calling on the provincial government to take measures against this proposal, a proposal that is contemptuous of First Nations' rights and a harbinger of things to come if the nuclear power lobby succeeds in this province.

To date, the government, through its inaction, has been complicit in the strife that this proposal has caused. The Ardoch Algonquin First Nation has repeatedly pointed out that the provincial government has failed to consult with them about uranium exploration on their traditional lands.

In the Premier's comments on this matter, he said, "In an ideal world, I would shut down our nuclear generation overnight, but 50% of our electricity now comes from nuclear-fired generation." He sidestepped the fact that his electricity plan for this province is a nuclear plan that will perpetuate the demand for uranium. Frankly, if he continues, his plan will precipitate more struggles of this nature down the road and many more activists coming to this Legislature to defend their communities and our environment.

CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE

Mr. Dave Levac: Mr. Speaker, I want to offer my personal congratulations to you as you sit in the chair and deliberate in this wonderful place. Congratulations.

November 14 was World COPD Day. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease is a long-term chronic respiratory disease and is characterized by chronic airflow limitations, shortness of breath, and persistent coughing and wheezing. This disease makes daily normal activities we take for granted very difficult to perform.

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The Lung Association of Canada always asks us to support World COPD Day by dressing in red. I just know that we all did something of that nature.

While NHL great and COPD spokesman Dennis Hull reminds us of the seriousness of the disease, more needs to be done to educate the public about this terrible affliction. Try breathing through a straw for one minute. You will get the picture. It is a silent and unknown killer in Canada. In fact, only 13% of the population of Canada have heard of COPD. While coronary heart disease and stroke death rates have declined by an average of 60%, COPD death rates have risen by 163%. According to the World Health Organization, COPD is the fourth-leading cause of death worldwide, on a par with AIDS and HIV. More than three million people die from this disease every year. The hospitalization costs alone for the riding of Brant were nearly \$3 million in 2005.

Enough said about the statistics. I would like to end by saying, folks, remember to support World COPD Day next year and also to remember that COPD sufferers may be breathless, but they need not be helpless as well.

CRIME PREVENTION

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Congratulations on your election, Mr. Speaker.

We all remember the summer of 2005. It was labelled the "summer of the gun." Dalton McGuinty and his team blamed everyone in sight for the 79 homicides that took place that year in Ontario's largest municipality, Toronto. The McGuinty government made one photo op announcement after another following the summer of the gun. You will remember that 2005 ended with the Yonge Street slaying of an innocent young woman. All of these photo ops, all of these glamorous announcements by the Premier, Attorney General and community safety minister have failed. Yesterday, Toronto surpassed the 79 homicides of 2005 with the slaying of a 16-year-old Scarborough boy.

There are still 28 days left in this year. How many others will die? How many more records will be broken? The McGuinty government is now in its fifth year—there is no one else to blame. It is time for the McGuinty government to get tough on crime. It is time that the city of Toronto no longer unnecessarily bury its young. It is time for Dalton McGuinty to press federal Liberals to stop

delaying tactics on good Harper legislation, tough-on-crime legislation. It is time for provincial leadership on community safety.

RIDING OF STORMONT–DUNDAS– SOUTH GLENGARRY

Mr. Jim Brownell: Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying it's great to be back and I congratulate you on your election.

On October 10, the people of Ontario looked at the many accomplishments of the McGuinty Liberals over the past four years and voted for continued strong leadership. In my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, I was proud to deliver real change and positive results through my first term. Working with local leaders, I made sure that many of the important initiatives neglected by the Conservatives in the 1990s were addressed. We have been successful in delivering revitalized infrastructure, redeveloped hospitals, re-energized economic development and renewed hope in our communities. We have come a long way in four short years, leading eastern Ontario into an all-encompassing renaissance. Now it is time to continue building towards a positive future.

I encourage everyone to come and experience the abundant opportunities in my riding. If you are a business looking to expand, SD&G has the location, skilled workers and competitive property values. If you are a medical graduate looking for a community in which to establish a practice, SD&G has state-of-the-art equipment in redeveloped hospitals. If you are a family looking to settle, SD&G has an unsurpassed quality of life and countless historical and natural attractions. If you are looking for a vacation destination, from snowmobile trails in the winter to beaches in the summer, as well as museums, parks and golf, we've got what you're looking for.

I encourage you all to contact me to learn more or to come and visit Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry directly. We have it all.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Reza Moridi: I rise in the House today to speak about the action we are taking to ensure we have healthy and green communities. We have taken action to reduce our environmental footprint by investing in public transit, reducing emissions from coal plants, promoting renewable energy, and supporting research and innovation. Under the McGuinty Liberals, Ontario went from last to first in renewable energy generation Canada. And while we have reversed a decade of NDP and PC cuts to energy conservation and put Ontario at the forefront of North America, there is more important work to be done.

We are hard at work in all corners of Ontario fighting climate change. We have an ambitious \$17.5-billion rapid transit plan for the GTA and Hamilton, we have laid out ambitious emission reduction targets and we are providing rebates and tax incentives to buy energy-effi-

cient products. We are moving forward in our commitment to phase out energy being produced from coal, and we are banning the use of cosmetic pesticides.

We are taking action to make our communities cleaner and greener for our families and their children. They deserve a healthy society—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

POVERTY

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you, Speaker, and on behalf of the city of Mississauga, congratulations on your election.

I rise to talk about the initiatives Ontario is taking to reduce poverty. This is as much an issue in communities like Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville as in any other area of our province.

One of the steps that our government is taking to alleviate poverty is the Ontario child benefit that will benefit an estimated 1.3 million Ontario children and 600,000 lower-income families. While the Harris-Eves Tories decimated social assistance programs and contributed directly to child poverty by slashing welfare payments by almost 22%, this government recognizes that Ontario can only be truly prosperous when we all share in the same opportunity. That's why Ontario is taking strong steps to help low-income families and combat poverty in our province. We have raised the minimum wage every year while in government; we will continue to bring it up to more than \$10 per hour. We have increased social assistance and ODSP, and we are enhancing child care.

Not only that, but we're building on our first-term successes in education and in Best Start. We'll appoint an early learning adviser regarding funding for full-day preschool. While the previous NDP government scrapped the Ontario child income program and presided over the doubling of welfare rolls, our government is taking real measures to ensure that no one is left behind.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that Mr. Runciman, member for the electoral district of Leeds–Grenville, is recognized as the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): As well, I would like the members to welcome Mr. Bud Wildman, the former member for Algoma from the 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th and 36th Parliaments. Welcome.

VISITOR

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would also like members to recognize and

welcome a member of the Hispanic Canadian Congress, Mr. Ramon Hernandez.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We welcome Mr. Hernandez.

I remind the member that that is not a point of order.

VISITORS

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence I'd also like to recognize Cindy Shcherban, the vice-president of provincial programs, and Carol Madeley, the director of respiratory health programs at the Ontario Lung Association, who are reinforcing the importance of World COPD Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Welcome to Queen's Park.

Again, I remind the member that that is not a point of order.

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TABLING OF SESSIONAL PAPERS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that since the House last met, the following documents and papers respecting the Legislative Assembly were tabled:

—on Tuesday, June 5, 2007, the report of the review of expense claims covering the period April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007, pursuant to the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act, 2002, from the Office of the Integrity Commissioner;

—on Monday, June 18, 2007, the Auditor General's Review of the 2007 Pre-Election Report on Ontario's Finances;

—on Wednesday, June 27, 2007, the annual report of the Ombudsman for the period April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007;

—on Thursday, June 28, 2007, the individual members' expenditures for the fiscal year 2006-07;

—on Friday, June 29, 2007, the eighth annual report from the lobbyists registration office with respect to the administration of the Lobbyist Registration Act, 1998, for the period April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007;

—on Tuesday, July 10, 2007, the projected costs for the 2007 provincial general election and referendum by the Chief Electoral Officer;

—on Wednesday, July 25, 2007, the annual report of the Integrity Commissioner for the period April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007;

—on Monday, July 30, 2007, a copy of the order in council made pursuant to subsection 23(6)(b) of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, appointing Lynn Morrison as the Acting Integrity Commissioner, effective July 30, 2007, until a new Integrity Commissioner is appointed under subsection 23(2) of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, and revoking, as of July 30, 2007, order in council number 1702/2001 dated June 27, 2001;

—on Wednesday, November 7, 2007, a request by the member for Welland, Mr. Kormos, to Lynn Morrison, acting Integrity Commissioner, for an opinion pursuant to section 30(1) of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, on whether the Honourable Michael A. Brown, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, has contravened the act or Ontario parliamentary convention, together with statutory declaration from Mr. Kormos in the above-noted matter.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

FAIRNESS FOR MILITARY FAMILIES ACT (EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AND HEALTH INSURANCE), 2007

LOI DE 2007 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ POUR LES FAMILLES DES MILITAIRES (NORMES D'EMPLOI ET ASSURANCE-SANTÉ)

Mr. McGuinty moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 to provide reservist leave and the Health Insurance Act to eliminate the waiting period for military families / *Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi afin de prévoir un congé pour réservistes et la Loi sur l'assurance-santé afin d'éliminer la période d'attente pour les familles des militaires.*

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Premier for a short statement?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I choose to speak to this momentarily at the time of ministerial statements.

Hon. Michael Bryant: I seek unanimous consent to permit the orders for second and third reading of Bill 2, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 to provide reservists leave and the Health Insurance Act to eliminate the waiting period for military families, to be called immediately and that a representative of each recognized party will speak for up to five minutes on the motion for second reading of the bill, after which the Speaker shall put the question without further debate or amendment; and that the question be put on the motion for third reading of the bill without debate or amendment; and that, in the case of any division, the bells be limited to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is there consent? Agreed.

It has been agreed to, but just to confirm that each party will have up to five minutes to speak to this.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: A few weeks ago, on Remembrance Day, several members of the House gathered at the veterans' memorial on the front lawn of the Legislature. The day before, we honoured the families of our soldiers who had recently lost their lives in Afghanistan by presenting them with Ontario's Tribute to the Fallen.

Today, I would like to inform the House about our continuing commitment to support the men and women in the Canadian Forces who today serve their country with such courage and valour. Canadian Forces members serve in dangerous commissions abroad, they respond to natural disasters here at home, and they stand ready to protect our sovereignty and that of our allies. Our men and women in uniform put their lives on the line for us, so it seems to me it's only right that our province be there for them.

Ceci est la raison pour laquelle notre gouvernement présente un projet de loi qui rendra la vie du personnel militaire et de leur famille plus facile.

That's why our government is introducing legislation that would make life a little easier for military personnel and their families.

I would like to thank members of the Canadian Forces Liaison Council, including chair Sonja Bata, for being here today. They are in the gallery today.

This proposed legislation has two main elements. First, if passed, it would provide immediate access to OHIP coverage for eligible military family members. As members of the Legislature may know, newcomers to Ontario face a 90-day waiting period for services insured under OHIP. This policy affects family members from the military who have moved to our province. Even in cases where coverage is provided by the province they are leaving, there can still be hardship. For example, military families coming to Ontario from Quebec often have to pay physician fees up front during the OHIP waiting period. They request reimbursement later. This is a burden military families should not have to bear. Our proposed legislation, if passed, would make OHIP-eligible military family members exempt from the 90-day waiting period. They would have immediate access to coverage for the full range of provincially funded care.

Second, this legislation provides job protection to reservists. Many Ontarians make the brave and selfless choice to serve in the Canadian Forces reserves. They do this on top of raising their families, building their careers and contributing to their communities. Their commitment to the reserves can mean extended missions away from home and work for either a crisis in Canada or a mission abroad. For example, about 200 Ontario reservists will be deployed to Afghanistan in March of next year. Most employers appreciate this commitment and ensure their job is safe and is there for them upon their return.

Ce projet de loi, si adopté, accordera à tout réserviste une garantie absolue que leur emploi est protégé alors qu'ils sont en service.

This legislation, if passed, will provide an absolute guarantee of job protection for every reservist while on a tour of duty.

1400

There's one more commitment our government is making to military families. It may only ever impact a small number of people, but it's important because it's about removing an obstacle that could stand in the way of an Olympic dream. The Quest for Gold Ontario athlete assistance program has a one-year waiting period; to

qualify, you must have resided in Ontario for one year. Effective immediately, military families will be exempt from this requirement.

A writer by the name of David Kenyon Webster, who fought in the Second World War, once wrote, "Those things which are precious are saved only by sacrifice." When the men and women of the Canadian Forces are asked to make sacrifices to safeguard what we hold precious—freedom and democracy—they don't hesitate. So when their families need important government services, we're not going to make them wait. Reservists make a tremendous sacrifice for all of us. They're the backbone of any military. We're going to back them up and make sure their job is safe for them.

Les personnes qui portent l'uniforme font un travail difficile. Elles s'inquiètent pour leur famille, et leur famille s'inquiète pour elles.

People who serve in uniform have a tough job. They can't help but worry for their families, and their families can't help but worry for them. The measures that we propose today will make life a little easier for the entire family, giving them peace of mind knowing our province supports them. Ontarians in the Canadian Forces do so much for us. Together, through this legislation, we can do something for them.

This bill is really a modest but important way to say thank you. I ask all members for their support so that together we can stand up for our military families. Let me add as well that it appears that we are going to have unanimous support for this bill. On behalf not of my government but of Ontario military families, I want to thank all members and particularly members of the opposition for their support for this timely intervention.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I want to take this opportunity to thank the Premier and congratulate Labour Minister Brad Duguid for recognizing the importance of protecting the civilian jobs of our military reservists. It's time that our reservists' contribution to world peace are recognized by the citizens of this province.

I originally introduced a similar bill last May, and a revised private members' bill was ready to be presented for first reading in this Parliament. The intent was that employers be required to secure the civilian jobs of our reserve force members. Our reservists deserve the opportunity to return to their civilian jobs.

I am personally aware of one reservist, who is my constituent, who lost his civilian employment while serving as a peacemaker. This is simply not acceptable.

I want to thank Lieutenant-Colonel John Selkirk, executive director of Reserves 2000; Brigadier-General Alan J. Howard; and the Honourable Senator Hugh Segal for their support and assistance in the development of my private member's bill. I also would like to thank the thousands of Legion comrades from across Ontario who signed a petition calling on the government to protect the civilian jobs of our military reservists.

If passed, this legislation will be welcome news for the thousands of military reservists who leave their jobs and families to serve our country.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: On behalf of our party, I want to express our appreciation to the members of the military for the tremendous sacrifices that they make on our behalf. I'm pleased that the government has finally started—and I say “started”—to respond to the concerns that our party has been putting on the record.

Mr. Martiniuk from Cambridge has just spoken to the private member's bill that he introduced for reservists. We're glad that the government has finally seen fit to move forward. But I would say to you, there are two other examples of recommendations that our party has made. Last spring, John Tory and John Yakabuski led the call in the Ontario Legislature to have the McGuinty government repeal the health tax for the men and women in the armed forces when they are living outside of this province. Our party also supported the request for an increase in special funding for the Phoenix Centre for Children and Families near CFB Petawawa due to the need for increased mental health services for the children of those who serve. So far, the government has not responded to those two initiatives, but we are pleased about the response today.

We feel it is important to do whatever we can to defend the interests of the men and the women who defend us so well on a daily basis. We would hope that this government would move forward. They are two other occasions I've just highlighted where they can also continue to show that they support the military in real and meaningful ways. We have always supported our military people.

I would say to the Premier and the government that we are very disappointed today. This is a bill that all parties, all sides, all people can support. We're at the start of a new four-year session. It is most regrettable that the members of the opposition did not have the opportunity to work with the government and that you did not give us prior notice of this bill. We would have been happy to give you the support that you're looking for today, but I think it's a troubling sign if this is what is going to happen in the next four years. I was hoping that we could work together in a more co-operative manner. I think the people in the province of Ontario expect us to do so, and when you have initiatives such as the one today where we all want to do what's right for the men and women who serve us in the military, certainly there was a wonderful opportunity to do so.

Again, we will support this bill and we hope the government will continue to listen to the members of the PC caucus that have other legislation and other needs that they feel need to be addressed.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Chair recognizes the member from Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations. I would like to say that I'm sharing my time with our new member from Nickel Belt as well, so let's hear it for her. And welcome to our esteemed guests.

Certainly we in the New Democratic Party of Ontario support our reservists and support our troops. We may have a question about this particular conflict and the way it is being waged, but we never have a question about the

care that our reservists should get both here and abroad. So we are in support of this bill.

However, I echo some of the concerns of the member from Kitchener–Waterloo about the process. I would ask the labour minister in the future to give us a little bit more time to look at this bill. The reason being is not to pick at it, it is not to weaken it, it is to strengthen it.

When I'm looking at the employment standards part of this bill—I'm the employment standards critic—I already note a few areas where it could have been strengthened. For example, I see here “an employee who has been employed for at least six ... months”—I would ask the labour minister about that. There may be instances where that may be waived and we would hope that it would be for our reservists.

Looking at the bill again—we wish we had more time—we also note that the employer may postpone reinstatement for two weeks or until the first pay period following the leave. We wonder why that is necessary. Again we ask, could this bill not be strengthened? We're looking at reservists here, people who are going to pay perhaps the ultimate sacrifice for their country. We've lost over 70 young men and women already in Afghanistan, and so we are asking a great deal. Could we not extend it another two weeks, another six months? Could we not strengthen this bill? So that is why we ask to have prior knowledge, a chance to read this bill in anticipation, because we don't want to pick it apart. And to our esteemed guests, I would say what we're hoping for is the strongest statement possible.

Again, regarding OHIP—I know our member from Nickel Belt is going to speak to this at some length too—I would say that we see a little bit more spin than substance. We would hope again there for more substance. But overall, absolutely anything that we can do to make the lot of our reservists better we in the New Democratic Party will do.

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M^{me} France Gélinas: I too would like to express our thanks to the military personnel and their families. The NDP is pleased to support this bill.

But lots of other groups who move to Ontario are not covered for that 90-day period, must pay out of pocket and never get reimbursed. We are talking here about residents of Ontario who have moved away and move back to Ontario. We are talking about our new immigrants.

We've also noticed as we look at this bill that Ontario has never established a reciprocal process for Quebec, which means that every other resident of Quebec who moves to Ontario must pay when they use health care services in Ontario and wait to be reimbursed by the government of Quebec. We are pleased that the military families won't have to go through this anymore. We think that a reciprocal agreement should be worked on for the people of Quebec who move to Ontario.

I would now like to ask for unanimous consent to move the second and third reading of the Fairness for Military Families Act.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member is asking for unanimous consent for second and third reading. Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Mr. Speaker, I understand that I am nonetheless formally required to move the following.

FAIRNESS FOR MILITARY FAMILIES
ACT (EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS
AND HEALTH INSURANCE), 2007

LOI DE 2007 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ POUR LES
FAMILLES DES MILITAIRES (NORMES
D'EMPLOI ET ASSURANCE-SANTÉ)

Mr. McGuinty moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 to provide reservist leave and the Health Insurance Act to eliminate the waiting period for military families / Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi afin de prévoir un congé pour réservistes et la Loi sur l'assurance-santé afin d'éliminer la période d'attente pour les familles des militaires.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

FAIRNESS FOR MILITARY FAMILIES
ACT (EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS
AND HEALTH INSURANCE), 2007

LOI DE 2007 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ POUR LES
FAMILLES DES MILITAIRES (NORMES
D'EMPLOI ET ASSURANCE-SANTÉ)

Mr. McGuinty moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 to provide reservist leave and the Health Insurance Act to eliminate the waiting period for military families / Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi afin de prévoir un congé pour réservistes et la Loi sur l'assurance-santé afin d'éliminer la période d'attente pour les familles des militaires.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT
(SCHOOL CROSSINGS), 2007

LOI DE 2007 MODIFIANT LE CODE
DE LA ROUTE (PASSAGES POUR ÉLÈVES)

Mr. Klees moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to school crossings / Projet de loi 3, Loi modifiant

le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les passages pour élèves.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement?

Mr. Frank Klees: At present, subsection 176(3) of the act requires that drivers who are required to stop at a school crossing must remain stopped until all persons have cleared the half of the roadway in which they are traveling. This bill simply changes that requirement to ensure that drivers remain stopped until all persons have cleared the entire roadway.

This was brought to my attention by Mrs. Barbara Comisso of Woodbridge, who herself is a school crossing guard. She indicated that there have been a number of occasions when there have been potentially dangerous situations where children may well have been injured. I wrote a letter to the minister October 25 asking him to take action on this, and I would ask that he give serious consideration to doing so. I thank you.

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES
COMMISSION (ONTARIO) ACT, 2007
LOI DE 2007 SUR LA COMMISSION
ONTARIENNE DE DÉLIMITATION DES
CIRCONSCRIPTIONS ÉLECTORALES

Mr. Sterling moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act to provide for the periodic establishment of a commission to readjust the number and boundaries of electoral districts for the purposes of the Legislative Assembly / Projet de loi 4, Loi prévoyant la constitution périodique d'une commission chargée de réviser le nombre et les limites des circonscriptions électorales aux fins de l'Assemblée législative.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Recently, our Premier has been demanding representation by population for Ontario in the House of Commons. However, right now we do not have representation by population for all Ontarians in this Legislature. Right now, because the average population of northern Ontario ridings is two thirds of the average population of southern Ontario ridings, we have a situation where a vote in a northern Ontario riding is worth the equivalent of 1.5, or one and a half, votes in a southern Ontario riding.

This bill would create an independent Electoral—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Sorry to interrupt the speaker, but the speaker was being interrupted by numerous members. I would just ask that we show

respect for one another and allow the member the opportunity to deliver his explanation.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: This bill to create an independent Electoral Boundaries Commission would ensure that all Ontarians receive representation by population now and in the future. As well, in an effort to ensure meaningful representation for northern Ontario, this bill would also enshrine a legislated minimum of 11 ridings in northern Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I hope the member is soon to be completed.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: The commission would be made up of one judge and two other eligible voters appointed by the Speaker. If we are to demand rep by pop for Canada, we must have rep by pop for Ontario.

INTERNATIONAL DAY
OF DISABLED PERSONS
JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE
DES PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES

Hon. Michael Bryant: Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent for all three parties to speak for up to five minutes on the International Day of Disabled Persons.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed. The Speaker recognizes the Minister of Community and Social Services.

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: L'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies a proclamé le 3 décembre Journée internationale des personnes handicapées.

The theme of this year is, "Decent work for persons with disabilities." The day focuses on how to expand job opportunities for persons with disabilities and on ways to fulfill benefits from the abilities of this often overlooked talent pool.

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L'Ontario reconnaît l'importance pour les personnes handicapées d'avoir accès au marché du travail comme un droit fondamental pour tous.

As our economy continues to grow, finding skilled employees is becoming more difficult, especially as our workforce ages and the baby boom generation retires. People with disabilities represent a skilled and diverse talent pool that we cannot afford to overlook.

We have come a long way from the time of President Roosevelt, when people felt they had to hide their disability.

We know that people with disabilities have the ability to contribute to all aspects of our society, to live rich, full lives and to enjoy satisfying careers. But in order for people of all abilities to participate fully in the workforce, we need more accessible, welcoming work environments for them.

As Lieutenant Governor David Onley recently said, "I care passionately about accessibility, because it is only through fully accessible communities that Ontarians with disabilities can take their rightful place as contributors to

the social, cultural and economic life of this province." We share Lieutenant Governor Onley's dream of an accessible Ontario.

Over the last year, we have made significant progress in implementing the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This act is our province's roadmap to make Ontario accessible to all people by 2025, through the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards for some of the most important areas of our lives.

We will soon begin implementing the first of five province-wide accessibility standards, in the area of customer service, which will come into force this January.

L'accès aux services se traduira par des services accessibles de même niveau et égaux à ceux offerts à la population générale.

We are also finalizing the second standard for accessible transportation, which will help people with disabilities get to work, access recreational opportunities and participate fully in every aspect of their communities.

We are making progress towards our goals, et ce n'est qu'un début.

We know that there is still a long way to go, but, working together, we can make sure that Ontarians of all abilities have every opportunity to reach their full potential. That is why we are breaking down barriers to employment in the social assistance system, and we are asking businesses to work with us to find new opportunities for people with disabilities.

Nous continuerons sur notre lancée et développerons de nouvelles normes dans le domaine de l'information et des communications, de l'environnement physique et du travail.

These standards will translate into a province where all Ontarians will have access to goods, services, education and employment, whether they have a disability or not. That is how we are working together to make the dream of an accessible Ontario a reality.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of the official opposition to recognize December 3 as the International Day of Disabled Persons.

Since 1992, when the United Nations General Assembly first asked member countries to observe the International Day of Disabled Persons with a view to furthering integration in society of persons with disabilities, our province has made great strides in addressing the concerns of persons with disabilities.

I'm proud of the Progressive Conservative caucus's long history of leadership, consultation and co-operation in addressing the concerns of people with disabilities.

Ontario was the first province to adopt a Human Rights Code, which was amended in 1981 to extend protection on the basis of disability.

We've also seen passage in this province of other significant legislation advancing the rights of those with disabilities, such as the Ontario disabilities act and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

One of the concerns that this House must recognize is the special set of problems faced by disabled persons in

smaller communities. In my own riding of Whitby–Oshawa, a great group of volunteers have come together to establish the Abilities Centre, which is a sports, recreation and performing arts facility for people with special needs that recognizes abilities and does not focus on disabilities.

In other ridings such as York–Simcoe, local governments are actively at work identifying barriers faced by people with disabilities and actions being taken to rectify problems. As an example, the accessibility plan of the town of Innisfil identifies several major problems. These include a lack of public transportation and alternative transportation for scooters and wheelchairs. What transportation is available is often financially out of reach. A lack of supportive housing is also an issue, with some disabled people having to move out of the community in order to find the housing that they need.

To remedy these problems, communities such as Innisfil need the provincial government to step up to the plate with financial assistance. We will be watching this government closely to see if its promises to assist disabled persons are backed up with real financial support.

Not only government needs to take the needs of disabled persons into account. One of York region's local newspapers recently noted that the last full-service gas station in Aurora had closed. This may result in inconvenience for many people, but for disabled people it means a drive that takes them far out of their way to find a full-service gas station. Sometimes it is little changes that we do not even consider that can have a tremendous effect on the lives of disabled persons.

Today is a day to celebrate Ontario's achievements, but it is also a day to acknowledge that barriers still exist. On behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, I renew our commitment to working toward the day when we can truly say that persons with disabilities can enjoy the full and equal access to all aspects of life that so many of us take for granted on a daily basis. I hope that all of us will give substantial consideration to our shared responsibility in working co-operatively toward a shared vision of Ontario where all members of society can fulfill their full potential.

I invite all Ontarians to join this House in recognizing the International Day of Disabled Persons and committing to building bridges of opportunity for our friends, neighbours and families.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Today in Sudbury, the Independent Living Resource Centre is celebrating the International Day of Disabled Persons, as proclaimed by the United Nations. The Independent Living Resource Centre offers services in Sudbury-Manitoulin and in a large part of my riding of Nickel Belt. It is a community-based not-for-profit organization that is controlled by and for persons with disabilities. On October 16, they kicked off their second annual great wheelchair challenge, an event where people volunteer to spend a day in a wheelchair.

Les gens qui ont accepté de relever le défi du fauteuil roulant ont passé une journée complète de leur vie en fauteuil. Ils ont dû essayer de faire quelques activités de la vie quotidienne telles qu'essayer d'acheter un pantalon

et d'essayer le pantalon dans une cabine d'essayage, en plus des activités de leur journée ordinaire.

The Independent Living Resource Centre is presently celebrating their success: More than 50 people took the challenge. They were able to experience for themselves the need to make things far more accessible, raising awareness of the necessity for accessibility.

The annual observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons on December 3 aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities. It also seeks to increase awareness of gains to be derived from the integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic, cultural and working life.

The theme of the day, as we've heard, is "Decent work for persons with disabilities." I would add "decent-paying work" for people with disabilities. I know that after today's celebration, a lot of them will be participating in the Tuesday and Thursday nights \$2 supper, partly because they want to meet with their friends and socialize, but also because 95% of the people who belong to that resource group are unemployed and rely on ODSP, the Ontario disability support program, and Ontario Works as their only source of income. While it is important to talk about their right to a job, we also must ensure dignity for persons with disabilities who are unable to work. When I talked to their president, Mr. Earl Black, he told me that they, like most groups working with people with disabilities, want to see changes to ODSP.

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Le programme d'appui aux personnes handicapées de l'Ontario a besoin d'être revu afin qu'il offre une pension suffisante pour couvrir le coût du panier d'épicerie santé tel que calculé par le bureau de santé local, les frais reliés au logement dans la communauté où la personne vit en plus de la prime de dépenses personnelles. De cette façon, le montant sera suffisant pour s'assurer que les gens ne retombent pas sous le seuil de la pauvreté.

The Ontario disability program should be revised so that it provides sufficient money for people with disabilities to afford a healthy food basket, as calculated by the health unit, an accommodation allowance that reflects the real cost of rent, and an allocation for living expenses so that those members depending on ODSP do not fall below the poverty level.

We also need more flexibility with ODSP so that the people at the Independent Living Resource Centre can make the transition to decent employment much easier.

Aujourd'hui, je veux souligner le travail important fait par toute l'équipe du centre de ressources, que ce soit au niveau de l'équipe, du personnel, des bénévoles, des membres du conseil d'administration, et souligner la contribution de leur directrice générale, M^{me} Norma Shaw, ainsi que de leur président, M. Earl Black.

I want to recognize the Independent Living Resource Centre for their good work and wish them all the best in their celebration.

Poverty and unemployment are two key determinants of health, but one does not have to lead to the other. Unemployment should not lead to poverty for people with disabilities.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, I want to extend our congratulations to you. We look forward to working with you and hope that we can stay on your good side—for at least the first week.

My first question is for the Premier—I'm not too worried about staying on his good side, but I would like to extend congratulations to the Premier and his party on their re-election, much as it pains me. Despite our differences, I'm sure we agree that on all sides of the aisle we have the shared goal of a better Ontario. And on that positive note, off to the races.

Premier, since January 2005, Ontario has lost close to 154,000 manufacturing jobs, and your response has repeatedly been to shrug your shoulders and whistle Don't Worry, Be Happy. Some might describe it as whistling past the graveyard.

One of the signs that Ontario's economy is in trouble are predictions for economic growth. In the budget last March, your government indicated that the economy would grow by 2.8% next year, and just days after the election, RBC said that the economy would grow by just 1.8%. That's a significant difference. Premier, can you confirm whether or not the government's own economic advisors concur with the RBC prediction?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: In the spirit offered in the preface to the leader of the official opposition's remarks, let me seize the opportunity as well, if I may, first of all to congratulate him on the assumption of his new responsibilities. I wish him the very best in that regard. To you, Mr. Speaker, I offer the same and assure you of our co-operation.

With respect to the issue raised by the leader of the official opposition, obviously I cannot agree with his characterization of our approach. The economy continues to grow, not as fast as we would like it, but not as slowly as many had predicted it would grow. It's demonstrated tremendous resilience. To be more specific, Ontarians, entrepreneurs and workers alike have demonstrated tremendous resilience and innovation. During the course of the past four years, 422,000 more jobs have been created. The unemployment rate today is at its lowest level in the past five years. We will continue to work hard with the private sector and labour alike to find new and creative ways to strengthen this economy and create new high-paying jobs.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: The Premier continues to use his 422,000 number. I know that there's a report,

from last month, of 20,000 new jobs, and all of them were in the government, in the public sector. It would be nice if we could get a breakdown. We've heard that the Premier is even using people who worked one day, election day, as part of these numbers. We would ask him to be straightforward with the people of the province with respect to job creation.

The reality is that you and your Liberal colleagues haven't learned from your last tenure in government, the Peterson years. You're taxing, spending and regulating the province into the ground. For the first time in 30 years, Ontario's unemployment rate exceeds the national average. Our economic growth has fallen behind all other provinces and is now predicted to rank dead last this year by both RBC and CIBC. For 2008, Scotiabank predicts another 10th-place finish for Ontario. According to the C.D. Howe Institute, we now have the least competitive business tax structure in Canada—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Answer, please, Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I note that the leader of the official opposition is talking about tax cuts; I just don't recall seeing any of that in their platform. What I can say is that we're proud of the new jobs that have been created, and it is true that some of those jobs are for full-time nurses, some of those jobs are for full-time health inspectors and some of those jobs are for full-time teachers. We are proud to welcome all those and so many others to the workforce here in the province of Ontario.

In terms of some of the things that we have been able to do—and we will have more announcements in due course about what more we will do to help support manufacturing, forestry and agriculture in particular—we have had in place an auto sector fund which has leveraged \$7 billion worth of new investments and over 7,000 jobs. In our manufacturing sector specifically, we have a \$500-million advanced manufacturing investment strategy which so far—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: It's some relief that the Premier didn't fall into the blame game, which he has perfected to a science, with respect to governments of the past and the federal government. We may hear that in his final response.

Premier, the condition of the Ontario economy is not an accident. Your government's tax hikes, increased regulation and spending are drawing investment away and hurting Ontario families. You don't seem to give any sign or indication that you understand the gravity of the situation.

I am asking the Premier, will he assure us today that the upcoming economic statement will include expediting corporate and capital tax cuts and reduced regulation? Will you do that?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I will agree on this score: that we are being challenged, particularly in the manufacturing sector, when it comes to our economy. About 15% of Ontario jobs are found within the manufacturing

sector. I know the leader of the official opposition will know, for example, that when it comes to biotechnology, digital media, financial services—including insurance—and information and communication technologies, we've been growing at two to three times the rate of our nearest competition south of the border in the US. We have been very strong in that area, but we are challenged in the manufacturing sector. He knows that the causes include the cost of energy—the cost of oil in particular—the high dollar, a sluggish US economy and emerging strong economies like Brazil, Russia, India and China. That's why we will continue to invest in our next generation jobs fund. That's why we will continue to support the advanced manufacturing investment strategy. That's why we will continue to invest in supports for our farmers and for the forestry sector. We are prepared to continue to work with all our sectors to strengthen the economy and ensure there are good high-paying jobs for all Ontarians.

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FAMILY DAY

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: To the Premier, again, dealing with the economy and what we view as his apparent nonchalance about some of the real challenges facing the manufacturing sector and the rest of the economy, the Premier began his election campaign a number of weeks ago with the promise of a new holiday in February. At the same time, we're hearing repeatedly about shrinkage in the economic growth projections and decline in productivity. My question for the Premier is this: Did he and his colleagues consider the economic implications of this action before justifying it on what are apparently political grounds?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: If the leader of the official opposition is now telling us he opposes this new holiday, he's opposed to Family Day and he's opposed to a day for families to get a little bit of a reprieve in this hectic just-in-time lifestyle that we all seem to be leading, he should stand up and say so. But I believe that if they can do that in Alberta, if they can do that in places like Manitoba, if they can have 11 holidays south of the border that are respected by employers there and we're only going to have nine holidays here in Ontario, I am in favour of a Family Day for the people of Ontario. If the leader of the official opposition is against that, he should say so.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: We're in favour of a growing and prosperous economy in the province of Ontario, and we're concerned about what's happening to the economy in this province. We are concerned about what's happening in terms of the hollowing out of the manufacturing sector, the impact on many, many communities and many, many families across this province, whom you seem to have adopted such a nonchalant attitude towards.

We know that the Premier didn't consider the implications. Gerry Macartney, the CEO and General Manager of the London Chamber of Commerce, said, "By

your government's own admission there was no cost-benefit analysis undertaken to determine what impact this decision would have on Ontario's flagging manufacturing sector; how production schedules might be impacted; how already-set budget targets would be impacted ...; or what impact this decision may have on our growing productivity gap with the US and the G7." Why didn't his government focus first on making sure our economic fundamentals are sound?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The leader of the official opposition says he's concerned about the state of the economy, but when we moved forward with a half-billion-dollar auto sector fund, which ultimately leveraged \$7 billion worth of new investment and made us the number one auto producer in North America for the first time since the invention of the car, they opposed that. When we moved ahead with our advanced manufacturing investment strategy, which has so far leveraged \$617 million in new investment and created 3,400 jobs, they opposed that. When we moved forward with \$1 billion in supports for our farmers, they opposed that. When we moved forward with \$1 billion in supports for the forestry sector, they opposed that.

If Ontarians want to know who's prepared to roll up their sleeves and work with business and labour, and get down in the trenches and help strengthen this economy, they can count on this government.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: If we keep going the way we're going, we won't have any sleeves to roll up; that's the reality. You talk about the auto sector. The CEO of Linamar, an auto parts maker with which I'm sure you're familiar, with 7,500 employees in Ontario, says that this one piece of legislation is going to result in 60,000 lost productivity hours for her company. That's just one company—an important one in the auto sector.

Judith Andrew of the CFIB says, "It's small businesses, those operated by Ontario's families"—which you seem to want to express so much concern about—"that are going to have to shoulder the burden of this."

The city of Toronto is going to see \$2.3 million added to their operating costs as a result of this decision. We don't know what it's going to cost the Ontario government.

My question to the Premier: With no consultations, no economic analysis, how can you justify this being your number one priority without first making sure our economic fundamentals are sound?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to remind the leader of the official opposition, as hard as it is for him to come to grips with this, that the fact of the matter is that during the course of the past four years, this economy generated 422,000 more jobs. Today, the level of unemployment is at its lowest level in some five years.

We're not going to rest on our laurels; we're not just going to stick with the auto sector fund and the advanced manufacturing investment strategy. We are also bringing to the table the largest fund of its kind in North America. It's a \$1.15-billion next generation jobs fund.

The members of the opposition may be opposed to us using public dollars to help lend strength to the manufacturing sector in particular, but we see it differently. We think we have a shared responsibility to work with our partners in labour and in business to help them strengthen themselves so that we can in turn strengthen this economy and support good-quality public services like health care, education and investments in infrastructure. We will continue to work with labour and with the manufacturing sector in particular as well as forestry and farming to strengthen those—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question?

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Howard Hampton: Thank you, Speaker, and allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of your office—although I've often wondered about the good sense of anyone who would want to be Speaker in this House. Let me also congratulate members of the government, but let me also say that there is work to be done.

My question for the Premier is this: At a time when Ontario has lost 175,000 manufacturing jobs, when the McGuinty government should be taking action to sustain jobs and working families, can the Premier explain why he's merely going to ask for a study of manufacturing job loss in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Let me say that the leader of the third party, of course, knows that we're doing much more than taking a long-term view of the future of manufacturing in Ontario. I for one believe it's bright and very promising. We are going to continue to live in a market here in North America of some half a billion consumers. Those consumers will be looking for sophisticated, value-added manufacturing products, and we will continue to make those here in the province of Ontario.

I can say that in addition to looking at the long term, we will continue to support our new initiatives, including our \$1.15-billion next generation jobs fund. It will be modeled after the approach that we brought with the auto sector fund. That half-billion dollars leveraged \$7 billion worth of new investment.

So we are coming to the table in a real and meaningful way. I'm hopeful that the leader of the third party and his party will in fact be supportive of initiatives that we will be announcing in due course when it comes to the kinds of investments that that particular fund will be supporting.

Mr. Howard Hampton: The Premier talks about his auto sector strategy. We see double-digit unemployment in an auto sector town like Windsor. We see more jobs being lost in Oakville, in St. Thomas, in London, in St. Catharines and in Oshawa: 175,000 manufacturing jobs lost; 45,000 direct and indirect jobs lost in the forest sector of northern Ontario. These are alarming figures.

So I ask the Premier again, with those alarming figures, can you explain to the people of Ontario why, as

your first step, you're merely going to study the loss of manufacturing jobs in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: That's not what I said and that's not an accurate representation of the course of action that we are pursuing. I think we have an ongoing responsibility to understand where manufacturing is going in North America, and particularly here, of course, in Ontario. If the leader of the NDP thinks that that's not a good investment of energy and our time, then he should say so. But I think it's important to understand where the global economy is going.

Beyond that, we've also come to the table with our next generation jobs fund. We are still at the table with our half-billion-dollar advanced manufacturing investment strategy. We continue to phase out the capital tax. We continue to reduce business education taxes. We continue to send out a signal to the world at large that we are a great place in which to invest. We have the best-skilled and most educated workforce of any G7 country right here in the province of Ontario. We are the best in terms of our skills and level of education. I think we've got a lot to bring to the competitive marketplace.

I look forward to continuing to champion this economy on behalf of Ontarians. I ask for the leader of the NDP's support as we work together to strengthen the Ontario economy.

Mr. Howard Hampton: It seems to me the Premier is trying to avoid the question. Your next generation jobs fund is old news for the auto sector; they've been laying off tens of thousands of people since you announced it. It's old news for the forest sector; they've laid off another 1,500 people since election day.

The question is this: When the banks say that Ontario will rank last in economic growth in 2008, when the auto sector analysts say Ontario will be North America's biggest auto production loser through 2012, do you really believe that it's an adequate response to hire someone who's responsible for the loss of 45,000 forest sector jobs to now study the loss of manufacturing sector jobs?

1450

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I just can't agree with the characterization presented by the leader of the third party. I think it's important for us to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time. It's important for us to understand what's going on in the global economy, particularly as it impacts the manufacturing sector, the forestry sector and agriculture here in Ontario, while, at the same time, continuing to come to the table in a real, substantive and meaningful way.

We've got \$1.15 billion by way of our next generation jobs fund and half a billion dollars in our advanced manufacturing investment strategy. We've got \$1 billion in supports so far for agriculture. We're coming to the table with a new risk management program. We just couldn't wait on the federal government to come, so we're going to move ahead on our own. We're also working with the forestry sector.

I just can't agree with the leader of the NDP's characterization. I think it is important for us to understand

what is happening out there. Beyond that, the fact is, we are coming to the table, and we're looking forward to working with our partners to help strengthen the economy at a particularly challenging time.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Howard Hampton: To the Premier: You seem to want to talk about the nebulous concept of the global economy, but you need to recognize that when Abitibi closed the paper mill in Kenora, they moved production to Quebec; when Cascades closed the paper mill in Thunder Bay, they moved production to Quebec; when Abitibi closed the other paper mill in Thunder Bay, they moved production to Quebec; when Norampac closed the liner board mill in Red Rock, they moved production to Quebec. Manitoba has added almost 1,500 new jobs in the forest sector while Ontario, under the McGuinty government, has lost 45,000.

Premier, do you understand that things like high electricity rates are a key reason why many Ontario manufacturing and forest sector jobs are leaving the province, and if you do understand that, will you express, as we have, opposition to Ontario Power Generation's announced plan to raise industrial hydro rates a further 14%?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The leader of the NDP may know that I recently had the opportunity to sit down once again with Premier Jean Charest, and we both talked about some of the challenges that we are facing, particularly insofar as our forestry sectors, agriculture sectors and manufacturing sectors are concerned. About three quarters of all manufacturing jobs in Canada are found in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario. He just didn't present it the way the leader of the NDP presented it. He just didn't present it that way at all.

I can tell you that we have some specific supports when it comes to the cost of electricity for our manufacturing sector and especially for our pulp and paper electricity transition program. It's a \$140-million program that's going to reduce electricity costs by 15% over three years to allow companies to transition to a more competitive and sustainable platform. I'm herein specifically referencing the pulp and paper industry. The leader of the NDP is right when it comes to lending support to this group of industries, and that's why we have come to the table, as I say, with \$140 million.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Premier, in your meetings with Jean Charest I'm sure he said, "Thank you for sending us those jobs." You announced support for the pulp and paper sector. Since then, Domtar has idled a further 300 jobs at the paper mill in Dryden. Now AbitibiBowater has announced the permanent closure of their mill in Thunder Bay. We've seen further layoffs in Kapuskasing, and then following on that, you see literally thousands of jobs lost in the sawmill sector because they have nowhere to send their chips with all the layoffs in the pulp sector.

Premier, there are things your government could do right away. You could support an industrial hydro rate

that would allow manufacturers and forest sector companies to continue to work in Ontario. You haven't met that test yet. You could bring in a proactive jobs commissioner or you could promote a "buy Ontario" policy. Will you do any of those things to help sustain manufacturing jobs in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We're going to have an interesting and what I think is a very important and hardly an academic debate over the course of the next weeks and months, and I look forward to that.

I think it's probably fair to say that the opposition will characterize our challenges here as being induced entirely and exclusively by the government, but I think Ontarians and Canadians know there's a little bit more at play than that. They understand that the high dollar has an impact on our competitiveness. They understand that the high cost of oil has an impact on our competitiveness. They understand that the sluggish US economy has an impact on our competitiveness. They understand that the slow-down of the US housing market has a direct impact on what is happening in our forestry sector. They understand that the development of strong new powerful economies like China and India has an impact on what is happening here in Ontario.

We will continue to find ways to come to the table with our manufacturing sector, and although the opposition may not like to hear it, we need another partner; that is the federal government. If they would come to the table and lend more support for manufacturing, for forestry and farmers—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary

Mr. Howard Hampton: Here we are, the first day, and already the Premier is looking everywhere, anywhere, to find someone else to blame. Premier, it's very clear that the loss of 175,000 manufacturing jobs and low pay, for example, are root causes of the increasing poverty levels in Ontario.

Once again there are immediate things the McGuinty government could do. The McGuinty government could raise the minimum wage to \$10 an hour now. Or you could end the clawback of the national child benefit supplement from the lowest-income kids in Ontario now. Or you could use the funding that the federal government has already given you for affordable housing to build affordable housing now. Will the McGuinty government do any of those three things now?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm not sure how the leader of the NDP is entitled to jump from manufacturing to poverty issues, but I'm pleased to address them.

In addition to putting in place our Ontario child benefit, which will grow to the point where it's going to provide \$1,100 per child growing up in a low-income family, in addition to raising social assistance rates three separate times, and in addition to raising the minimum wage 17% and continuing to raise it to \$10.25 an hour, we will move beyond that. The leader of the NDP will know that we have in place a new cabinet committee which is devoted to putting in place indicators and targets

and a focused strategy that will result in us achieving our targets when it comes to poverty reduction. Our strategy will include new dental benefits, a continuing growth of the minimum wage, our Ontario child benefit, more child care spaces and more affordable housing. That is a great start to an important new initiative that we are about to embrace as a new government.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is for the minister who is responsible for small business. I have some information to kick-start your study on the loss of manufacturing jobs. It comes from Aurora. Nicholas C. Hindman, Sr., the senior vice-president and chief financial officer for Westell Technologies, said this when they announced that 300 jobs would be shut down in their facility in Aurora by the end of this year: "We are one of the few manufacturers left here. This is a survival situation. It has gotten to the point where we cannot compete any longer."

This is one example. I want to ask the minister responsible for small business, given the state of affairs particularly of the manufacturing sector in Ontario, does he support the imposition of a new \$2-billion tax on small business in this province?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: The Premier has already indicated that our manufacturers are facing some challenges, there's no question about it. Those challenges are basically coming from global competition. It's coming from the high Canadian dollar and it's also coming because of the big economy in the US as well.

But our government has done a lot already. We have the advanced manufacturing strategy. We are doing everything to make the tax structure very competitive: the capital cost allowance is being matched with the federal government, and we have eliminated the capital tax on businesses as well. So our government has taken a lot of initiatives to make sure that our business environment becomes competitive.

We are still facing challenges—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

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Mr. Frank Klees: With all due respect, I think the minister missed the point. The question that I asked the minister is whether he, as minister with responsibility for small business in this province, supports the imposition of a new \$2-billion tax on the manufacturing sector in this province. He didn't answer the question. May I perhaps inform the minister that we are told an economist at BMO Capital Markets estimates the impact of the new holiday tax of this government to be \$2 billion.

I want to know, will this minister responsible for small business stand up for small business in this province and oppose the imposition of that new tax on small business in this province? Will he do his job?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We got through half of question period, and we were doing very well. I

would trust that we can continue on. I want you to know that I've been keeping my own little list of who's been naughty and who has been nice and I'm going to be conscious of that. But we all need to respect one another.

The Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, please.

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: We need to have a balance between family life and business. Ontario workers work very hard and they deserve to have some time off with their families. That is why we are doing this. But at the same time, I want to say that our business sector is very strong. We have created 420,000 new jobs in this province since this government took office, and that is because of the hard work of our entrepreneurs. It's the hard work of our business people and employees; that's why they deserve to take some time off to spend with their families.

SECURITIES INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is for the Minister of Finance. I'd like to preface my question to the minister with a couple of quotes which were taken directly from Ed Waitzer, the former chair of the Ontario Securities Commission, as reported in this weekend's Toronto Star.

The first quote is very simple: "The [securities] regulators are becoming like the people they're trying to regulate."

Quote number two: "They're spending their time managing reputations instead of getting results. There's not a lot of accountability. They can talk a big game, and the fact is they don't deliver."

To the minister, what concrete action is your ministry going to take to fix what even industry insiders are calling an international embarrassment?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We continue to work with the OSC. The first concrete measure is, we will continue to support a single securities regulator in this country. I would point out to the member opposite that every other major western capital market has a single security regulator. All the experts—and I've met with a number of them since assuming this portfolio—say that that is, first and foremost, the most important thing that we can do in the context of better enforcement. For instance, in the United States they have one security regulator; in Great Britain they have one security regulator; and in France. All of the individuals that I have spoken with to date have indicated that's a first important step.

In addition, there are a number of other steps that can be taken and we are in the process of looking at those. I would be happy to respond to that in the member's supplementary question.

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened intently to the minister and I didn't hear any specifics on what he can do, not what he wants to do; nothing specific at all about what he can do and will do. So let me help him out a little bit with two recommendations from the last session's finance committee report that looked at securities issues. The all-party committee suggested that the minister could end the

conflict of interest at the OSC by separating out its investigative functions from its adjudicative functions. The all-party committee recommended that the minister could end the conflict of interest amongst securities dealers by no longer allowing the dealer trade association to investigate and rule on industry complaints.

My question is simple: These were two simple recommendations from almost three years ago. When are we going to see action on them?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I am pleased to report that we have added 16 additional enforcement staff to the OSC's enforcement unit, which will be in place by March 31, 2008, which are part of their staffing plans that were included in budgets that were submitted to you. The Attorney General is also reviewing a report on enhancing the enforcement of capital market offences.

The member opposite knows that there are a number of issues beyond the strict regulatory ones. There's the question of enforcement. There's the question of law enforcement agencies. But again, first and foremost, what is most significant is that this country get a single securities regulator. This government and this Premier will continue to stand up for Ontario investors in trying to ensure that we get that that single securities regulator, which is the most important thing any government can do in terms of securities safety.

ABOLITION OF BRITISH SLAVE TRADE

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: It is my pleasure to rise before you today and ask a question of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Minister, you are well aware that yesterday was the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, as marked annually by the United Nations. Across the world, this milestone was marked in different ways. Here in Ontario, special attention has been paid to commemorating the bicentenary of this act to abolish the British slave trade. Can the minister please share with us what this government has done to help commemorate this turning point in world history?

Hon. Michael Chan: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the residents of Markham–Unionville, I would like to congratulate you on your recent election. I would also like to thank the member from Ottawa Centre for his question and welcome him to the Legislature. I would like to take this moment to extend my profound appreciation to the staff of the ministry that I now lead.

This year, the world is also commemorating the 200th anniversary of the act to abolish the slave trade in the British Empire. Here in Ontario, we have seen the bicentenary as an opportunity to remember, to educate and to commemorate a chapter of our history that was virtually untold. This is why our government is investing \$1 million in community-based projects in this bicentenary year. Our aim is to educate the public about the history of slavery and its abolition in Ontario.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, Minister.

The people of Ottawa–Centre have benefited, like many other communities in the province, from the Roots

of Freedom investments that have been made to honour the act to abolish the British slave trade. In Ottawa alone, investments have been made with the Catholic Immigration Centre to bring adults and youth together to explore mentorship and leadership development opportunities for black youth. Leadership Ottawa, a community organization for black individuals, has invested to support a leadership development program. The Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization has been supported to work in conjunction with the Jaku Konbit Academy to engage francophone and anglophone black youth in developing projects on black Canadian contributions to science and technology. Can the minister tell us in what other areas the bicentenary committee has invested?

Hon. Michael Chan: Based on the committee's recommendations, we awarded Roots of Freedom grants to 33 community organizations. Among the many funded projects are programs to showcase the achievements of female artists and the restoration of pioneer cemeteries where many early pioneers are buried. As well, our government opened the Ontario Bicentenary Exhibit just around the corner at 880 Bay Street. It tells the story of the enslaved and those who fought to end this evil. The exhibit closes December 31, and I encourage all of my colleagues to visit.

The bicentenary year is teaching us lessons from the past. In doing so, it is helping Ontarians to build a stronger foundation for the future.

1510

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. John O'Toole: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, I've listened to the questions here today and, quite honestly, your bobbing and weaving. The evidence today is that it's reported that Ontario has lost over 160,000 jobs since 2005 in the manufacturing sector. This is really about people and their lives, especially at this time of year, and in the local paper—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I caution the member about what he's about to do.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm reading from an article in the local paper. It's not a prop, Mr. Speaker, with your permission.

In the business section of this week's paper in Durham is the headline, "Layoffs—Actual and Perceived—Wreak Havoc on Lives." This is about a family that's lost 20 years' experience and now are looking for a job. If you look at the response that you've given today as well as recently—one of the terms you've used is "a bit of contraction." Minister, could you tell this House today what plan you have for any certainty in the manufacturing sector in the economy of Ontario?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We certainly concur that the issue in the manufacturing sector is about families and families that suffer. That's why this government has worked so actively and aggressively over the last two years with the manufacturing sector, with the forestry

sector. The Premier referenced earlier a \$500-million investment, leveraging \$7 billion in new investment, that benefited, I might point out, the GM plant in Oshawa, the Ford and Chrysler plants in Windsor, Chrysler in Brampton, and Toyota.

We acknowledge there's a lot more to do, and we intend to do that. We have already begun the process. As long as one person, one family, needs a job, this government will not rest. As long as one sector is suffering, there remains more to be done. We look forward to the day when manufacturing does as well as computers are doing in Ontario. We look forward—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. John O'Toole: Even the leading economists in this province—RBC and CIBC—say that Ontario will be dead last in Canada with respect to the state of its economy.

In fact, if I look locally again, the headline in another paper says, "Action Centre Opens for Lear Layoffs." Minister, you should know that there are over 1,200 jobs at General Motors, 350 jobs at Lear Siegler, and the additions go on and on with the multiplier effect that we all know. All the answers I've heard today are to blame someone else, and I've heard no substantive plan that you have, not only on policies that you as the Minister of Finance can take, but no plan for Ontario's manufacturing sector. In fact, the prognostications here indicate that Ontario's going to be dead last. Minister, I ask again if you will give us a real plan for real jobs for the people and families of Ontario.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Again, as long as one family is suffering from a job loss, this government will continue to work for them and with them, just like we did with the OASIS fund, which that member voted against; just like when we moved to accelerate the capital tax reduction, which that member voted against. When we did the \$540-million business education tax, which will help manufacturers, which will help the logging industry, that member voted against it.

I would remind the member that that very organization, Lear—that the support service that's in place has support from the provincial government to help those workers and their families get through this difficult situation. Those workers, those families, can count on this Premier, this government. We only wish they could count on you and your friends in Ottawa.

FIRE IN HAMILTON

Ms. Andrea Horwath: To the Premier: Last July, a fire at the Biedermann Packaging plant in Hamilton sent pesticides into sewers, killing thousands of fish in Spencer Creek. Will the Premier immediately announce a full public inquiry into this environmental and health disaster in Hamilton?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I thank the member for the question. As she well knows, officials of the Ministry of the Environment have worked very, very closely over the last six months, ever since this situation started, in order to deal with the situation. You also noted that under our new proposed toxic reduction law, which we talked about during the campaign, we will include a right-to-know element that isn't currently there.

We continue to follow up with the city of Hamilton to do whatever is necessary to deal with the situation. We've certainly made the individuals and the public at large in Hamilton aware of the circumstances there. We look forward to working with the member, as well, to deal with the situation as expeditiously as possible.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Back to the Premier, the reality is that the city of Hamilton has asked twice for this public inquiry and nothing has been heard at all in regard to this particular disaster. Over 900,000 litres of water saturated with the weed killer diazinon escaped into Spencer Creek and Cootes Paradise, killing thousands of fish, and a raging fire burned before the ministry's air sampling even began.

The city of Hamilton has called for a full public inquiry; I've sent a couple of letters as well. The McGuinty Liberals are simply sitting on their hands in this matter. Hamilton and its residents want to know, will the Premier announce a full public inquiry into the Biedermann fire today?

Hon. John Gerretsen: As the member well knows, all the stakeholders that are involved in this, all the various parties, have been working extremely actively to come up with a restoration plan and to take the appropriate steps that are necessary to deal with the effects that it has had on Spencer Creek. That includes the city of Hamilton, the Royal Botanical Gardens, the Hamilton Conservation Authority, the Ministry of Natural Resources, and the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, as well as the company involved. We're working together; we're dealing with the situation. The member well knows that the ministry is involved on a day-to-day basis, and we look forward to the member's involvement in this as well to deal with the situation as soon as possible.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Helena Jaczek: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. As a physician, I know that our government has accomplished a great deal for children with autism. Our government has tripled funding and has almost tripled the number of kids receiving IBI. I also know that we've been taking a comprehensive approach to ensure kids with autism get the supports they need.

As I canvassed my riding, I heard from a lot of people wanting to know more about our government's plan for children with autism. I know that in my region there have been special summer camp supports for kids with autism. Can the minister share with this House the details about

this program and the new supports provided by our government this summer?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'd like to thank my brand new colleague from Oak Ridges–Markham for her question and welcome her to the Legislature. I know she's going to bring tremendous expertise to this job, and we look forward to what I'm sure will be her enormous contribution.

She is right, we have made tremendous progress on the issue of autism. Since our election in 2003, we've removed the age six cut-off that the previous government had imposed on IBI therapy, we've tripled funding and we've almost tripled the number of kids with autism receiving IBI. Since the House rose for the summer, we've continued to improve services for children with autism and their families. I welcome the opportunity to share with you some of this progress.

This past summer, we launched a new program to send kids with autism to summer camp. Eight hundred kids were able to go to camp thanks to this program, 500 went to regular camps with support and 300 went to special autism camps.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: As a former board member of Giant Steps Toronto, a school for children with autistic spectrum disorders, I know first-hand the toll the diagnosis takes on families. Can the minister tell us what this government has done to help families cope with this stress?

1520

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thanks again for your question. Parents of children with autism face enormous emotional and physical challenges every single day. As you mentioned in your first question, we are taking a comprehensive approach to autism in this province, and that includes not only improving services for kids but also for their families.

I'm pleased to tell this House that this summer we also announced that we're providing relief to families in the form of respite services, so they can have a little bit of a break. These services will help 3,000 families. It means families will get a temporary break while their children are in the care of experienced autism providers.

I want to take this opportunity to say to parents of children with disabilities of all types how much we value the work they do. We value their commitment to their children and we will work to help them in this very important challenge they face.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the Premier. Premier, since 2005, you have presided over the loss of some 153,500 high-paying manufacturing jobs in Ontario. My question for you is simple: Why have you waited until now, almost 2008, to appoint your parliamentary assistant to study the loss of manufacturing jobs?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I've asked Mr. Ramsay to give all of us a hand to better understand. As we now

prepare to go even beyond our platform and look for new supports for the manufacturing sector in particular, and the forestry and farming sectors as well—and given that the ground is shifting under our feet all the time—I thought it would be appropriate to ask Mr. Ramsay, a man of considerable ability, to come up with a report in fairly short order, giving me his best advice as to what we can do.

Of course, this will not prevent from us moving ahead on the number of fronts that we've already started, including—and we're particularly enthusiastic about—our next generations job fund. It's a \$1.15-billion fund. It eclipses any similar fund anywhere else in North America. We're sending a powerful signal to the world at large: If you want to come and invest in North America, Ontario is the place you have to come.

Mr. Norm Miller: Under your watch you've also increased corporate taxes by 27%, and that's not helping too much.

Parry Sound–Muskoka has been hard hit by the loss of manufacturing jobs. Recently, the Dura Automotive plant in Bracebridge, which at one time employed 500 people, closed. Cequent Towing Products in Huntsville announced this month, December, that they're closing their plant and moving to the States. That's a loss of another 200 good jobs. Premier, what are you going to do to replace these lost jobs in Parry Sound–Muskoka?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: Speaker, congratulations on your appointment.

To the member from Muskoka: I'd like to remind him that the riding he comes from is in fact full of manufacturers that have been watching the benefit of this government's auto investment strategy and advanced manufacturing investment strategy.

What's key for this government is that we have a partner in the federal government to assist us in coming to the aid of the manufacturing sector, which has never seen this number of variables coming together at the same time: like a very high dollar, like energy prices. These are issues that we have been deliberately identifying for the federal government so it can come to the assistance of the most significant sector in Ontario. I will remind the people of Muskoka that when this government has come forward with programs to help the sector, their own MPP voted against those measures.

RETAIL SALES TAX

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Revenue. Madam Minister, Ontario's ethnic publications—such as *Thôi Báo*, *Latin Life News*, *Iran Javan* and many others—are being squeezed for PST payments because your government, the McGuinty government, says they are magazines and must pay the PST on printing and supply costs. I ask the minister today to stop punishing our ethnic papers, which are sources of essential information for millions of Ontarians. Will the minister

stop charging Ontario's ethnic newspapers PST for their supplies, so they can continue to serve their communities?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'd like to thank the member for Beaches–East York for his question today. This is an issue that we are aware of. The representatives of the Ministry of Finance have met with the Ontario Community Newspapers Association and the National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada on this very topic. One of the difficulties we have in defining newspapers is to distinguish them from taxable magazines. Magazines are bound publications typically published less frequently than weeklies, and so we have a problem in distinguishing those. It's a problem of determining what, exactly, is a newspaper. We're working with the community and we'll continue to have those discussions.

Mr. Michael Prue: Madam Minister, the former finance minister already said that he would look into this; now you're saying you're going to look into it. But *Thoi Bao*, a Vietnamese publication whose editor is in the audience here today, has a bill from your ministry for almost \$1 million. The ministry says it needs to print at least five times a week and to stop using staples; with this bill, they will be lucky to print at all. Will the minister end this practice and allow our ethnic media to flourish and put them on the same level as the *Toronto Star* and every other newspaper?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: As I said, and perhaps you didn't hear me, member from Beaches–East York, we are in discussions with a variety of organizations that represent ethnic newspapers across the province. We will continue to have these discussions and try to resolve this issue.

PATHWAYS TO EDUCATION

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I would also like to congratulate you on assuming your new role in this assembly.

My question is for the Minister of Education. This government believes that the best way to build a stronger Ontario is through investing in our people, and of course, there's no better sign of this than investing in our children. Last month, this government announced an expansion of the very successful Pathways to Education program. The investment of \$19 million over the next four years, along with a \$10-million contribution from the United Way, will allow this program to expand in four communities across the province: Lawrence Heights in Rexdale in my own riding in Toronto and neighbourhoods in Kitchener and Ottawa.

As a result of this expansion of the Pathways to Education program, I believe that we are giving the children of Ontario a better chance at a brighter future. Minister Wynne, I would ask if you might specifically indicate to us what this means for the children of Ontario.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Congratulations, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you to my colleague for the question, and I am very happy to be in this House to respond. We need every one of our students performing at their highest potential. The Pathways program has demonstrated in Regent Park that they can cut dropout rates, increase graduation rates, wrap services around kids so that they not only graduate from high school but go on to post-secondary. So this investment will help more students. It will directly help students graduate from high school and move on to university and college.

This investment in Pathways is another part of our program to reach our target of having 85% of students graduate from high school. We believe that the best way to build a stronger Ontario is to have every one of our young citizens operating at their highest potential. That's what this investment is about.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: As you'll know, the needs of children in one community can often differ greatly from the needs in other communities. From my own experiences on the ground with the Pathways to Education program, I can say that this program is not the implementation of a one-size-fits-all mentality to what is, of course, a very complex and multi-faceted challenge.

What I would ask is, can you, Minister, tell us what the expansion of the Pathways to Education program means specifically to the people and the children in my own riding, in Rexdale in the great riding of Etobicoke North?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member from Etobicoke North is absolutely correct. We can't say exactly what the program will look like, but what we do know is that the students in Rexdale will now have access to things like tutoring in five core subjects four nights a week. They'll have group mentoring for grades 9 and 10 and specialty career mentoring in grades 10, 11 and 12. There will be immediate financial supports, such as free bus tickets, which is often a barrier to kids getting the services they need, and then \$1,000 every year in the program to a total of \$4,000 when the students graduate from high school. There will be student-parent support workshops to help the families grapple with the kinds of supports that kids need in order to make it through high school.

So, although we don't know exactly what the form of the program will be, we know that those services will be available to the kids in Rexdale.

1530

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Premier. Premier, Ontario has one of the worst regimes for new business investment in North America, with one of the highest levels of corporate taxation. In fact, according to the C. D. Howe Institute, Ontario has the least competitive business tax structure in all of Canada.

Premier, will the Ontario government follow the federal government's lead—

Interjections.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think it's important to understand something about the level of corporate income taxes in the province of Ontario. The federal government at present is charging a corporate income tax rate of 22%. In five years' time, they're going to reduce it to 15%. The general manufacturing rate today in Ontario is 14%. The manufacturing rate is 12%. What that means is that in five years' time, the federal government still won't have a corporate income tax rate that is as low as it is at present in the province of Ontario. We're leading once again.

Where we could use the support of the federal government is with additional support for our manufacturers, our farmers and our forestry sector, and I'd ask the member opposite to lend her support to those efforts.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Again my question is to the Premier. When is this government going to develop a sense of urgency about the desperate situation we have here, stop quoting meaningless statistics and tell us when you're going to do something to make the business climate more amenable to new investment in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Some of the members today have raised the issue, which I think is a really important perspective to have on this: Fundamentally, this is about families, it's about jobs and it's about the sense of pride that parents have when they come home, look their kids in the eye and know that they're contributing and making it on their own.

There are some workers who are caught up in what's happening in our economy and who are losing their jobs, and my concern is this on behalf of those workers: The average Ontario worker is getting \$4,000 less by way of employment insurance than Canadians living in other provinces. What I'm asking the member opposite and the opposition parties to do is to join us in the overture that we're making to the federal government to have them ensure that our unemployed workers are qualified for the same types of benefits as unemployed workers are in the rest of the country. It's time to stand up for Ontario's unemployed workers.

PETITIONS

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition from Jolley's Dairy Bar and Video in Flesherton, and it's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Grey Bruce Health Services, Markdale hospital is the only health care facility between Owen Sound and Orangeville on the Highway 10 corridor;

"Whereas the community of Markdale has been promised a new state-of-the-art hospital in Markdale;

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

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announce as soon as possible its intended construction

date for the new Markdale hospital and ensure that the care needs of the patients and families of our community are met in a timely manner."

I've also signed this.

CHILD CUSTODY

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I have a petition, signed by many constituents, to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We would like the government of Ontario to change the legislation regarding the visitation rights of grandparents. Under any family circumstances, grandparents should have visitation rights to their grandchildren unless the grandparents are abusive."

I've affixed my name to this petition.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which reads as follows:

"Whereas many vehicles on Highway 12 are continuing to travel at speeds exceeding the speed limit through the village of Greenbank; and

"Whereas residents in the community are deeply concerned over the safety of pedestrians along this provincial highway in Greenbank because of the high speeds and volume of traffic;

"Therefore we the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and request that the Ministry of Transportation proceed immediately with the following safety improvements:

"—Repainting the crosswalk;

"—A new overhead flashing light crosswalk sign;

"—The installation of flashing lights at the entrance and exit to the village of Greenbank to the north and south alerting drivers to reduce speed;" and, along with the municipality of Scugog,"

"Consideration for this area to be designated a community safety zone."

I'm pleased to present this on behalf of Kim Fewer and many other constituents in the riding of Durham from the community of Greenbank, and present this to page Olivia.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just would like to remind the members that—I know this is the first day back and there are conversations that are taking place, but those conversations could be best had outside the chamber. I encourage the discussion, but we need to keep the flow of the chamber moving.

Further petitions? The member for Simcoe North.

MACULAR DEGENERATION

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of blindness in the elderly and is

present in some form in 25% to 33% of seniors over the age of 75. AMD has two forms: the more common 'dry' type and the 'wet' type. Although the wet type occurs in only 15% of AMD patients, these patients account for 90% of the legal blindness that occurs with AMD. The wet type is further subdivided into classic and occult subtypes, based on the appearance of the AMD on special testing. Photodynamic therapy, a treatment where abnormal blood vessels are closed with a laser-activated chemical, has been shown to slow the progression of vision loss in both subtypes of wet AMD;

"Whereas OHIP has not extended coverage for photodynamic therapy to the occult subtype of wet AMD, despite there being substantial clinical evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of this treatment in patients with either form of wet AMD. Untreated, these patients can expect a progression in their visual loss, with central blindness as the end result;

"Whereas affected patients are in a position where a proven treatment is available to help preserve their vision, but this treatment can only be accessed at their own personal expense. Treatment costs are between \$12,500 and \$18,000 over an 18-month period. Many patients resign themselves to a continued worsening of their vision, as for them the treatment is financially unattainable. The resultant blindness in these patients manifests itself as costs to society in other forms, such as an increased need for home care, missed time from work for family members providing care, and an increased rate of injuries such as hip fractures that can be directly attributable to their poor vision.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fund the treatment of the occult subtype of macular degeneration with photodynamic therapy for all patients awaiting this service."

I'm pleased to sign my name to this and give it to Mara to take to the Clerk.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, I add my congratulations on surviving your first question period and for doing a good job.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the parents of St. Paul's elementary school in Alliston have raised many issues regarding the security, cleanliness and state of repair of their school; and

"Whereas a 2003 condition assessment completed by the Ontario government identified the need for \$1.8 million in repairs to St. Paul's elementary school; and

"Whereas the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board has approached the Ministry of Education with the intention of having the school deemed prohibitive to repair as they believe the school requires \$2.28 million in repairs, or 84% of the school replacement cost; and

"Whereas there are ongoing concerns with air quality, heating and ventilation, electrical, plumbing, lack of air

conditioning and the overall structure of the building, including cracks from floor to ceiling, to name a few;

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

"That the Minister of Education immediately deem St. Paul's elementary school prohibitive to repair, secure immediate funding and begin construction of a new facility so that the children of St. Paul's can be educated in a facility that is secure and offers them the respect and dignity that they deserve."

As I've said in this House before, my mother taught at this school for over 33 years and I attended this school from kindergarten to grade 8. During the election this government made an announcement, but we haven't seen any action yet. So I'll give that to the page Diem to give to the table.

1540

GO TRANSIT TUNNEL

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: This is to the Parliament of Ontario, the minister of infrastructure services and the Minister of Transportation.

"Whereas GO Transit is presently planning 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;

"Whereas TTC is presently planning a TTC right-of-way along all of St. Clair Avenue West, including the bottleneck caused by this dilapidated St. Clair Avenue-Old Weston Road bridge;

"Whereas this bridge"—which is actually an underpass—"will be: (1) too narrow for the planned TTC right-of-way, since it will leave only one lane for traffic; (2) it is not safe for pedestrians (it's about 50 metres long). It's dark and slopes on both east and west sides, creating high banks for 300 metres; and (3) it creates a divide, a no man's land, between Old Weston Road and Keele Street. (This was acceptable when the area consisted entirely of slaughterhouses, but now the area has 900 new homes);

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that GO Transit extend the tunnel beyond St. Clair Avenue West so that trains will pass under St. Clair Avenue West, thus eliminating this eyesore of a bridge with its high banks and blank walls. Instead it will create a dynamic, revitalized community enhanced by a beautiful continuous cityscape with easy traffic flow."

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

STRANDHERD-ARMSTRONG BRIDGE

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: This is a very important issue to my constituents.

"Whereas the close-knit communities of Barrhaven, Riverside South and Manotick combined have a population of well over 50,000 people;

"Whereas the only link between Barrhaven and Riverside South across the Rideau River is a lengthy

commute either across the congested Hunt Club bridge or through the village of Manotick, which cannot sustain the traffic;

“Whereas the city of Ottawa has identified the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge as a viable alternative to the traffic congestion created at the Hunt Club bridge and on Bridge Street in Manotick;

“Whereas the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge is much more environmentally sustainable as an option for south Ottawa commuters across the Rideau River than either the commute across Manotick or the Hunt Club bridge;

“Whereas the city of Ottawa has identified the cost of the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge, including all ramps, road work, road widening and bridge work, at \$105 million;

“Whereas the city of Ottawa has requested that a third of this funding, approximately \$35 million, be provided by the Ontario Liberal government and further, that one-third has already been committed by the federal government;

“Whereas the previous Liberal MPP for the community of Riverside South did not act on the need for this bridge, and the current Liberal Premier of Ontario has refused to enter into negotiations with the city of Ottawa over the cost-sharing of the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge;

“The residents of Barrhaven, Riverside South and Manotick call on Dalton McGuinty to build the bridge now.”

I affix my signature with that of our federal member, Pierre Poliev, and submit this to the Legislature.

IDENTITY THEFT

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Chair recognizes the member from Davenport.

Interjections.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I thought we had as much right as the opposition to read petitions. I've got no idea what this obfuscation is over there.

This is a petition to the Parliament of Ontario and the Minister of Government Services, and I might add, I've got the agreement with our member of Parliament right here to read this petition. It reads:

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

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

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

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

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

“We, the undersigned, demand that Bill 38, which passed the second reading unanimously in” this “Legislature ..., be brought before committee and that the

following issues be included for consideration and debate:

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

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

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

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

Certainly I'm delighted to sign this petition.

HIGHWAY 35

Ms. Laurie Scott: Congratulations on your being elected as Speaker of the Legislature.

“Highway 35 Four-Laning

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has been planning the expansion of Highway 35, and that expansion has been put on hold by the McGuinty government; and

“Whereas Highway 35 provides an important economic link in the overall transportation system—carrying commuter, commercial and high tourist volumes to and from the Kawartha Lakes area and Haliburton; and

“Whereas the final round of public consultation has just been rescheduled;

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

“That the Liberal government move swiftly to complete the four-laning of Highway 35 after the completion of the final public consultation.”

I'm going to hand it to page Simon.

HEALTH CARD RENEWAL CLINIC

Mr. Tim Hudak: Again, Mr. Speaker, congratulations upon your new position in the assembly.

I'm very pleased to read in a petition about bringing health card renewal services closer to Glanbrook residents. It reads as follows:

To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas seniors, the disabled, families with young children and other Mount Hope and Binbrook residents are forced to drive to downtown Hamilton to renew their Ontario health cards; and

“Whereas the province of Ontario mandates that health cards be renewed on a regular basis and that an Ontario health card must be presented to receive OHIP health services; and

"Whereas the Dalton McGuinty government has increased taxes and fees on local residents but has not improved services;

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

"To work with the Ontario Ministry of Health to bring a mobile health card renewal clinic to the Mount Hope and Binbrook area so that residents can more readily renew their Ontario health cards without the drive to downtown Hamilton."

Beneath the signatures of Sue and Robert Allan, I affix mine in support.

REFUNDABLE CONTAINERS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Chair recognizes the member from Davenport.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much, and I want you to know that I have the authority from our whip to read this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the Minister of the Environment:

"Whereas we find lots of pop cans and beer bottles in our parks plus children's playgrounds;

"Whereas it is therefore unsafe for our children to play in these parks and playgrounds;

"Whereas many of these bottles and cans are broken and mangled, therefore causing harm and danger to our children;

"Whereas Ontarians are dumping about a billion aluminium cans worth \$27 million into landfill every year instead of recycling them;

"Whereas the undersigned want to see legislation passed to have deposits paid on cans and bottles, which would be returnable and therefore not found littering our parks and streets;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, strongly urge and demand that the Ontario government institute a collection program that will include all pop drinks, Tetra Pak juices and can containers to be refundable in order to reduce littering and protect our environment."

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

MACULAR DEGENERATION

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: This is again on macular degeneration.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of blindness in the elderly and is present in some form in 25% to 33% of seniors over the age of 75. AMD has two forms: the more common 'dry' type and the 'wet' type. Although the wet type occurs in only 15% of AMD patients, these patients account for 90% of the legal blindness that occurs with AMD. The wet type is further subdivided into classic and occult subtypes, based on the appearance of the AMD on special testing. Photodynamic therapy, a treatment where

abnormal blood vessels are closed with a laser-activated chemical, has been shown to slow the progression of vision loss in both subtypes of wet AMD;

"Whereas OHIP has not extended coverage for photodynamic therapy to the occult subtype of wet AMD, despite there being substantial clinical evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of this treatment in patients with either form of wet AMD. Untreated, these patients can expect a progression in their visual loss, with central blindness as the end result;

"Whereas affected patients are in a position where a proven treatment is available to help preserve their vision, but this treatment can only be accessed at their own personal expense. Treatment costs are between \$12,500 and \$18,000 over an 18-month period. Many patients resign themselves to a continued worsening of their vision, as for them the treatment is financially unattainable. The resultant blindness in these patients manifests itself as costs to society in other forms, such as an increased need for home care, missed time from work for family members providing care, and an increased rate of injuries such as hip fractures that can be directly attributable to their poor vision.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fund the treatment of the occult subtype of macular degeneration with photodynamic therapy for all patients awaiting this service."

I'm pleased to sign my name to this petition.

1550

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Consideration of the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: I move, seconded by Mr. Ramsay, that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Pendergast moves, seconded by Mr. Ramsay, that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

"To the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session."

The Speaker recognizes the member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations.

I share my time with the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane.

It is with honour and humility that I accept this opportunity to move the speech from the throne. Thank you. It is with the same honour and humility that I represent the interests of the constituents of Kitchener–Conestoga under the leadership of this Premier.

Kitchener–Conestoga is a new riding. We are a diverse riding. We are rural, we are towns, we are cities. We are hard-working. We are farmers and Mennonites. We are business owners and health care professionals. We are a unique community with a real sense of who we are and how we can make this work for us. I have lived in the community all of my life and I know who we are.

As a cashier at the local Dutch Boy grocery store, I worked my way through local university and graduate school to be a teacher. I began to look out the classroom door to see how I could help in the rest of the school. As an administrator, I looked out the door to see how I could help in the rest of the province. On provincial committees, I looked out the door to see how I could work beyond education and partner with community service agencies and with ministries.

There are many stories that were instrumental in keeping me on the path that brought me here today. One in particular involves my uncle the late Father Russell Pendergast, a Basilian priest and dean of economics at the University of Alberta, who gave me some advice when I was 18 and looking for direction in life. He told me, “Take all the time you need to decide, but do your thinking on a university campus.” That inspired me to complete both my master’s in English literature and my master’s of education.

So it is with pride that I stand here before you today, the product of generations of hard work and struggle. As my Irish grandparents had a dream of a better life, they left their homes and travelled to Canada to settle in Ontario. Their dreams live on in me and in my children. It is a dream of greatness, a dream of the potential of the province of Ontario. It is a dream that continues to insist on small miracles: that our children are fed and safe from harm, that our children are educated and successful at school, that we enjoy the best health care system possible, that we serve the needs of our seniors, that we maintain an environment that protects clean water and air for future generations, and that families can grow and prosper together in Ontario.

I am a mother of three boys, a wife, a daughter, a sister and a cousin. I represent hard-working Ontarians who have seen the changes that have happened in our communities, and I am here to participate in that hard work. I’m here to continue to move forward together to make a difference for the people of Kitchener–Conestoga and for all Ontarians. I am here because I have seen that

these changes are possible and that they work to improve our lives.

I stand before you today because of the advancements of this government under the leadership of Premier Dalton McGuinty. I have seen first-hand, on the front lines, the advancements made by this government in the past four years, and that is what has inspired me to be here today.

I taught English at the high school level for 10 years, and I have been a high school vice-principal for 10 years. I know education. I know what our youth have been through. I know the power that education has to change a life and to emancipate our youth from poverty. To quote John Kennedy: “Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone.”

For 20 years I have been helping youth in Ontario who are at risk—at risk in the struggle against illiteracy and mental health issues; at risk in the struggle against crime and drugs; at risk in the struggle against lack of housing and family problems. But in the past four years in our schools and our communities, we have seen remarkable changes and improvements under the leadership of this government. Our test scores and our graduation rates are up. We have student success programs in place to support children in every way. We have child and youth workers and attendance counsellors. Pathways to Education is providing the four pillars of support that our youth so desperately need. We have anti-bullying programs in every school in a preventive manner, and we are taking a restorative approach to justice. Parents are engaged in their child’s learning and participating in after-school homework help. We are moving forward on full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds, and our grade 4 students are world-class.

I’d like to give you an example that may help illustrate the impact this government is having on lives in Ontario. I’ve heard many stories over the years as a teacher and vice-principal, but one that I heard recently sticks with me. It reminds me of a Dickens character, like Oliver Twist or Sydney Carton from *A Tale Of Two Cities*. But this is a true story, so let’s say that this is a story about Sydney Carton. It’s an emotional story, but one thing that I have learned on the front lines is that it’s okay to care that much. Because even if it is not my own child, we have the same responsibility for the success of every child. The stakes are too high not to care that much.

Sydney moved on to high school as an at-risk student. Prior to arrival, each at-risk student received a case conference to meet the needs of the incoming student. It was common knowledge that Sydney was—and I’ll never forget these words—kept in the basement and treated like a dog. He was let out only to go to school and then returned promptly to the basement. He was gentle, kind and naive, and, given his new surroundings in a large secondary school, was more at risk than he had ever been, both academically and socially.

Thanks to the advancements over the past four years of this government, Sydney has access to a child and youth worker and an attendance counsellor. He will continue to have a vice-principal to follow his care. He is receiving credit rescue and credit recovery support. He now has bus tickets to get to and from school and to his probation meetings, and an advocate to stand on his behalf, thanks to Pathways to Education. As I stand before you today, I tell you that Sydney will graduate from high school and move on to post-secondary training and education. As sure as the sun rises, as this government continues on the path we are on, that will happen. This is a far, far better thing we do than we have ever done: *e pluribus unum*; the power of one, one out of many. One caring adult engaged in the life of a child can make a momentous difference. Small things can make a difference. Imagine the power of the combined individual strengths in this chamber as a united front. If we work together and build together, imagine what we can achieve together.

1600

Dr. Emily Werner conducted a remarkable survey in the 1950s, where she studied 50 youth over the course of 30 years. They were at risk and not expected to succeed. After 30 years, four out of five of those individuals had been successful. So when she asked them how they defied the odds, how against all odds they had become contributing members of society, every one of them had the same answer: one caring adult. One caring adult somewhere along the way in their formative years had made contact and supported them and allowed them to believe they mattered and that they could succeed.

Let me ask you a question: Do you believe that the way I treat you can affect your outcome? Michael Feiner conducted a study of 25 youth. He told the students they were all exceptional. They were treated as such; teachers and staff treated them as if they were exceptional. At the end of the term, all 25 students performed at an A or a level four. That was the expectation. What Michael didn't tell them was that they were randomly selected. They were not a group of exceptional students but a group of students who had performed as exceptional because that was the expectation, which reflects without a doubt that, yes, the way I treat you can affect your outcome. I ask each of you to think back to a time in your early years when an adult made a difference in your life, to your memory of that one caring adult. For most of us, what we find is that that adult is in a school setting: a teacher, a principal, a parent helper, a librarian or a bus driver.

This is exactly why we need to focus our efforts on supporting our youth through their formative years, through their education experience, to become contributing members of society; support from cradle to grave. Our youth are competing in a Web-enabled global world. We need to provide for them the tools to compete in a world of research and innovation, in a knowledge-based economy. In this room alone we have many talents and skill sets. I am reminded of the story of Paul Revere,

as conveyed by Malcolm Gladwell. Paul Revere rode out that night, north and west of Boston, to warn that the British were coming, but he was not the only one. Another man rode out that night—same message and distance, directly west of Boston. This man, William Dawes, is virtually unknown because he didn't have what Gladwell refers to as "a rare set of social gifts." Here in this chamber, in every seat, sits that rare set of social gifts with the potential to mobilize this province on so many fronts. If one of us can change the life of a child, imagine the effect we can have when we work together. Roosevelt outlined our task when he said, "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future."

An education is the foundation of a successful society. We continue to work toward a better-educated, more highly skilled Ontario. We can continue to work together to tackle the greatest threat to our environment, climate change, and turn it into an opportunity to create the next generation of green technology and the good jobs that will come with it. We can continue to build on the Ontario child benefit with a new dental program to help those who need it most, which includes a new cabinet committee to focus on reducing poverty in Ontario and developing a poverty reduction strategy, as outlined in the speech from the throne.

We must continue to shift our philosophy of caring from cleanup to prevention, from illiteracy to learning. We must form these safety nets at the top of the hill before people fall off the cliff into struggles. I'm reminded of Holden Caulfield in *The Catcher in the Rye*. Holden only wanted one thing, and that was to be the catcher in the rye to stop all the little children from falling off the edge of the cliff. Our leaders are the catchers in the rye.

The initiatives of this government over the past four years have prevented many Ontarians from poverty, illiteracy and health care concerns. Moving forward together as a government, let us continue to serve the dreams of the people of Ontario. It is with this inspiration and determination that I stand here today with the belief that there are even better days ahead, the belief that we can provide the education and training we need for a stronger, smarter, healthier and greener Ontario.

We can make a better home for our families because at the end of the day, when we get home, they are the only ones there waiting for us. We can make a difference as we work together to build our children for the future. We care enough to carry the dreams of our ancestors into the future of our children. It is with this experience and passionate belief in Ontario and this government that I move we accept the speech from the throne.

Mr. David Ramsay: The first thing I'd like to do is congratulate my new colleague on her maiden speech, the member for Kitchener-Conestoga, a beautiful part of the world. I know you'll do a great job, and you've started that off today with a most fabulous maiden speech. I thank you very much. It's very nice for your family to

share in that, and we welcome you here. You've got a politician in the family now.

I was going to congratulate the Speaker on his election. Mr. Speaker of right now, you could pass that on to him, if you will. That would be great.

I'd also like to congratulate all the members here today on their election, whether they were re-elected—but especially the new members. We've got an incredible crop of new members here, which I think bodes well for the democratic process in this province. We're renewing in this place and it's wonderful, members of all sides.

I say to people who ask me for advice whether they should run or not that it's one of the greatest responsibilities you could have in a democracy, to get involved politically, whether that means going door to door on behalf of a candidate or setting up signs or working in a committee room or campaign headquarters. It's all very, very important. But to those of you—and those who didn't make it here today—who put your name up and represent your political party or run as an independent, that's huge, and democracy needs you. Thank you very much to everybody who has done that, because it's very important. As Winston Churchill said, it's not the most perfect of systems but the best that we have. It really does work.

When kids and classes are here—and you'll see them come later on in the year; we'll have classrooms here. Sometimes we get criticized for some of the shenanigans that happen here, but that's how we, in an organized way, let off a little steam. You look at the news every night and you see how some other jurisdictions in the world settle disputes. We're very, very blessed to have such a mature British parliamentary system in the greatest province in the best country in the world.

1610

This is the 39th Parliament, and I would say to the new people as well as the veterans, we're here because we're activists. We're not here because we get up in the morning and say, "Yes, this is a great place." We say that it's the greatest province in the best country in the world, but you know what? We can make it better. We on this side and the people on that side all have ideas about how they can make it better.

I think the leader of the official opposition today said it very well at the beginning of his remarks, that while we have differences of opinions, we're all here for the same principle: We all want to improve Ontario. The only differences we have here are that we might have various perspectives on that and how we go about it. But we all want the best for our families and for our children. And when we're talking about issues today such as the environment, we're now thinking of our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren, because we have big responsibilities on our shoulders today.

The previous speaker, from Kitchener-Conestoga, talked about her involvement in education. I think that's very appropriate, that we had an educator lead off the speech today, because if you look back at the first term of

the McGuinty government, Premier McGuinty wanted to be known—his main emphasis was on education.

When I talk to people in my riding about that, sometimes people are taken aback, especially if you have an older audience: "Are you telling me that education is actually your first priority?" I said, "Yes, that has been the first priority of this government." A lot of people would think, "Well, isn't it health?" Health is extremely important and it's a very close number two. But they ask, "Well, why is it education?" The reason is that education is an investment in our future, and that's why Premier McGuinty places it number one. He's investing in our children, but by doing that he's investing in our economy.

As the Premier always says, "There are people around the world that just want to eat our lunch." There are people in countries with populations millions larger than our jurisdiction of 12.5 million that quite frankly are willing to work 30 hours a day, if you will, to defeat us economically. So the only way, with 12.5 million people here, that we're going to survive and prosper and to develop the revenues we need for the great programs that we have in this province, is to work smarter. And the only way to do that is to invest in our people.

So we start at the very youngest of age. We've seen that with the smaller classroom sizes in the last term. Now we're looking at extending the school term into the lower grades, so that four and five year olds can have full-day school—again, no better investment could we make, not only in our children but in the future of the economy of this province. It's a great initiative and we all look forward to contributing to and being part of that.

I'd like to touch upon a few things that are of interest to me personally, not only to the region that I come from but with the new assignment that I was tasked with by the Premier as of last week. I'm no stranger to this House because this is my seventh term. I come from northern Ontario, but I grew up in the south originally; I went up north in 1972. I was first elected in 1985, and I continue to enjoy this job and the responsibility and the privilege of representing the people of Timiskaming-Cochrane.

We have particular challenges in northern Ontario that we don't have here, though I must say—relating to the task that I now have—we also have some very tough economic challenges in southern Ontario with its manufacturing base. I will talk about that a little bit later.

One of the best things we did as a Liberal government—I'm going to go back now to the Peterson government—was to establish the northern Ontario heritage fund. The idea of that fund was to establish a fund of money that would help compensate for the resources that were extracted from the ground and taken to other jurisdictions. We did that. Why I want to mention that now, besides it being a very successful program, is that the McGuinty government has committed—and reiterated in the throne speech as of last week—to increase the amount of that money, from \$60 million a year to \$100 million a year. I look forward to working with the new Minister of Northern Development and Mines and

discussing at the northern caucus meeting tomorrow morning and in other opportunities how we might engage northerners about how that money could be best invested in northern Ontario.

I'll tell you some of my ideas right now. While our number one criteria in northern Ontario, like it is becoming right here now, is making sure we have job retention and job creation, we have to also look at our society, that we round out the opportunities for people's lifestyle in their various communities. I think it's a wonderful opportunity to take a look at cultural and recreational investments in our communities too, so that we can help retain the young people in our communities so that we can better our communities to make them more liveable, more enjoyable and attractive to live in. This is something I want to certainly engage in with the minister.

Another area that's a really great success story in northern Ontario, as it is in the south, is that agriculture is probably the most growing and sustainable part of our economy in northern Ontario. It's going to become more and more important right across this province as we enter into a bioeconomy. We're now seeing great pressures placed on our economy because of the high price of crude oil. Of course, this is not only just used as an energy resource, but many of our materials are produced from crude oil. When crude was at \$12, \$20, \$22 and \$25—and that was only a few years back—we just took this resource for granted and, in fact, we squandered it.

We understand now that we're putting up carbon that was deposited way below the earth's crust in the dinosaur time, and we know we need to find alternatives to that. We know we're going to run out of that in 50 years, but the high prices now and the concern for climate change are driving an agenda to start to move much more quickly on developing a bioeconomy. This is going to bode very well for jurisdictions like Ontario, which has a tremendous landscape where we can grow materials. Northern Ontario itself is as big as British Columbia. Ontario is the second-largest geographic jurisdiction in this country, and most of it is arable land. In Ontario what's great is that we have a confluence of agricultural and forestry biomass. So we have great resources today that we can start to utilize to create the new economy, to create the new energy sources and the new materials.

An example of that is that soon we will be making interior door car panels in Ontario that are 50% soybean oil plastic and 50% wood waste. That's the type of technology that's developed in Ontario. We can produce all those raw materials in Ontario and that helps contribute to a lighter automobile, which will make that car more efficient. For the climate change agenda, that's where we have to be heading.

We have a bright future because we've got the innovation, the know-how and—unlike some jurisdictions, like desert countries, for example, they're not going to be able to grow things. It's going to be those jurisdictions that can grow crops, whether it be trees or agricultural crops, that will be the new wealth generators of the future. So we're well blessed and well positioned for the

future economy, and I look forward to that and helping, with my colleagues, in playing a role in that.

We've had tough times in forestry in northern Ontario. It came up again today—an industry that is in transition. A few things that are happening there are, of course, that we're seeing less and less consumption of newspapers nowadays, so the consumption of newsprint is in steady decline. In the old days, these things were cyclical based on economic cycles. For newsprint, that's no longer so as we are getting our news now from many other types of sources—digital and electronic sources. That's changing, so we're going to have to be changing in the paper area of forestry into new products.

We're lucky in Ontario because we have the highest quality fibre from our black spruce and other species that you can't replicate in the tropics. You can do cheap tissue-like fibres in the tropics, but you can't produce high quality fine papers like you can in a jurisdiction like Ontario.

When it comes to lumber—one of the biggest areas—that is cyclical. We know what's happened to the United States' housing market. We feel that here, and that's hurting. That's going to take at least two years to clean up, but a new sort of entity in forestry is going to be probably the chemical industry. Now wood cellulose is going to be a new source for material and energy and pharmaceuticals. So we're going to have a new player on the scene and a new demand for our wood products.

The good thing about that is, we need to be growing more trees and we need to be utilizing those products and sequestering that carbon in those products. We look at our desks here—I don't know exactly from the Clerk's office how old these desks are, but some, I think, go from the beginning of the last century. Some of these desks are as old as some of the members here in the House, I believe; maybe even older.

Interjection: Possibly older.

Mr. David Ramsay: Possibly older.

Interjection: It says "1870" on this.

Mr. David Ramsay: There: 1870 right there. What's interesting is, the carbon is sequestered in this wood—hopefully for many more years—just like the carbon in the 2x4s in your house, and hopefully they're going to last for years and years. So the more we can plant and utilize and store in forest products, the more carbon we are going to be able to sequester. So in the medium and long term it's going to be great, great news for agriculture and for forestry.

Before I sit down, I just want to talk about the task the Premier has given me as of last week, as that seemed to be the subject du jour today as it is probably the greatest challenge facing the economy in the short term in Ontario. We all know of the challenges that have impacted our manufacturing sector over the last few years. Anybody six months ago who would have said to you, "Do you realize that in six months the value of the Canadian dollar will be \$1.10 American?"—you would have thought they were crazy. But look at what happened about three weeks ago. We're now at par, a little below

par, but it's probably going to stay in this area for quite a while, which is a heck of an adjustment for many, many of our manufacturers.

They're having a tough time, so I was very pleased when the Premier asked me to take a look, in the very short term, at what we could do with our small and medium-sized manufacturers in helping them through this, and see if we can bring some creative and innovative ideas to help this industry. I look toward meeting with all my colleagues and with people from the opposition. I'm meeting with some union reps tomorrow, and people from manufacturing associations and some decision makers from some of the companies. I look forward to this engagement over the next few weeks, and hope to accelerate the timetable to bring some ideas to the Minister of Finance, whom I am going to meet with next. This has to be job one for this government right now.

We are very well blessed with a very diverse economy in Ontario, and 15% of it is manufacturing. You could say that this is a small percentage, but they are very high-paying jobs. A million people are employed in manufacturing in this province, and they are some of the highest-paying jobs in this province. They're worth defending, they're worth protecting and, quite frankly, they're worth growing. We've got to be rolling up our sleeves, as we said today, and get to work on this. So I look forward to working with all my colleagues on that—the Premier and the Minister of Finance especially—and

helping our manufacturers be able to survive and to prosper, because if we don't have a strong economy, we're not going to have a strong society.

We have been well blessed by that in Ontario, and because of that strong economy we have the most wonderful programs in the world. Ontarians are very, very lucky to have the jurisdiction that we do with the beautiful geography and the strong economy. It's just a great place to live and to raise our children. I think everybody in this House could agree to that. We all need to work together to continue to make it the best place in the world.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Norm Miller: I move adjournment of the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Miller has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

Hon. Michael Bryant: I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The government House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock, Tuesday, December 4.

The House adjourned at 1624.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Sophia (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Albanese, Laura (L)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Culture / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de la Culture
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	
Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Finances
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (L)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Health) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Santé)
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / procureur general
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (L)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (ND)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Broten, Laurel C. (L)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Health) / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Santé)
Brown, Michael A. (L)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (L)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Tourism / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Tourisme
Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)	St. Paul's	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, government House leader / ministre des Affaires autochtones, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (L)	Barrie	Minister of Culture, minister responsible for seniors / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Colle, Mike (L)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craiton, Kim (L)	Niagara Falls	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Énergie
Crozier, Bruce (L)	Essex	
Delaney, Bob (L)	Mississauga–Streetsville	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Research and Innovation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Dhillon, Vic (L)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Travail
Dickson, Joe (L)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (ND)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (L)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Oakville	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Environment / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Environnement
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (L)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Tourism / ministre du Tourisme
Gélinas, France (ND)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (ND)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (ND)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Hoy, Pat (L)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (L)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health Promotion / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Brampton–Springdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (ND)	Welland	New Democratic Party House leader / leader parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kular, Kuldip (L)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée)
Kwinter, Monte (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Leal, Jeff (L)	Peterborough	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires autochtones
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (L)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	Parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for seniors / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (L)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Richesses naturelles
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier and President of the Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (L)	Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
McNeely, Phil (L)	Ottawa–Orléans	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Renouveau de l'infrastructure publique
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (ND)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (L)	Huron–Bruce	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Municipal Affairs) / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement (Affaires municipales)
Moridi, Reza (L)	Richmond Hill	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (L)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services (Community Safety) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels (Sécurité communautaire)
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (L)	Sault Ste. Marie	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (L)	Kitchener–Conestoga	Parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for women's issues / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Hon. / L'hon. Peters, Steve (L)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie
Prue, Michael (ND)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (L)	London–Fanshawe	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Ramsay, David (L)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Northumberland–Quinte West	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (Rural Affairs) / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales (Affaires rurales)
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House leader / leader parlementaire de l'opposition
Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (L)	Guelph	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de l'Éducation
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (L)	York West / York-Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Housing) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement (Logement)
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (L)	Nipissing	Minister of Revenue / ministre du Revenu

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / vice- premier ministre, ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Sorbara, Greg (L)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (ND)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Van Bommel, Maria (L)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Children and Youth Services / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (L)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (L)	Willowdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire au procureur général

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