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(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 13 December 2007

Jeudi 13 décembre 2007

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 13 December 2007

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 13 décembre 2007

The House met at 1000.

Prayers.

PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS

FIRE PROTECTION STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2007

LOI DE 2007 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI A TRAIT À LA PROTECTION
CONTRE L'INCENDIE

Mr. Prue moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to deem that the Building Code and the Fire Code require fire detectors, interconnected fire alarms and non-combustible fire escapes / Projet de loi 14, Loi prévoyant que le code du bâtiment et le code de prévention des incendies sont réputés exiger des détecteurs d'incendie, des systèmes d'alerte d'incendie interconnectés et des sorties de secours incombustibles.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Prue has moved second reading of Bill 14. Pursuant to the standing orders, he has 10 minutes to make his initial presentation.

Mr. Michael Prue: It is indeed again an honour to stand on this bill. This is the third time that this bill has been introduced in this House. The first time was in 2005, where it received unanimous approval at second reading and was ordered to committee. The second time was in 2006, where it received unanimous approval of this House, went to committee, was approved unanimously in committee and was ordered for third reading. Unfortunately, in both circumstances, the House was prorogued, and the bill died on the order paper. Hence, it is back here again today.

I'd like to commence by thanking those who are in attendance today. As you can see, we have a huge showing of firefighters from across Ontario who are here in support of the bill. They come from Toronto and from all of the areas around the capital, and they are here to show support for this bill, as they have in the past. I would like to thank as well the people and groups who have written letters of support in the past on this bill: the Toronto Professional Fire Fighters' Association, the Toronto fire chief, the Toronto tenants' federation and the Coalition for Social Justice.

The biggest thank you, though, I want to give is to Mr. Tom Steers, who is here; he was here on the last two occasions as well. I would like to extend my gratitude to him, a man who has worked for nearly nine years to see that the tragedy that happened to him, to his friends, to his fiancée, in January 1999 is never revisited by anyone in this province.

At 3 a.m. on January 14, 1999, a fire broke out at 2362 Queen Street East in the Beach. It was a horrific fire. It literally burned the building to the ground. Two people died, one of them being Linda Elderkin and the other being Paul Benson. Linda was Tom's fiancée. As residents fled the building in the dark and in panic, no one pulled the fire alarm. Linda and Paul were asleep and unaware of the tragedy that was unfolding around them and that would soon engulf them. Finally, the heat of that fire became so intense that the wires melted, and that was what triggered the alarm in that building. The firefighters arrived within minutes, as they always do in Toronto. They found an apartment building completely engulfed in flames. They found that the back fire escape was completely engulfed in flames and that no one who was in the building could get down either the front stairs or down the back fire escape. They could hear the victims' screams, yet with all of their training and with all of their courage, they could do nothing.

An inquest was held into this fire in 2000, a year later. The inquest jury made 28 recommendations, two of which are embodied in this bill. Tom Steers has fought every step of the way to have these 28 recommendations become law and to be enforced, and the fire departments across Ontario have been with him every step of the way and ask that these recommendations of the jury be enforced as well. Tom has gone to the newspapers, he has gone to the courts, he has been to this Legislature—now for the third time—asking that the jury's recommendations become law. A lesser man may have given up; Tom did not, and I believe he will not until this is passed.

The bill purports to do two things: first of all, that all the fire alarms need to be interconnected with fire detectors mandatory in rental buildings, and the second part is that the fire code needs to be amended to ensure that fire escapes are made of non-combustible material.

In terms of the interconnected fire alarms, the interconnected fire alarms would work when an out-of-control fire triggers a building-wide alert. It would be in the common areas only. I want to assuage the fears of anyone who thinks that a resident or a tenant burning some toast in the toaster will set off the alarm; it will not. The alarm

will only be triggered when the common areas, not the individual residences, have smoke; that is, if fire is that strong that the smoke spills out into the halls, it will trigger the alarm throughout the building so that people on the first, second, third or 20th floor of a building will be able to hear it and know that there is a serious fire. If this had happened at 2362 Queen Street, I am sure that both Linda and Paul would still be alive.

The second aspect of this bill involves wooden fire escapes. It has to be obvious to everyone that to have a wooden fire escape on the outside of a wooden building is tantamount to asking for disaster. It has been outlawed years ago in most jurisdictions around the world, including most of the states of the United States of America. It is still common practice in some of the jurisdictions in Canada but ought not to be, with the greatest of respect. Remember that fire escapes exist on these buildings because the building is not in compliance with the fire code. Whenever you see a fire escape on the outside of a building, you know that the building is not in compliance with the fire code. If you see an apartment building without fire escapes, you know that it is in compliance and therefore it does not require fire escapes. So the reason they are there is because the building does not meet the fire code, and this is a way to get around it.

1010

What is required in law in Ontario is that there be two exits, and very often in these older buildings there are not two exits; there is an exit into the hall, but there's nothing else, and so the fire escape is the second means to get out of the building should there be a fire. Older buildings do not have firewalls. Some of them do not have the self-contained units of a modern building where the fire will be contained within an apartment for a number of hours before burning out into other areas, and they do not have multiple staircases; hence the need for fire escapes. The fire escape allows compliance for the existing unsafe condition.

I'd like to read what the fire code says right now. Section 9.4.7.13(3) says: "Fire escapes shall be of metal or concrete"—that's the law, and then there's the "except," and this is what we're trying to change—"except that wooden fire escapes may be used on buildings of combustible construction if all posts and brackets are at least 89 millimetres in their least dimension and all other woodwork is 38 millimetres in its least dimension."

Just for older people who may be watching this or some of the members of the Legislature, that means that the posts are four by fours and the rest of it is two by fours. If any of you have ever had some spare wood and used it in a campfire, you know how fast you can burn a two by four. It burns pretty readily. This is crying out for change and in fact to be deleted from the fire code.

I ask the members to consider who lives in these old, potentially unsafe buildings, and I think all of you know from your own ridings who lives in these buildings. They tend to be people of low income. They tend to be students if it's near a school or a university. They tend to be people who live on social assistance and who cannot

afford to live in newer or better-kept apartments, and they tend in many, many circumstances to be new immigrants.

The last Parliament saw another bill by Mrs. Jeffrey, who I'm glad to see is here today, and we are in complete agreement should she bring that bill forward. But hers deals with new construction; I'm asking you to consider this one for the older buildings that are unsafe. Perhaps with the two of them together, we can try to be as safe as other jurisdictions. I know that the city of Vancouver, which has adopted both parts—the one that she will, I hope, bring forward again and the one I'm bringing forward today—has had no deaths for a number of years, whereas Ontario averages between 100 and 200 people dying in fires each and every year.

I'm asking you as well to consider the brave firefighters, those who need to get to the fire, those who have to get the people out of the building, those who have to go up burning fire escapes. Make life simpler and safer and better for them so that they too can go home to their families.

I ask the support of this Legislature for this bill, and I thank again the firefighters and Mr. Steers for being here today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: As always, it's a privilege and honour to stand up and speak on many different issues, and I want to thank my colleague Michael Prue, the member from Beaches–East York, for bringing this very important issue again to this place. I think he has brought it twice so far; this is the third time. I remember last time, I stood up and spoke in support of that bill, supporting the intention of the bill. Also, my colleague Linda Jeffrey brought an almost similar bill to this place to be discussed, because I guess all of us have a great intention to create some kind of protection mechanism for tenants, for the people who live in many different residential or apartment buildings across the province.

I also want to take the opportunity to welcome the firefighters, who give great support to this bill. They've been working around the clock to protect all the people of this great province of Ontario.

It's important to allow time to talk about safety. I was listening carefully to the member from Beaches–East York talking about this issue. I know this issue came as a response to the coroner's inquest that happened in 2000, and also as a result of the deaths of two people from his riding in 1999. I think it's important to be able to establish rules and laws to protect innocent people, especially when they live in old buildings. I know the building code right now requires concrete or metal fire escapes to be installed in all buildings, and also that it's mandatory to have alarm systems in residential buildings, even a single home, because it's important to protect residents and give them some kind of a warning.

I know this issue has been debated many different times. As I said, I support the essence of the bill and I support my colleague from Beaches–East York for

bringing this bill forward, because it's very important, as I mentioned, to protect the residents who live in older buildings. This has happened in many older buildings and older homes, which, sadly, are occupied by low-income families, students and people with no ability to move to a newer home, all of which are built according to the building code in a safe way. But the minister of corrections and safety has established some kinds of recommendations or rules to support all buildings, all places, and also ask them to have metal and concrete fire escapes to protect the residents who live in those dwellings.

It's a great bill, and I think all of us can support it, and hopefully it will go to third reading. Hopefully it will pass, because all of us, from both sides of the House, have a great interest in seeing all residents live in a safe place, and also in creating a mechanism to create safety for all of the people who live in many different jurisdictions. This issue is very important. We have debated it many different times. I hope that at the end of this debate we will pass this bill and support it. Hopefully it will go to committee to tighten it up and see what we can do. All of the bills, all the rules and laws, have many different ideas and different points of view. We have to debate this bill very well to see what the best mechanism is to use, because it's very important. The safety of our people is more important than anything else, and without passing tougher rules sometimes, we leave our residents and our citizens unsafe. I think it's about time.

I thank the member from Beaches–East York for bringing such an important bill for the third time, and I'm looking forward to debating it for a second and a third time, and hopefully we'll see it established and passed. It would be another initiative to protect the residents of Ontario.

Thank you, again, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak. I wish my colleague luck, and hopefully this bill will pass.

Mr. Peter Shurman: First of all, I'd like to congratulate the member for Beaches–East York for this important bill. It deserves passage.

Earlier this week, I recall that the galleries of this House were filled with firefighters, and there was an extraordinary amount of time spent by members, even the Speaker, acknowledging the presence of so many of these good people here with us. Some of the firefighters took the time to visit individually with their MPPs privately. I had the pleasure of hosting several of our good firefighters from the city of Vaughan.

All parties acknowledge that these people do fine work, and they also acknowledge the care that firefighters provide to the people they serve. Our efforts here should be to demonstrate that support very tangibly, and this bill is an aspect of that. How do we do that? Well, by making life easier for the firefighters themselves. After all, they put their lives at risk for the people of Ontario.

Mr. Prue's bill is not new in this House. It has appeared before several times, as has been noted. Perhaps we could say to Mr. Prue that three times lucky will apply. All this bill says is that fire detectors should be

present in public or common areas in residential buildings of two units or more. I would venture to say that there's no one in this House who hasn't installed detectors in their own single family dwelling or their apartment. It just makes sense. Who wouldn't want them?

1020

The bill would also make it necessary that fire escapes be constructed of non-combustible material. Seriously, are we still looking at wooden fire escapes, or has somebody contemplated plastic? I know that's a bit sarcastic, but it seems pretty obvious that we have to make sure the structures that get us out of burning buildings are the last structures to go, and concrete or steel would do that.

In short, I support the bill, as does the entire Progressive Conservative caucus.

I believe this bill also calls for modifications to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997. It's probably an appropriate time to call attention to this act, because about a third of it deals with labour relations for firefighters. Perhaps what it needs is a thorough review some time in the not-too-distant future. My stakeholder firefighters want well-trained, happy, fit and properly treated firefighters in their midst. I agree with that sentiment. Firefighters are asking now for consideration for a mandatory retirement age of 60, which of course goes against recent human rights changes that provide for an open-ended retirement age, but frankly, I'm 60 years old and I personally don't want a 67-year-old man carrying me out of a burning building down a ladder. So I think that deserves some consideration, and it finds itself in the Fire Protection and Prevention Act as well.

In addition to that, collective bargaining between firefighters and the cities they serve oftentimes takes the entire period of a contract to expire before it actually becomes finalized. I think that's something that bears review as well. So in voting along with Mr. Prue on this act in a positive way, I would call the House's attention to these important considerations that firefighters are asking for under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997.

Mr. Paul Miller: This bill is a must, in my opinion. We cannot expose our firefighters to potential life-threatening situations. Steel fire escapes allow firefighters to have solid platforms to work from. This enables them to have access to multilevel buildings, to be able to remove people and pets from life-threatening situations. This legislation is long overdue. It also provides firefighters an escape route in the case of flash fires and explosions. We have an obligation to the families of our firefighters also. Every time they go to work, I'm sure their families are concerned. I, for one, want to see this legislative body provide all the necessary safety features possible to ensure the safety of these brave men.

All buildings must be forced into compliance as soon as possible. I support this bill 110%. I think the wisdom of this Legislature will come through on this bill and finally it will be where it's supposed to be.

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey: I'm pleased to speak today in support of Bill 14. I'd like to congratulate the member for Beaches–East York for his persistence and his vision. I

remember that the first time this bill was introduced it was Bill 184 in 2005, and then its replacement in 2006 was Bill 120, I believe. I'm delighted to support all fire protection legislation that's designed to save lives.

Fire kills nearly 100 Ontarians each and every year and it injures many more, the overwhelming number at home. Despite mandatory smoke alarms and improved building construction, there has not been a substantial reduction in this number in over a decade. The cost to the Ontario economy in relation to health care expenses, property loss and the personal impact is in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Smoke alarms are simply not enough.

I believe Bill 14 has the support of the firefighting community, the fire safety industry, many large and small municipalities, contractors, seniors' organizations, the insurance industry and Ontarians across this province.

Statistics show us that fatal residential fires most often occur between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m., when the victims are asleep. Victims are also disproportionately children and the elderly—those who are vulnerable because they're physically unable to get to an escape route. There's no magic bullet. There's no single solution to the dilemma we face in legislating adequate fire protection; rather, for Ontarians to be effectively protected from fire, we need to use a number of strategies. It's clear that simply having a smoke alarm is not enough.

The member's bill addresses key concerns that I support. That is, where there is a fire in a building in which more than one dwelling exists, an alarm should be sounded in other dwellings within that same building. It seems only logical that alarms warn neighbouring or adjacent dwellings in the event of a fire. However, I do recall a report by CBC Marketplace that was broadcast back in June 1990 which reported that "one third of smoke alarms fail to go off in an emergency: People just don't maintain them.

"Canada has one of the highest rates of fire deaths in the world, and almost 80% of them happen at night....

"Many people think the smell of smoke will wake them up."

Fire alarms cannot protect you from fire, and often a fire is out of control by the time people in a residence are warned by a fire alarm. By the time a parent realizes that their house is on fire, it's too late to save the children. By the time you realize there is a fire, it's too late to save an elderly parent.

The second part of this bill addresses the ability to escape from a flaming building. Once alerted to a fire situation, it's critical that people can escape safely. This bill recognizes that there are many fire escapes in the province that were constructed at a time when measures we now take for granted were not in place, and that there are a number of buildings that have a wooden fire escape that offers no protection in the case of a fire where the only means of escape may in fact contribute to a fire. Firefighters cannot climb up and rescue someone if the fire escape is on fire or weakened by fire. Again, common sense tells us that we need to make changes to give people every chance to escape a fire alive.

The member's efforts are to be lauded, and I know that a number of fire professionals support this initiative, but this legislation is only one strategy. Ideally, I believe better fire protection would include residential fire sprinklers. Members on all sides know my passion on this issue, and as tempted as I am to use my time to promote this issue, I would instead encourage other members to join in the debate on fire safety as the member from Beaches–East York has done by introducing this bill. The facts are overwhelming, and the terrible, ongoing loss of life is preventable. This issue goes beyond partisan politics.

Again, I would like to commend the member from Beaches–East York for being persistent in bringing forward this important piece of legislation. I'm very happy to support Bill 14, and I believe that the time is right now to bring forward legislation that is meaningful and ensures the safety and security of all Ontarians.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to thank the member from Beaches–East York for once again introducing this worthwhile bill that will increase fire safety and save lives. I was pleased to support it in the past, when he introduced the same private member's bill in 2005 and in 2006, and I'm pleased to support it once again today.

As I was preparing these remarks, I looked back at Hansard from June 8, 2006, the last time this bill was debated in the Legislature. I started my remarks on that occasion by pointing out how strange it was that the House would unanimously be in support of an important initiative like this for the safety of our population, and yet the government seems to think it's not important enough to bring back for third reading and actually make it part of the law of the land. In April 2005, the member of Beaches–East York first introduced this bill, which was then Bill 184. It was debated during private members' business and was passed on a voice vote. Sadly, the bill was referred to committee and died there.

In June 2006, the member from Beaches–East York once again introduced the bill. This time it was Bill 120, which was debated and passed second reading, and I want to point out that it passed second reading with the support of members of all parties that were there—not one vote against the bill. From there it was referred to committee and had hearings. In the committee it was supported by the Canadian Automatic Sprinkler Association, Thomas Steers, the Toronto Fire Services, the Ontario Municipal Fire Prevention Officers Association and the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs. There was even a member from the government side of the House who appeared before the committee to speak in support of the bill. During those committee hearings, Deputy Chief Frank Lamie from the Toronto Fire Services said, "The measures required in Bill 120 will enhance early detection and provide early warning to all building occupants. Bill 120 will also provide an alternate escape route that can be part of the residential fire escape plan. The main advantage of early detection and early warning is to allow building occupants to get out of the building when the fire is small."

1030

The committee reported back to the Legislature in September 2006, and last spring, when the House prorogued, the bill died again. It was never called for third reading. The committee had done its job, but after that, it must be the government that calls the bill back for third reading, as you would know, Mr. Speaker. Let's remember back last spring. The Legislature prorogued several weeks early. It wasn't that we ran out of time to deal with this bill; it was that the government didn't deem it a priority for the safety of the people.

Now it may be that, like several other private members' bills from this side of the House, the government may choose to incorporate these good ideas into a government bill and bring them forward, which they could do—put this in the building code review—but so far they haven't done it.

What I really want to talk about is that private members' business should be about members doing the right thing for their constituents and collectively doing the right thing for the people of this province. A couple of days ago there was motion introduced to look at making the workings of this place more family friendly. I would think, as that committee is looking at that, they should look at making private members' business more productive. As we look at all the good bills that have been introduced, all the good bills that have been passed for second reading, very few ever get to third and final reading and become the law of the land.

At the beginning of this new session, I would hope that the government would put aside partisan interests and do the right thing for the people of Ontario and have that review. I hope they will evaluate private members' bills based on their merits, not on who introduced them, and that when we have a good bill like this one they will take action and move forward for the good of the people.

I think everyone agrees that the changes in this bill will save lives. This bill requires that fire alarms be interconnected so that if a fire detector is activated in a public area, it will sound an alarm that is audible; people everywhere can hear it throughout the building. Simply put, this tries to ensure that if there is a fire in a public area or a serious fire within one of the units, people will be warned in time to exit the building or to make it possible to extinguish the fire. Early warning allows people to get out before the situation is life-threatening. As a former firefighter, I can tell you that often after the fire has been put out and you look at the results, you think, "If only someone had noticed it sooner, it could have been a much different situation."

One of the concerns that is raised about the interconnected fire alarms in a multi-residential building is whether the alarm will go off too frequently. I think we all agree that if an alarm sounds every time someone burns toast, then people start to ignore it or even disable it. This is one of the reasons I support this bill, because it is the fire detectors in public areas that are required to be interconnected. That means that if someone burns something in the kitchen, their individual fire alarms should

alert them to the problem so they can deal with it. However, if the fire gets out of control, then everyone in the building will be warned. That also means that if someone has a fire in a basement apartment, the people on the top floor should be warned before the fire spreads to the stairs and blocks their route out of the building.

I also want to address the part of this bill that will save lives, which is the requirement that fire escapes be constructed of non-combustible materials. I spoke to that quite at length the last time this bill was here. The current building code regulations simply do not do an adequate job of ensuring that people will have an escape route in the event of a serious fire. The current regulation reads as follows:

"Fire escapes shall be of metal or concrete, of the stair type extending to ground level, constructed throughout in a strong substantial manner and securely fixed to the building, except that wooden fire escapes are permitted to be used on buildings of combustible construction if all posts and brackets are not less than 89 millimetres in their least dimension and all other woodwork is not less than 38 millimetres in its least dimension."

This means that if my building is made of wood, then I can build a fire escape of wood as well. It simply doesn't make sense that when the building is on fire, the fire escape, which is supposed to provide a safe exit, is just as likely to be on fire.

I want to raise one concern, and this is the one I raised last time I spoke to this bill. The bill says: "Regulations made under subsections (1) and (2) are deemed to require that fire escapes, where permitted, be constructed of non-combustible material." My concern is with the words "where permitted." It would seem to me appropriate to say, regardless of whether they were permitted to be there or whether they weren't, whatever fire escapes are, we don't have wooden fire escapes, wherever they are. I think I mentioned last time that it seems silly that we have to have a steel one in case the building isn't really on fire, but if the building is all wood and it's in full flames, it's okay that the stairs are also in full flames. That just doesn't make sense.

I also have concern that if you leave the words "where permitted" in, if it's not saying that they have to be there, where it is not mandatory, municipalities could put in that they don't allow fire escapes and then they could put up wooden ones. Again, if they have to be metal, if they're not permitted to be wood, if they don't do anything, they can put in wooden ones. I hope that when the bill goes to committee this time, this is something that is considered to ensure we are preventing tragedy with wooden fire escapes.

Mr. Prue has related the tragic story of the fire that occurred in 1999 on Queen Street, and I want to once again extend my sympathies to the families of the victims of that fire. It was a horrible tragedy. I was a volunteer firefighter for 25 years. There were good days when we made a difference, helped an injured person or saved a life. There were also the days that we couldn't help, the days when we were too late or an accident was too bad.

Those days stay with you forever. I can only imagine what the firefighters in Toronto must have felt when they saw the wooden fire escape in flames. I can't imagine what people felt who needed the escape route.

While you cannot prevent every fire, I believe that these changes could reduce the number of tragedies in the future. I believe that this Legislature has a responsibility, not only to support this bill today but to ensure that it's moved forward quickly and does not die on the order paper. We need to ensure we are not back here in a year or two debating the same issue on this same bill. I think lives can be saved in the meantime. Can we imagine that there are many cases where it's possible that a life could have been saved if this bill had been passed the first time it was in this Legislature? I encourage everyone to support it and move it forward.

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais remercier M. Michael Prue pour avoir amené ce projet de loi, Loi prévoyant que le code du bâtiment et le code de prévention des incendies sont réputés exiger des détecteurs d'incendie, des systèmes d'alerte d'incendie interconnectés et des sorties de secours incombustibles.

I wasn't around when this bill was introduced the first time and the second time, but I'm here now and I have a really difficult time understanding how something so obvious, something people have been putting forward since the year 2000, hasn't been accepted yet by this House. We heard the previous speaker say that all of the process has been followed: Mr. Prue introduced the bill, it went to committee and it received the support of the people in committee. Everybody is on board—the association of professional firefighters, the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs—and everybody agrees that this is a good bill, yet it doesn't go through. It doesn't become a law. It doesn't come into effect.

This is the kind of skepticism people sometimes have toward politicians. I think some of it is born in actions like these, in the lack of action. Why is it that when a private member brings something forward, a private bill that makes sense and that is supported by members of government—everybody on each side of the House today has spoken in favour of it. I'm hopeful it will go to committee, although it will be for us all to decide. I'm hopeful that this time will be the real time for it.

I know we have people here who have to live with the legacy of what it means not to have this kind of protection in effect in Ontario. The first part of the bill says, "Every residential building with two or more dwelling units is equipped with fire detectors in all public corridors and common areas of the building and interconnected fire alarms that are audible throughout the building." We all know that fire alarms and smoke detectors save lives. You can ask any kid from elementary school and they can rhyme it off: "Fire alarms save lives." The fire departments have big campaigns in all of their communities that, when you change your clock in the fall and when you change your clock in the spring, you change the battery in your smoke alarm. It would be even better if your smoke alarm was hard-wired through

your house. But if you take on this habit, it will save lives and it has saved a lot of lives.

1040

Yesterday I had the opportunity to meet with Marc Gobbo and Mark Muldoon. Marc Gobbo is the president of the Sudbury Professional Firefighters Association and Mark Muldoon is on their executive. They came and talked to us about what firefighters want. What they want is basically to work themselves out of service. They want to make sure that everybody is safe. Sure, they'll be there if you need them, but they know that the more lead time you have, the better the outcome will be. Sometimes the outcome can be really bad, very drastic, and sometimes it leads to death.

Like the speaker before me, my husband, Keith Harris, is a firefighter. He has gone to many fires in his long career where the outcome has been really bad. When he comes home, he will always say, "The fire detector didn't work. The smoke alarm was disconnected," and those are the fires that turn out bad. What this bill is trying to do is make sure that this will not happen again. It is 100% preventable. All we have to do is pass this bill. Make it hard-wired. Make it interconnected. Make it so that if an apartment in the basement is on fire or is filled with smoke, then all of the exits don't fill up with smoke before the people on the second or third floor know about it. As the member mentioned before, most of those fires happen at night, when people are asleep. Most of the fatalities are not people burning to death; they are dying of smoke inhalation because the smoke alarm didn't go on, because there was no smoke alarm.

The second part of the bill says that every fire escape should be constructed of non-combustible material. Here again, why are we debating this? Isn't it common sense that a fire escape should be built of non-combustible material? It goes without saying.

So I'm going to give my support to this bill. I have a feeling that most of the people in this House will give it their support. It will go to committee. Here again, all of the professional associations will come out and say the bill is good the way it is. It will save lives. It will make a positive difference in the lives of people in Ontario. I hope this time is your lucky third time—it's the lucky third time for all of us—that it will come back to this House, it will become law, and the pain and suffering that some of the visitors in this House have gone through will be recognized in a positive way, that it brought something good out of something tragic that has continued to happen for the last seven years. Let's make sure that 2008 is the last time it ever happens in Ontario. Let's make sure this bill comes back to the House and that we as politicians do the right thing: that we do what's right for the people of Ontario and we pass Mr. Prue's Bill 14 and make it the law in Ontario.

C'est certainement mon plaisir ce matin de pouvoir amener mon appui au projet de loi 14, Loi prévoyant que le code du bâtiment et le code de prévention des incendies sont réputés exiger des détecteurs d'incendie, des systèmes d'alerte d'incendie interconnectés et des sorties de secours incombustibles.

La première partie de ce projet de loi dit que des détecteurs de fumée devraient être connectés dans tous les corridors et les sorties d'urgence pour permettre aux gens qui demeurent dans une même habitation de l'entendre. Souvent les feux se déclarent la nuit, pendant que les gens dorment. Lorsque les pompiers s'y rendent, ils vont nous dire que le résultat est tragique et drastique. Souvent ce n'est pas parce que les gens sont brûlés qu'ils vont mourir, c'est parce qu'ils vont respirer trop de fumée. Donc les gens meurent dans leur sommeil sans même s'en apercevoir. C'est tellement facile à prévenir : tout ce qu'on aurait à faire c'est de s'assurer de passer le projet loi, un projet de loi qu'on essaie de faire passer depuis l'année 2000. Ça fait sept ans qu'on essaie de faire passer quelque chose qui est tellement évident : d'avoir des détecteurs de fumée et d'avoir une sortie d'urgence qui n'est pas faite de matériel combustible.

Ça aussi est pas mal l'évidence lorsqu'on pense que la loi comme elle est en ce moment dit que les sorties d'urgence doivent être faites avec des 2 sur 4 et des 2 sur 8. Qu'est-ce qu'on est en train de faire là? On est en train de rajouter de l'huile sur le feu. On est en train de rajouter du matériel combustible à une situation qui est déjà explosive. Il me semble que ça va de l'évidence.

Ce projet de loi a été présenté une première fois, il s'est rendu en comité, il a passé en deuxième lecture, mais le gouvernement n'a pas cru bon de le ramener en Chambre pour en faire une loi. Il a été présenté une deuxième fois par M. Prue. Encore là, il s'est rendu en comité, il a reçu l'appui de l'Association des chefs pompiers, de l'Association des pompiers professionnels. C'est un bon projet de loi, mais encore là le gouvernement n'a pas jugé nécessaire de le ramener en Chambre.

Cette fois-ci, c'est la troisième fois. J'espère que la troisième fois va être plus chanceuse. C'est un bon projet de loi, c'est un projet de loi qui va prévenir des feux, qui va prévenir également du dommage autant aux habitants qu'aux habitations, et j'espère que cette fois-ci on va le respecter et que le gouvernement va juger bon de lui donner l'importance qu'il devrait avoir. Moi, je vais voter en faveur.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: First, thank you to Mr. Prue for bringing forward this bill. This gives us a good point of discussion.

I was very enthusiastic about this bill until just yesterday. I am less enthusiastic about this bill today, and I will be listening very intently to what Mr. Prue has to say about at least one of my questions.

As you know, this Bill 14 is to amend both the Building Code Act of 1992 and the Fire Protection and Prevention Act of 1997, and I only wish that Mr. Prue would have divided those two so we could have separate discussions on the Building Code Act and on the Fire Protection and Prevention Act.

As you know, as it stands right now, the FPPA is administered by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services and already provides authority for standards that apply to fire safety.

What Mr. Prue is trying to accomplish—I am familiar with the City of Toronto Act. It says that interconnected systems must be applied in buildings of six units or more. Mr. Prue is trying to reduce that to two units, which is admirable and certainly has my support. The question that I have has to do with something that happened to me personally when I was invited to visit an eight-storey building in my riding. I was shocked to see that some of the interconnected systems and smoke detection systems were tampered with, almost to the point where in every fifth apartment that I visited personally it had been tampered with by the tenant. Either the unit was pulled out of the wall because it was deemed to be too sensitive—and, Mr. Prue, I would hope that we will have this discussion in committee—or too sensitive also in terms of smoke detection systems. In some cases they were not pulled out; in some cases the battery was missing. In some cases it was taped over. Why? Because these units had been manufactured in a too sensitive manner, and consequently they were sounding the alarm when no alarm was necessary.

So I would certainly support that part of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, because it would indicate that Mr. Prue's intention here is to ensure that there must be a manufactured interconnected fire system to prevent tampering, and that discussion has to take place in committee. That discussion is necessary, because it's no use to talk about fire prevention systems when it's easy to pull out a battery or it's easy to pull out the equipment, and consequently, all this money spent on fire prevention is of no consequence. So I would hope that you will take that into account when the details of this bill are being discussed.

1050

The second part of my question—and this is really the reason why I may not be as excited and enthusiastic about supporting this bill. I was looking for the second time at Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*, and it struck me that Mr. Prue's bill, Bill 14, talks about wooden fire escapes. It's obvious that we don't want wooden fire escapes, because they keep burning. Even though there are treated woods that will delay the fire, that may be of little consequence to firefighters.

But in addition to fire escapes, let's look at what's on the ground in the city of Toronto. There are literally thousands upon thousands of decks and balconies that I see when I go onto any street in the city of Toronto. The question I have is this: Number one, are these wooden balconies or these wooden fire escapes—and remember, these are not steps. Fire escapes are not necessarily steps; fire escapes are balconies. They are exits away from a fire. I'm wondering, having looked at this bill—and I hope maybe there will be a discussion as well—if you are changing the wooden structures which have been treated to prevent fires or delay fires, and then you impose a law that says you have to now either do it in concrete or metal, will these be too heavy?

But what's even more important when I discuss the *Inconvenient Truth* movie by Al Gore is, what will be our

environmental footsteps of ensuring that all wooden structures now are having an effect on material that is not renewable? So I'm wondering, Mr. Prue, if you are able at all, in whatever way, to tell us what would be the environmental problem of replacing all of those. Now, I know you will tell us, "Well, it's a question of environment versus saving lives." That may be the case, and I'm very sensitive and happy that you would be making that argument, but you should also tell us in terms of the numbers what would be the effect on the environment.

Thank you very much, and I hope I'll be listening to Mr. Prue's response to this question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and welcome back to the Speaker's chair once again in this session.

It's a pleasure this morning to speak to the bill before us, Bill 14, the Fire Protection Statute Law Amendment Act, 2007, just for those of you at home who are viewing today. I congratulate the member from Beaches-East York again for bringing this forward in the Legislature and his tenacity on this issue. And welcome to the firefighters in the gallery today and those who have been here through the week, coming to our offices, explaining their concerns and putting the public safety of Ontarians foremost before us and what we can do to make the laws better.

This is one example of what we can do. We were disappointed, in the two times that it's been introduced, that it has not been moved forward. I encourage the government to certainly take this forward maybe a little bit more expediently than they did before.

I want to concur with my colleagues the member from Oxford and the member from Thornhill about the different aspects of the bill they have brought forward. I want to focus, in the short time I have, on the particular part of the bill in which Mr. Prue, under section one, indicates interconnected fire alarms that are audible, and in clauses 1(2.0.1)(b) and 2(1.1)(b) he reiterates that point.

The concern I want to bring forward is about people such as seniors or people who are deaf or hard of hearing in our communities who need strobe lighting and different devices in order to be alerted. I know my colleague the member from Pickering-Scarborough East did a private member's bill in the last session on visual fire alarms so I know that other members of the Legislature are aware of this.

I've had the opportunity to speak in my riding to Maggie Doherty-Gilbert, who represents the Canadian Hearing Society and does a fantastic job on that part. She's been to my office many times. She makes the point that one of the main focuses of the local health integration networks is to work at providing seniors with the dignity and independence of staying in their homes, and this includes those living in retirement residences and supportive housing. Statistics show that as many as 40%

of seniors in our community are either deaf or hard of hearing. So for most of those people, an audible fire alarm isn't sufficient to make them aware of the potential danger they may be faced with, so strobe alarms are what's needed in these cases. We have a variation of those strobe alarms in the Legislature, as we speak.

Surprisingly, strobe alarms and fire alarms are not covered under the assistive devices program, so there are financial hardships for these people in obtaining strobe alarms. The estimated cost is about \$100 per alarm, but it's the connection of the hard wiring and the many rooms that they will need; obviously, they need them in different rooms in their homes. That is the point we want to make: to look at strobe alarms that may be covered by the assistive devices program.

I want to make the point that the Legion in Clarington has just raised \$2,000 for a local situation in their riding. So I say, God bless the Legion for identifying that and for fundraising.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The New Democrats have three more minutes if they choose to use it.

If there's no further debate, I can recognize the member for Beaches-East York for up to five minutes, can I not? Agreed. The member for Beaches-East York in reply.

Mr. Michael Prue: I would like to thank the members for London-Fanshawe, Thornhill, Hamilton East, Brampton-Springdale, Oxford, Nickel Belt, Davenport and Victoria-Haliburton-Brock for their very serious and well-thought-out comments on this bill. I have up to five minutes, so I'd just like to deal with some of the concerns that they raised.

The member from London-Fanshawe spoke generally, but he spoke very well. He did remember the contents of the previous bill, and I thank him for having spoken to it in the past as well as today.

The member for Thornhill is a newcomer to the House, but he seized upon and understood immediately what the bill involved, particularly in terms of the firefighters. In my opening 10-minute remark, I did not have enough time to talk about the firefighters. But he was absolutely right: The firefighters put their health and their lives at risk each and every day. The firefighters are in support of this bill, not only because it will help them to do the job that they are paid for and that they have a passion to do—that is, saving lives—but it will also, in the long term, protect those brave men and women who have to go into burning buildings, to make them safer and to more often come home. We know that every year we mourn the loss of firefighters who have died in the line of duty going into burning buildings, some in the actual fire and some because of the inhalation of smoke and other toxins that is endemic to the profession.

The firefighters will be very much saved. Number one, when they get there, they will get there faster. If the alarm goes off—as it did in the case of the Queen Street fire, where it had to actually melt the wires to turn it on—they'll get there before, in the three or four minutes that

they endeavour to try to do in every single case, at least in large cities like the city of Toronto and Hamilton. When they get there, they will find that the residents have had an opportunity to leave the building, so they won't have to be running in trying to save people who are inside, because they'll already be outside. And last but not least, many times they will be able to have access to the rear or side entrances to gain access to the fire and be better able to put it out, rather than simply going in a front door. They won't be able to do that if there are wooden fire escapes. So I think this is a health and safety issue for them, and we need to pay attention to that.

The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is a newcomer, and he spoke briefly but well on the bill.

I applaud the efforts of the member from Brampton–Springdale. We've been working in tandem, even though we're in different parties, trying to get two aspects of the bills passed: one for older homes, which is my bill, and one for newer homes, which is hers. I hope she is going to bring her bill forward again.

The member from Oxford spoke in absolute detail. I was not aware till today, or did not remember, that he was a former firefighter.

I'd better skip down to the member from Davenport because I only have a couple of seconds left. Yes, we need the very best technology so that fire alarms don't go off when toast is burnt, even in the hall. They can be modified and should be modified.

1100

In terms of whether a wooden fire escape is better for the environment than a metal one, I can't tell you how much that's going to save, but I do know that the purpose of this bill is not so much environmental as it is life-saving. But I promise to try to get you that answer by the time this goes to committee.

The member from Victoria–Haliburton–Brock was talking about strobe alarms. I think inevitably that's possible. It is something that can be considered when the debate of the bill takes place in committee. Strobe alarms maybe won't work everywhere, but I don't think the technology is that far afield that it cannot be modified, and especially modified in places where people are hard of hearing. She has made a very good case and a very good suggestion in terms of retirement homes and homes where a lot of senior people might live, also where the deaf or hard of hearing might live, that strobe alarms be considered as well.

The difficulty with that—and I have to state—is because we're trying to do the public areas, not the areas inside the apartment. So if somebody is asleep and is hard of hearing, the strobe alarm would be outside the door. It would be in the hallway, as this is intended to do. It may have to be wired into their home if that's what they wish as well. I certainly have no difficulty with it being done.

The only argument that was raised in the past was an issue of cost. There were some landlords who owned properties who said they did not want to be involved in the cost. Well, the whole issue here is the cost of human

life. The whole issue is for the landlord to put in the fire escape. As fire escapes become redundant, they have to be replaced. Certainly, the bill contemplates that there can be a time frame for this to be done. It would not instantly become law, but there would be a time frame. As these old fire escapes are replaced, they would have to be replaced with non-combustible ones. This is all eminently doable.

I thank all members for their suggestions. I'm looking forward to your support today and to having this heard again in committee and passed at third reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have available for this ballot item.

KATELYN BEDARD BONE MARROW
AWARENESS MONTH ACT, 2007
LOI KATELYN BEDARD DE 2007
SUR LE MOIS DE LA SENSIBILISATION
AU DON DE MOELLE OSSEUSE

Mr. Crozier moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 5, An Act to make the month of November Bone Marrow Awareness Month / Projet de loi 5, Loi visant à désigner le mois de novembre Mois de la sensibilisation au don de moelle osseuse.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm prepared to recognize the member. He has 10 minutes for his leadoff presentation.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: Like the bill we just finished debating and discussing, it's the second time that this bill has been presented. The first time was earlier this year, only in the last session of Parliament, and it received unanimous consent the morning it was debated. It was ordered for third reading but, unfortunately, because of the mysterious workings of this place, it did not get third reading finally and, as the saying goes, died on the order paper. I certainly hope it enjoys as much support as the last time, and more, and I hope this time it gets past third reading and is enacted.

As a matter of fact, it's a very short bill that carries a great message. The bill is only three paragraphs, and I would even read it. It declares: "The month of November in each year is hereby named Bone Marrow Awareness Month." The act would come into effect and force on the day it receives royal assent, if it is passed. But importantly in this case too, the short title of the bill is the Katelyn Bedard Bone Marrow Awareness Month Act, 2007.

This bill was created with the inspiration provided by Katelyn Bedard and her parents, Joanne and Bryan. They are founders of the Katelyn Bedard Bone Marrow Association. They live in Windsor just outside of my riding. Beautiful and lively Katelyn lost her battle with leukemia at the tender age of three and a half, when she was unable to find a match within the bone marrow registry for the life-saving donation that she needed. That is the reason that in Katelyn's memory—for her so-short life and her

battle against leukemia—we have named this the Katelyn Bedard bone marrow bill.

After losing Katelyn, her parents decided to make it their mission to encourage more people to join the bone marrow registry, so that no other child, and in fact no other person, would have to experience the pain that Katelyn and her family did when they couldn't find a match. I quote Bryan Bedard: "Having Bone Marrow Awareness Month declared will bring added legitimacy to our cause.... With hundreds of Canadians needing a bone marrow transplant each year, it is imperative that people educate themselves about the bone marrow registry and add their name to the list of potential donors to bring hope to those that desperately need to find a match to save their life."

The bone marrow transplant is a procedure that's required when a patient's own bone marrow is destroyed because of the use of high doses of chemotherapy or radiation. For many people suffering from diseases such as leukemia, a bone marrow transplant is the only hope of any long-term survival. A transplant requires matching tissue types between the patient and donor. More often, I suppose, this is found in related donors and patients, but in those cases where even the related donor and patient can't find a match—that's why we need to make bone marrow donation a much broader scope, so that the chances of finding someone are increased.

These tissue types are inherited, but 70% of patients don't have a matched donor in their family. These people rely on the kindness of strangers who have volunteered to donate their bone marrow through the national bone marrow registry. But sadly, the demand for life-saving bone marrow transplants far outweighs the matches found in the registry. Again, bringing awareness to the need for bone marrow donors will increase the size of the registry and therefore increase the chances of needy patients finding a bone marrow match.

I hope that the memory of little Katelyn Bedard inspires people to register to donate their bone marrow. There are plenty of people in my own riding whom we would like to encourage to do this.

In order to help the patients, and others around the world, as a matter of fact, find compatible, committed and healthy unrelated donors, the Unrelated Bone Marrow Donor Registry was established in 1989 by the Canadian Red Cross Society and assumed by the Canadian Blood Services in 1998. The success of the registry, as I have said and will emphasize, depends on people who are willing to sign up to provide the gift of life to someone who's not related to them. While many patients have received a life-saving bone marrow transplant from a donor found through the registry, many others continue to search for this miracle each month.

I will admit that I have not yet registered. The only thing that's preventing me from doing so is finding the closest clinic that I can go to. But it's a very simple process. There is simply a blood sample taken, and then that blood sample is recorded for those technical things that they need to know in order to match it with a patient

who needs a bone marrow transplant. Your name is in the registry, and if someone who's seeking this kind of life-saving help finds the qualities of your blood to be that match, then you are asked to give a bone marrow transplant and that process is carried out. So with little inconvenience and certainly little discomfort, many of us could help save lives.

1110

After all, we are here on this planet together to, I think, from time to time, make large sacrifices in order to save someone's life. But in this case, it's such a small sacrifice, and yet it can mean so much. It would mean an awful lot—although she's not with us—to little Katelyn, I'm sure. The short time that she was here, it would make that little life of hers mean so much more if, through this, and in her name, we could encourage more people to register to be a bone marrow contributor.

So I ask for the support of my colleagues here this morning. It received unanimous support when we debated it earlier this year in the former Parliament. I ask you to support this bill so that come next November, when they can take a month to call their own and bring this issue to the fore, all of us can feel proud that in some little way we helped to bring that awareness to those around us who don't know about it, and subsequently, because of that, increase the size of the bone marrow registry. With that increase in numbers comes a better chance that a life will be saved.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to rise today in the debate on Bill 5. I think that when we look at this issue in a broader societal context, what we're really looking at is balancing the success of medical science in being able to provide answers with public awareness and understanding. This is an ongoing issue. It certainly always has new facets of challenge for the public and for medical science.

I think back to the point in time when we were in government and we embarked on a public awareness program to increase organ donation. I recall at that time that I think most of us embraced the notion, particularly when we found out that Canadians were reticent to sign up for organ donation, and we had relatively, in comparison to other jurisdictions, a very small percentage. So again, it was the question of creating opportunities to build that awareness and to improve the percentage of potential donors.

I must say that I thought it was a very clear public message, but I did have a constituent who phoned me in great agitation because somehow she thought that this initiative implied that there was going to be some obligation on her part to be engaged in organ donation. I had to assure her that, no, it was a question of public awareness. I offer that anecdote simply to remind people that the challenge here, first of all, is in supporting the research we are proud to have in this country that provides us with avenues for this kind of donation. But it behooves us as public figures, then, to encourage and promote public awareness and understanding.

Maybe it's a feature of my age, but it seems to me that we have pushed the boundaries of medical science in those particular areas. I think back to the availability of successful organ transplants, and now we look at tissue, cell, cord blood. These are all huge innovations in the area of being able to treat medical conditions, very life-threatening medical conditions. The issue for us today, then, is matching that medical success with this ongoing public awareness and understanding. The challenge, I think, is understandable because of the fact that around us constantly are medical science achievements. People tend to think, "Well, it's not something that affects me; I'm not directly involved," so they're not as likely to make themselves aware of the issues and the opportunities that in fact save lives.

I'm reminded of the personal story from my neighbours, who discovered, obviously in a very traumatic way, when their seven-month-old baby was diagnosed with leukemia—when he was diagnosed and the medical profession were looking for options that might be of assistance to him, they were pleased to note that he had three siblings but, very sadly, none of those siblings provided an opportunity for a bone marrow match, and certainly the fact that he had cousins as well—they were not able to find a match within the immediate family.

This created huge angst on the part of my neighbours, because obviously they understood that their child's chance of survival would be significantly enhanced by the opportunity of having a bone marrow transplant. In speaking to Hudson's parents, their appreciation of the kind of technology and research that exists today became clear to me, and they wanted to convey the importance that people's lives are saved, that it is money well spent.

When we look at the whole bone marrow process, one of the things that I think becomes very clear is the chance of how successful it is to find a match: It's estimated that it's one in 750,000 people. When you consider that, according to a Toronto Star article in October 2006, there are only about 230,000 people in Canada who are registered, it gives you some kind of idea of the kind of urgency that the member from Essex referred to in being a part of that registry.

I think as well that when you look at the support program that has been provided through this Katelyn Bedard foundation, it's also something that needs to be recognized, because when I look at the delivery of the terrible news for my neighbours about their seven-month-old and having to deal with that kind of message, the kind of support that they required from family, from friends, from neighbours, from the community at large, was enormous. As a seven-month-old, of course, he went to Sick Children's in Toronto, and had to have his mother with him most of the time. So there's a huge strain, and I think that recognizing the work of this foundation in providing that kind of support is extremely important.

So I want to offer congratulations to the member for Essex, Mr. Crozier, in the reintroduction of this bill, because I think that it goes a long way to building that awareness that we need to share. We need to make

people more conscious of the opportunities and, frankly, the good work of this foundation.

1120

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: I thank the member from Nickel Belt for allowing me to speak at this time. I can tell you that I'm truly honoured to stand in this House and speak to this particularly vital bill, the Katelyn Bedard Bone Marrow Awareness Month Act. I would also like to extend my appreciation and my gratitude to my colleague from the riding of Essex, Bruce Crozier, for proposing this act and actively lobbying on its behalf for the families that have been most affected by the illness through this tragedy.

The story of Katelyn Bedard is truly a sad and very heartbreaking tale. For a child of three years old to have to suffer through and ultimately succumb to an illness such as leukemia is a true tragedy. Even more tragic is the fact that Katelyn may have been able to survive such a critical illness had she been able to receive a matching donor for her bone marrow transplant. She did not, and now we must strive forward in trying to fix the system and attempt to influence more Ontarians to become bone marrow and organ donors. A story like Katelyn's will often help in bringing an issue as serious as this to the public consciousness. I hope this bill will do the same and that, out of such immense tragedy, there will be hope for others who will come behind Katelyn to not have to suffer the illness that could have been avoided through organ and bone marrow transplants.

Katelyn's parents, Bryan and Joanne, have served the honour of Katelyn by creating and dedicating themselves to the Katelyn Bedard Bone Marrow Association. This association's goal is to promote awareness about worldwide bone marrow registries and to educate about bone marrow donation in an attempt to further encourage adults to consider joining the bone marrow donation registry in hope of saving the life of someone else suffering from this illness. This is truly admirable of the Bedards. I speak for others in the Legislature in suggesting how important and commendable their work on this mission is and how proud of themselves they should be for striving to help others to avoid the tragedy that has befallen their family.

On that note I would also like to relate a similar story about organ donations from a very special individual from my riding. Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to meet Ann Miller. Ann is a resident of the riding of Huron-Bruce, and she was at the Legislature, as a part of National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week last April as a representative of the Gift of Life Association.

Ms. Miller had been struck by a tragedy: Both her son Joel and her nephew were killed in automobile accidents within a very short time of one another. Ann's son was an organ donor, and his donation went to help give other people the gift of life. Ann's son was enshrined in the Gift of Life Association quilt that honours transplant donors and recipients. Through the tragedy of losing her son and her nephew, Ann has become a tireless advocate

for the Gift of Life Association. She travels around the province with the organization, telling her story in hope that it will drive those who have not signed up for organ donation to do so in order to save a life.

I'm certain that many, if not all, of the members of the Legislature could share a story of a constituent or a friend or a family member who has been touched by a tragedy like my constituent Ann Miller.

To conclude, this bill proposed by the member from Essex is being presented as a bill that could help lead to saving the lives of people faced with similar circumstances like Katelyn Bedard. If this bill will help to save even one life, I cannot imagine how it could not receive full support from this Legislature. I'm certain that every member in this House would agree that more needs to be done to help promote bone marrow and organ donation across this province. Because these donations can make a difference, a decision between life and death, in many instances. We need to do what we can as representatives of the province of Ontario. We need to push this issue and we need to become advocates for bone marrow and organ donation.

So once again, to the member from Essex, you deserve a great deal of credit and respect from this Legislature for being on the front lines of this issue and bringing awareness not only from your riding but from across the province. To the people that I represent, I thank you for all of your hard work, and I will support this bill.

Ms. Laurie Scott: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to introduce the grade 10 class from the Lindsay Collegiate and Vocational Institute, the students and the teachers. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Further debate?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm certainly pleased to join this debate on Bill 5, the Katelyn Bedard Bone Marrow Awareness Month Act, that's been introduced by our Liberal colleague from Essex. I'd like to congratulate him. He's reintroduced a bill that he felt very strongly about before in this Legislature. As we've heard, it has been inspired by Katelyn Bedard. Unfortunately, she lost her battle with leukemia because there was no match in the bone marrow registry. Certainly, her parents since then have done whatever they can to encourage all Ontarians to join the bone marrow registry.

I think sometimes we don't realize that each one of us could do a lot. We know that in certain instances we have the opportunity to donate blood; in some instance we have the opportunity to donate our organs. But we also have the opportunity to donate our bone marrow, and it is extremely important that people become aware of the fact that this is something that they can do. I think particularly at this time of the year, people sometimes are looking to do something that would benefit others, not just in this province or this country but throughout the world. And really, the success of the registry that we have depends on people who are willing to sign up to provide the gift of life to someone who is not related to them. While many patients have received a life-saving bone marrow

transplant from a donor found through the registry, there are many, many others throughout the world who continue to search for their miracle match. Each one of us would be devastated to know that we have a life-threatening disease that could be cured if only the right person had joined the bone marrow registry.

I hope this bill, as it's reintroduced today, will be supported, will be passed. Even our discussion today, I hope, will raise the awareness of the need for people to participate in donating bone marrow.

I think it's important to also remember that we need people from all ethnic backgrounds to be participating. If we take a look at the Canadian bone marrow registry, we will see that many people of backgrounds other than Caucasians are vastly under-represented. It says here that there are approximately 230,000 Canadians registered: 83% of them are Caucasian, 1% aboriginal, 0.5% African-Canadian, 3.6% Asian, 1.6% East Indian and 0.3% Hispanic. We know that if we're going to be matching these donors to the transplant, they need to be of the same ethnicity. So certainly we need to encourage all people, and it's really important to raise awareness. This is an issue that isn't always talked about.

1130

I went on the website of the Katelyn Bedard Bone Marrow Association, and there was a note there from Judy Fortier of Lavigne, Ontario. She joined the registry 12 years ago and she says it's "Easy to register. Good for the soul."

Lisa Beneteau of Amherstburg says she did it to honour her husband, who had a transplant in May. She goes on to say that it's so easy; people need to be educated on how easy it really is.

There's someone from my community, Steven McEvoy, who has belonged to the registry for 16 years. He has donated twice.

There's a Kim Dwight of Strathroy, who writes that she has recently joined the registry because she wants to make her existence in this world useful to others.

There are Jennifer and Ryan from London, who have joined to honour a loved one's memory, and they hope to help somebody else.

There's a Celeste Breault from LaSalle, who says, "I joined when I heard about Katelyn Bedard. I went to school with her parents and it really hit home.... I realized that even if I wasn't a match for her, I could still help save someone's life."

Then there is Donita Des Rosiers from Windsor, who writes that she was at a Nascar race in Michigan and there was a booth set up by the national bone marrow donor program. Both she and her husband signed up on the spot.

Then there's Rosanna Brazil, who writes that she joined the registry in 1996 because a girl named Natasha was looking for a bone marrow transplant, and that a year before, a girl at her school had died suddenly from AML leukemia.

So you know what? There are many, many people who have made the decision to become a donor. I know

that recently there was a resident in Kitchener, my community, who was looking for a bone marrow transplant. He wasn't able to find a matching donor in the registry. His family was originally from Nicaragua and, as I think was pointed out to you, there weren't too many donors of Hispanic background, and he was quite desperate.

To those people who are watching today, I hope that a gift that you will consider making this Christmas is to register. You may be called upon at some point to give the gift of life to somebody else. Again, congratulations to my colleague on introducing this bill again.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Il me fait plaisir, moi aussi, de parler en faveur de la Loi visant à désigner le mois de novembre Mois de la sensibilisation au don de moelle osseuse.

Chaque année des centaines de personnes en Ontario ont besoin d'une greffe de moelle osseuse pour lutter contre des maladies, des maladies qui souvent sont mortelles. Cependant, moins de 30 % de ces gens trouveront un donneur de cellules souches parmi les membres de leur famille même si on inclut là-dedans les familles étendues. Un donneur non apparenté qu'on ne connaît pas est la seule source de moelle osseuse disponible pour la majorité des gens qui attendent le don de moelle osseuse.

Donc, un registre de donneurs non apparentés de moelle osseuse a été créé en 1989, ça fait quand même pas mal longtemps de ça, par la Société de la Croix-Rouge. Plus tard, ça a été prise en charge par la Société canadienne de sang, en 1998. Le registre vise à aider les gens qui ont besoin d'une greffe de moelle osseuse à trouver quelqu'un, un donneur compatible non apparenté, partout dans le monde.

On est, nous les politiciens ici à Queen's Park, dans une position privilégiée pour s'assurer que ce message-là se répand à la grandeur de la province. Pour ceux qui écoutent à la télé, puis certainement si on appuie ce projet de loi, on aura la chance de faire une différence concrète dans la vie de centaines de personnes. Par contre, le succès du registre repose largement sur ceux qui acceptent de se porter volontaires pour offrir le don de vie à une personne qui n'a aucun lien de parenté avec eux. Si de nombreuses personnes en attente ont pu recevoir une greffe de moelle osseuse essentielle à leur survie, c'est parce que le registre a permis de trouver un donneur et que, par miracle, cette personne-là était compatible. Par contre, c'est difficile et on a besoin que plus de gens participent.

Pour stimuler la participation, la Katelyn Bedard Bone Marrow Association a été mise en place en 2005. L'association vise à faire connaître le registre des donneurs de moelle osseuse du monde entier pour que tout le monde sache où un donneur potentiel puisse se trouver. Ça sert également à renseigner le public sur le don de moelle osseuse et attirer l'attention sur le besoin urgent de donneurs de moelle osseuse et d'encourager tous les adultes à s'inscrire au registre.

L'inscription est facile. Les gens pensent, quant à la moelle osseuse, que l'on parle d'une chirurgie ou des os

ou quoi que ce soit. Pas du tout; ce n'est pas ça. C'est une simple prise de sang. Même pour ceux qui ont peur des aiguilles, je vous garantie que ça ne fait pas mal. Allez-y. Vous ne le regretterez pas. Même mon collègue n'aura pas peur.

La désignation du mois de novembre comme Mois de la sensibilisation au don de moelle osseuse appuie à la fois les activités de la Société canadienne du sang et celle de la Katelyn Bedard Bone Marrow Association, en attirant l'attention sur la nécessité d'accroître le nombre de donneurs volontaires, afin d'accroître les chances de trouver un donneur de moelle osseuse compatible pour tous ceux qui sont en attente d'une greffe.

Je crois que ce sont des motifs très honorables. Je suis sûre qu'on a tous connu quelqu'un qui avait soit le cancer, un lymphome ou une autre maladie sérieuse qui était en attente d'une moelle osseuse et qui n'a pas reçu ce don de vie. Moi-même, j'ai perdu un ami il y a deux ans, M. Michel Galipeau, qui lui aussi aurait eu besoin d'une moelle osseuse et a subi des complications. On est tous dans des situations comme ça, on connaît tous quelqu'un, et en passant ce projet de loi, on peut faire une différence. Donc certainement, les néo-démocrates voteront en faveur de ce projet de loi. J'espère que le travail de comité va se faire et que ce projet de loi soit ramené en troisième lecture, pour être appuyé par cette Chambre et pour être sûr qu'il devienne loi. Nous avons la chance ici de faire une différence dans la vie de centaines de personnes. Il ne faudrait pas la laisser passer.

As politicians, we are in a leadership position. We have an opportunity here to pass a bill that will make a tremendous difference in the lives of hundreds of people waiting for bone marrow transplants. Let's make sure we take this leadership responsibility seriously. Let's make sure that this bill goes to second reading, goes to committee and comes back to this House and becomes the law. We will have an opportunity to make sure more people register and make a big contribution to people who are waiting for bone marrow transplants.

The season of giving is upon us. It would certainly be a nice gesture to call up your local hospital and make a donation. You won't regret it. You will feel better about it.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I want to thank the member for Essex for introducing this private member's bill, the Katelyn Bedard Bone Marrow Awareness Month Act.

Katelyn Bedard today is asking us to donate our bone marrow through the National Bone Marrow Registry. But I think at the same time Katelyn Bedard would want us, as members of Parliament, to be leaders and examples of how to live a healthy and gifted life. Is there something we can do to ensure that we do that? Yes: a proper diet, go easy on fats and sugars, increase amounts of fruits, vegetables and grains, and don't forget your vitamins. There are mineral supplements because our foods may be lacking in them. Physical exercise should be a must— aerobics, walking, cycling—and certainly getting enough sleep, which is something all MPPs need more of.

1140

But there is one dimension that seems to be missing as well to a healthy life that Katelyn Bedard is asking of us today, and that is the emotions. What are the effects of our emotions on our health? That of course is the new science called psychoneuroimmunology, which shows the connection between your mind, the nervous system and the immune system.

Why is this important? We know that the stress that most people feel has a negative effect on our lives, especially sitting here and listening to some of the speeches; that could certainly increase a lot of stress. But it is important, because I ran across a very interesting article in the journal of the Archives of General Psychiatry from December 2005. This study shows that the effects of an argument between spouses have a negative aspect on your health. The new study shows that arguments between spouses slow down your body's ability to heal a wound. Dr. Ronald Glaser of Ohio State University found that having these kinds of negative interactions between people—everyday, hostile relations with your spouse—is changing your body's immune system as you grow older.

The study shows clearly that only one half-hour argument with a spouse reduced the immune system's mechanism to heal a wound by one day; imagine that. A big, strong argument with your spouse reduces your immune system, and consequently it reduces the ability to heal a wound by one day. In short, as hostile arguments between couples increase, the body's ability to repair a wound decreases. That is the power of this new science called psychoneuroimmunology, and it shows that it has a direct effect on the immune system.

How does this relate to Bone Marrow Awareness Month? Bone marrow is the factory of production of red and white blood cells, and they have, obviously, a direct impact on the immune system. Consequently, in order to live a healthy, gifted life—because what is life but a gift, really—we have to try to ensure that we understand this kind of relationship. The body of evidence is growing that the emotional content, the stress we feel every day, has a direct impact on our health.

So what's the science? Let's look at Joan Borysenko, who says that the mind-body relationship is entering a new level in scientific understanding. She talks about how belief and imagination can unlock the mystery of healing. Dr. Carl Simonton pioneered the use of guided imagery for cancer patients, and he runs the Simonton Cancer Center in Pacific Palisades in California. Dr. Dean Ornish, University of California, advocates the use of meditation to reverse the effects of heart disease. Karen Olness, Bernie Siegel—Dr. Hamer of Germany discovered after 40,000 case studies that almost every disease is caused by a shock experience of stress.

In short, while we're discussing the whole issue of Bone Marrow Awareness Month, we must also show some leadership in terms of introducing a gifted and healthy life and some leadership to show the rest of the world how we can live a gifted life.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'm delighted today to speak in support of An Act to make the month of November Bone Marrow Awareness Month, which has been introduced by my colleague Mr. Crozier. This is a very important topic and something that is very near and dear to my heart. I have actually been tested and I am, I think, on the bone marrow registry.

As some of my colleagues know, my brother was diagnosed with aplastic anemia 10 years ago. This is a disease that strikes one in a million people, and in order to be treated for it, he required a bone marrow transplant. My siblings and I were all tested. My older brother was as close a match as we could find, although not a perfect match, and underwent the transplant. I have to say for my colleagues and for those who are watching that being tested and being put on the registry is a completely, as my colleague from Nickel Belt stated, painless undertaking, one that takes very little time and that could alter somebody's life forever.

My older brother was the bone marrow donor. When in fact you are called to be a donor, it is, again, a fairly uninvasive procedure. It is somewhat painful, although you recover very quickly. My younger brother received the bone marrow transplant. Unfortunately, over the following two and a half years, there were complications, and he did pass away in 2000. Although this has been a very difficult time for my family, and it's a very personal issue for me, I wanted to take the opportunity today to talk about it, to encourage people to get themselves on the registry because, again, it is painless, it takes very little time, and it can ultimately change someone's life dramatically.

In my hometown, I also have a little girl named Julie Perrotta. She is my friend Rosalba Perrotta's niece, and Julie was also diagnosed with aplastic anemia. Again, one of those shocking statistics, that it strikes one in a million, but I happen to know two.

Julie was seven when she was struck with aplastic anemia, and spent a great deal of time at Sick Kids hospital, as we did at Princess Margaret at around the same time. She's now 15. Julie was able to find a bone marrow donor on the registry. After all of her family, her relatives, her extensive Italian family were tested, they were unable to find a perfect match. But they found a stranger in Ohio, of all places, who matched perfectly with Julie, who went through the donation of her bone marrow and we had a successful transplant. Julie today is 15 years old, a high school student in North Bay and thriving. So, again, by the generosity of a total stranger thousands of miles away, this little girl in North Bay is now living a perfectly normal life. It's a very happy tale.

So I just wanted to take the opportunity today to support Mr. Crozier in his bill, to support the creation of the month of November as Bone Marrow Awareness Month, because it is an issue that touches so many people. While these diseases—leukemia, aplastic anemia and other autoimmune deficiency diseases—strike what seems to be a few people, everyone who has spoken this morning has had some kind of personal contact or awareness of

someone who has required a bone marrow transplant. There is a demand out there. There are people who are dying because they cannot find that match.

If this woman in Ohio hadn't taken the time to be tested and put herself on the registry, Julie wouldn't be here today. So I am here today to speak to the fact that, having been tested, having been put on the registry, it is painless, it takes very little time, and it really can change somebody's life.

I'm hoping today that we are all able to support this. It is, as the member for Kitchener talked about, a season of giving. I think it's important that we see this as a gift that anyone can give. It has no monetary value but it has a huge value in the impact on somebody's life. I want to encourage everyone to support this bill and to support Mr. Crozier in his endeavour to raise the awareness and to ensure that everyone across the province is aware of the fact that they can be on the registry. It's so simple, it's so easy, and it has such a dramatic impact.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? That concludes the debate on this item. The member for Essex has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: I want to thank the members for York-Simcoe, Huron-Bruce, Kitchener-Waterloo, Nickel Belt, Davenport and Nipissing for their contribution to our discussion of this bill this morning.

With that, I just want to read something from the website of the Katelyn Bedard Bone Marrow Association:

"If only there had been a donor for Katie.

"Katie was such a precious little girl. She loved to sing songs, make crafts and play games with her brother and cousins. She was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia (AML) not long after her second birthday. After treatment with chemotherapy, the leukemia went into remission but it eventually came back, just days before her third birthday. The only thing that could cure her of this life-threatening disease was a bone marrow transplant.

"Sadly, nobody in the bone marrow registry was a match for Katie. She never received the bone marrow transplant she desperately needed, and in June 2005, little Katie earned her angel wings. She was only three and a half years old.

"If only there had been a match for Katie in the bone marrow registry. If only more people were aware of the desperate need for bone marrow donors. Please help.

"Join the bone marrow registry today.

"Spread the word.

"Tell your friends and family."

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): According to the standing orders, I am now compelled to suspend the proceedings of the House until 12 noon.

The House suspended proceedings from 1150 to 1200.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

We will first deal with ballot item 3, which is standing in the name of Mr. Prue.

FIRE PROTECTION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2007

LOI DE 2007 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INCENDIE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Prue has moved second reading of Bill 14, An Act to deem that the Building Code and the Fire Code require fire detectors, interconnected fire alarms and non-combustible fire escapes. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 96, the bill is referred to the committee of the whole House.

Mr. Michael Prue: I would like to have this matter referred to the standing committee on justice policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Shall this bill be referred to the standing committee on justice policy? Agreed? Agreed.

We will next deal with ballot item 4, which is standing in the name of Mr. Crozier.

KATELYN BEDARD BONE MARROW AWARENESS MONTH ACT, 2007

LOI KATELYN BEDARD DE 2007 SUR LE MOIS DE LA SENSIBILISATION AU DON DE MOELLE OSSEUSE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Crozier has moved second reading of Bill 5, An Act to make the month of November Bone Marrow Awareness Month. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 96, the bill is referred to the committee of the whole House.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: I would seek unanimous consent that the bill be ordered for third reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is there unanimous consent to order the—

Interjection: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I heard a no.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: I ask that the bill be referred to the standing committee on justice policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Shall this bill be referred to the standing committee on justice policy? Agreed? Agreed.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, I do now leave the chair. The House will resume at 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1202 to 1330.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

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

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Lieutenant Governor transmits supplementary 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

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Toby Barrett: The McGuinty government's "Don't worry; be happy" approach is breaking the back of rural Ontario: on the front page of the Ontario Farmer, "Pork and Beef Farmers Ask for Help." Farmers are losing \$65 per finished pig and \$350 to \$400 for fed cattle. Surging government-policy-driven feed prices, rocketing European pork export subsidies and the Canadian dollar spell disaster. Our cattlemen predict losses of more than \$100 million in the last half of this year, and many hog and beef farmers fall through the cracks of CAIS.

When the pork sector faced disaster nine years ago, our government announced funding and it went into their hands within 40 days. Today's farmers have been waiting a lot longer for this agriculture minister to speak up.

Greenhouse fruit and vegetable growers are feeling the heat as well. Surely the minister knows their concerns on energy costs, minimum wage increases and regulatory restrictions ripping their bottom lines. Again, government has caused this; government must fix it.

Tobacco farm families have suffered a market meltdown. Jacked-up tobacco taxes and a smoke-free Ontario war on tobacco see government sitting idly by as families lose their farms, lose their houses and lose their livelihood.

Pork, beef, tobacco and hogs are reeling in the wake of McGuinty government policy, regulations and programs or lack thereof. Will this government finally announce help in this fall's economic statement?

RIDING OF ALGOMA-MANITOULIN

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I stand today to reflect on the year 2007 in the beautiful and vast riding of Algoma-Manitoulin.

During the year, we have seen the coming into production of the largest wind farm in Canada at Prince township in the Algoma district. We've seen remarkable improvements to the ski hill in Manitouwadge in the Thunder Bay district. We've seen significant improvements to the waterfronts at Gore Bay and Little Current in the Manitoulin district. We've seen improvements for the first time in over 30 years to the overpass that crosses the CPR main line at Chapleau in the Sudbury district.

We've seen new family health teams created in Wawa, Elliot Lake, Espanola and Little Current. We've seen the literal rising from the ashes of the Haavaldsrud lumber company at Hornepayne. We've seen 16 kilometres of four-lane highway opened in Algoma, just east of Sault Ste. Marie. We've seen the building of a long-overdue water treatment plant at White River in the district of Algoma. We've seen a \$9-million refit of the Chi-Cheemaun ferry, which travels between Tobermory and South Baymouth.

Community after community have made much progress. We've also seen difficult times in the forest industry.

I want to take this opportunity to wish all those in Algoma-Manitoulin a Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous new year from my dedicated staff and from our family. Best of the season.

LEGISLATIVE REFORM

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: "We get it," to quote my daughter's favourite heroine, Dora the Explorer. Welcome to the 21st century. We finally made it. The composition of this Legislature today is so different than it was 200 years ago. We've got more young men, we've got young women, and we've got members from different linguistic, regional, religious and cultural backgrounds.

On Tuesday this past week we all stood together. Regardless of gender, party or region, we unanimously rallied together to make this place more reflective of who we are and where we are going as a province. By unanimously supporting a government motion inspired by a resolution I tabled over a week ago, we have recognized that each member of this Legislature is more than just a politician. By forming an all-party panel with the intent of making the Legislature more family friendly, I think we've embraced a new era of thinking in this place.

This is an important time in the history of this institution. We have been recognized as stewards of this place and we must also modernize it to keep up with the times and make the systemic changes so that this Legislature will be more appealing to all men and to all women who are called to public service.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for your support of this initiative as well as all members, and in particular all of our families, who love this province as much as we do.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

Mrs. Laura Albanese: On November 27, the Ontario government officially committed an investment of over \$3 million in my riding of York South-Weston to establish a new satellite community health centre for Weston-Mount Dennis, an area identified as one of 13 Toronto neighbourhoods most in need of improved community infrastructure, according to the United Way Strong Neighbourhoods report.

The community health centre approach is vital to our public health care system. It brings health care to the

neighbourhoods where people may have difficulty accessing primary health care due to barriers such as language, culture, physical disabilities, homelessness, poverty or geographic isolation.

Community health centres, or CHCs, are non-profit organizations funded by the government of Ontario and community partners who make up health teams that include traditional medical personnel such as physicians, nurse practitioners and nurses who work alongside counsellors, community workers and dietitians.

Under the sponsoring agency of York Community Services, the Weston-Mount Dennis satellite CHC will be an umbrella group where residents can find medical as well as social and mental health programs all in one place.

I look forward to working with York Community Services and the Ministry of Health to ensure that the needs of low-income earners and seniors of York South-Weston will be met.

FOOD SAFETY

Mr. Randy Hillier: In 2001, the Harris government gave the people of Ontario confidence in the safety and quality of the food on their tables. However, under the same legislation, the McGuinty government has jeopardized our food supply and put rural Ontario and small business on notice once again.

Over-zealous agents are using this same legislation to eliminate local food suppliers that we have relied on for generations. The Premier thinks it's safer for me to buy steak from Argentina than from the Beckwith Butcher in Lanark county. In 2006, the McGuinty government put farmers' markets and church suppers in the crosshairs, and now the butcher shop is on the block. The minister of rural affairs talks about cost-sharing, but in the real world cost-sharing means bankruptcy.

The relentless attacks on rural values and the rural economy by the McGuinty government are consistent and despicable. In Ontario's butcher shops, food safety is their livelihood. For the McGuinty government, however, food safety is an attack on the family business and the cultural institutions that have been our bedrock.

With our tax dollars, the government tells us to "Buy Ontario." But under this government, there will be no one left to buy from.

HOME WARRANTY PROGRAM

Mr. Michael Prue: Last May, approximately seven months ago, I posed a question in this House to the then Minister of Government Services. I asked the minister what he was going to do in terms of the Tarion Corp., what kinds of actions he was willing to take, how he was going to act in order to protect homeowners in Ontario.

At that time, the answer was not forthcoming, and over the last seven months there has been no answer forthcoming from the McGuinty government—absolutely none whatsoever. People who have bought these homes and who are dissatisfied with these homes continue to write to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Most recently, Karen Somerville has written too to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services, who, I must say, has brushed her off. In his last paragraph of a very, very truncated and short letter back to Ms. Somerville, he writes: "I note from your correspondence that you have already sent your request for information to representatives of the township of Rideau Lakes and to the Honourable Jim Watson, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, to whom I must defer." So, he is not willing to intervene on the behalf of consumers either.

1340

If the Liberal Party wants to see the worst case of this abuse, I suggest that they go and talk to your former candidate in the township of Rideau Lakes, Lori Bryden, who is the living nightmare of all that this party refuses to do for consumers.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I rise in the House today to ask a question: Why is the federal government making a worker living in Ontario worth less than a worker living in any other province? Specifically, I'm talking about the federal government's ongoing refusal to provide Ontario workers with equitable funding for employment insurance benefits and job training.

Last year, the average unemployed worker in Ontario received \$4,000 less in funding for regular EI benefits when compared to the average unemployed person in the rest of Canada. If Ontario's unemployed were to receive fair treatment in regular EI benefits, they would have received about \$1.7 billion more in benefits last year alone.

Not only that, but 70% of Ontario's unemployed workers do not qualify for EI and are therefore excluded from EI-funded training programs. If Ontario was treated fairly and received the same funding for job training as other provinces, there would be an additional \$314 million annually to support Ontario workers to upgrade their skills.

Ontario workers deserve the same opportunities as other Canadians to improve their skills, to find meaningful work and to contribute to Canada's prosperity. I call upon all members of this House to press the federal government to end this unfair practice to the people of the province of Ontario.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Mr. David Zimmer: I rise to talk today about the McGuinty Liberals' \$17.5-billion rapid transit action plan for greater Toronto and the Hamilton area. The plan, Move Ontario 2020, tackles gridlock by building a modern transit system that will move people and goods quickly and efficiently to ensure we can attract and keep thousands of good, high-paying jobs.

Over the summer, John Tory called this plan a political ploy. I don't think the people of Ontario, who are going to benefit by the 175,000 jobs, would agree

with him on that point. The plan will build over 900 kilometres of new and improved rapid transit, create two rapid transit lines across Hamilton, and help realize Toronto's transit city vision for light rail transit across the city.

Mr. Tory can call it a ploy, but let's not forget that it was his party that allowed Ontario's infrastructure to crumble because of inadequate investments in our highway system. It was Mr. Tory's party that in 1998 cut transit funding to 0% and then, in 2002 when they resumed transit funding, it came in at less than half of the original level. The Conservative Party's 2001 investment plan provided only \$3.25 billion in funding for transit over a 10-year period. That's less than our government has spent in the last three years.

The McGuinty Liberals' Move Ontario 2020—

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

HOLIDAY MESSAGES

Mr. Jeff Leal: I rise in the House today to wish my colleagues and all Ontarians happy holidays. Whether you celebrate Christmas or Hanukkah or Kwanza or the Hajj, this festive time of year is a special time to be with family and friends, and it's also time to reflect on another year past. I encourage Ontarians to reflect on how fortunate we are to live in the best province in the greatest country in the world, and in the everyday hustle and bustle of our daily lives, I ask Ontarians to remember to give and share with those less fortunate.

As this is the time of year for celebrations and holiday cheer, it's important that we all ensure that we and our family and friends are safe in their travels. I remind Ontarians that if they drink, they should not risk the lives of themselves or others by driving. Please take a taxi or public transit, or use the services of the dedicated individuals at Operation Red Nose.

We all cherish this time of year to be with those we love, so let's make sure to be safe and enjoy it, while keeping in mind the needs of those less fortunate among us.

Mr. Speaker, happy holidays to you, my colleagues and all the people in the province of Ontario.

VISITORS

Mr. Frank Klees: I would ask that members help me to welcome three very special guests in the west gallery: Mr. Ron Wallace, the publisher and editor of the *Auroran*, otherwise known as Mr. Aurora; Ms. Barbara Thompson; and Mr. Greg Foster. Welcome.

VISITORS

Hon. David Caplan: Our page Dave Lewis, from Don Valley East, has his family here in the gallery: Jamie, Jane, Kristen and Tim. I'd like to welcome them here today, joining us watching David in action.

VISITORS

Mr. Bob Delaney: On much the same point of order, I'd like to introduce Brianne Westland from Mississauga–Streetsville, who is job-shadowing me today. She's a student at Cawthra Park Secondary School in Mississauga. I welcome her to the Legislature.

VISITORS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's my delight to introduce to the House Mr. John Bowker. He's with the Roncesvalles Village Business Improvement Association, owner of She Said Boom! and a defender of the rights of small business.

VISITORS

Mr. Mike Colle: In the gallery today we have one of the finest mayors of one of the finest cities in the world with us: the mayor of Mississauga, the honourable Hazel McCallion.

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

VISITORS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I stand to welcome Sharon Howarth, Adriana Mugnatto-Hamu, Rita Bijons, Mike Nickerson, and a number of other friends and supporters of Donna Dillman, today on the 68th day of her hunger strike, which I understand will be ending as an inquiry has been called by major environmental groups in this country on the issue of uranium mining in Frontenac county. Welcome and have a good holiday.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I think my statement may very well be a little timely, with the points of order.

Yesterday, members of the House spent in excess of five minutes introducing guests in the galleries. It seems to me that the business of introductions may be getting a little bit out of control. I would ask that members use their collective intellect to ponder alternatives to these kinds of introductions, and discuss them with me during the adjournment so that we might address it in the spring session.

As an example, it may be appropriate for the Speaker, on behalf of all members of the House, to make introductions at the onset, as I'm about to do on behalf of one member who brought this suggestion forward to me today, in welcoming 53 students and three teachers from a high school located in the riding of Leeds–Grenville. The grades 10 and 11 civics classes from Thousand Islands Secondary School are in the gallery today with their teachers James Cross, Conrad Walpot and Patty Gollogly. Welcome.

VISITORS

Mr. Charles Sousa: I would like us also, if we may, to congratulate and welcome the students of Neil C. Matheson Public School, who are here today. And with Her Worship Hazel McCallion, I think it's appropriate that the students are here, and I would like to congratulate them.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Welcome. Again, as has been said in the past in this chamber, to anybody that hasn't been recognized, welcome to Queen's Park today. It's a pleasure to have you here.

USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Yesterday, the member for Oshawa, Mr. Ouellette, raised a point of order arising out of question period. The member for Oshawa expressed an opinion that on at least two occasions during yesterday's question period, answers were given that amounted to announcements which should more properly have been made during ministerial statements. The member asked for some clarification on the rules and practice respecting this issue.

While the Speaker is not in a position to make judgment on answers in order to ascertain whether the contents constitute announcements of new public policy, I am nevertheless in agreement with the member that any such announcements should be made during ministerial statements and not question period. I would therefore remind the House that as much as possible, ministers should refrain from using question period to make statements that might more appropriately be made during a ministerial statement, particularly in response to questions asked by the members sitting on government benches. I thank the member from Oshawa for bringing this forward.

1350

Mr. Peter Kormos: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: The comments you just made give rise to this. I do put to you, sir, that you do have, as do members, direction from standing orders 36(a) and (d), which are relevant to the comments you just made.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the member for that, and I wasn't pointing out any one member. There were a couple of specifics raised, and it's really done just as a reminder to all members. I thank the member for the reminder from the standing orders as well.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

FINANCE STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2007LOI DE 2007 MODIFIANT DIVERSES LOIS
DE NATURE FINANCIÈRE

Mr. Duncan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 24, An Act to amend the Assessment Act, Community Small Business Investment Funds Act, Corporations Tax Act, Education Act, Income Tax Act, Land Transfer Tax Act and Taxation Act, 2007 / Projet de loi 24, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation foncière, la Loi sur les fonds communautaires de placement dans les petites entreprises, la Loi sur l'imposition des sociétés, la Loi sur l'éducation, la Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu, la Loi sur les droits de cession immobilière et la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts.

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 Minister of Finance for a short statement.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: In ministers' statements, Mr. Speaker.

POPE JOHN PAUL II DAY ACT, 2007

LOI DE 2007 SUR LE JOUR
DU PAPE JEAN-PAUL II

Mr. Klees moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 25, An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day / Projet de loi 25, Loi proclamant le Jour du Pape Jean-Paul II.

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, please.

Mr. Frank Klees: Members will recognize this bill; this is really a reintroduction of a bill that was before the House in the last session of Parliament. The House was prorogued. We had literally thousands of petitions in support of this bill. I'm reintroducing it today and asking that we give serious consideration to recognizing the life, the work and the contribution of Pope John Paul II as not only a spiritual leader but as a humanitarian and someone who bridged the gap between many cultures and faiths in the time that he reigned as Pope.

DAY NURSERIES AMENDMENT ACT

(NOT FOR PROFIT

CORPORATIONS), 2007

LOI DE 2007 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES GARDERIES
(PERSONNES MORALES
À BUT NON LUCRATIF)

Ms. Horwath moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 26, An Act to amend the Day Nurseries Act to limit the approval of corporations to not for profit corporations / Projet de loi 26, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les garderies afin de limiter l'agrément de personnes morales aux personnes morales à but non lucratif.

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.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This act is quite self-explanatory. The purpose of it is to restrict the expansion of child care in this province to the not-for-profit sector, as was advised to this government during the entire process of their consultations with child care providers and the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care particularly, because it's well documented that the not-for-profit sector provides a higher quality of child care at a lower rate. What we really want to see is good-quality child care being the priority of providers and not the shareholders of massive corporations.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT
(SNOW PLOWS), 2007
LOI DE 2007 MODIFIANT
LE CODE DE LA ROUTE
(CHASSE-NEIGE)

Mr. Ramsay moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to privately operated snow plows / *Projet de loi 27, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui a trait aux chasse-neige exploités en entreprise privée.*

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. David Ramsay: This amendment to section 109 is introduced today to clear up a double standard in the Highway Traffic Act that says to a private snowplow operator who has an oversized plow that if they have a contract with the province and a municipality, they're allowed to convey that plow on a provincial highway, but if they happen to have a private contract—say, with a forest company—they cannot and they have to disassemble it and reassemble it at the site where the work is to be taken. This adds a penalty to those operators and to forestry operations.

HOMESTEAD ACT, 2007
LOI DE 2007
SUR LES PROPRIÉTÉS FAMILIALES

Mr. Hudak moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 28, An Act to amend the Assessment Act with respect to homesteads / *Projet de loi 28, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation foncière à l'égard des propriétés familiales.*

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. Tim Hudak: This bill would update the previous Homestead Act to reflect the realities of 2007-08. As members know, assessors will be in the field this winter

and spring and will deliver to taxpayers a triple whammy of assessment increases this fall to be assigned in the 2009 tax year. That means that residents in some homes could see, based on previous results, 60% to 80% assessment increases.

This bill would ensure that the annual increase in assessment during the phase-in would be a maximum of 5% per year; provide a property tax break to seniors and the disabled; have a deductible for home improvements; and also bring in, as has been successful in Manitoba, a reverse-onus system to put the burden on MPAC and not the homeowner when it comes to proving an assessed value.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY
AMENDMENT ACT
(HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE), 2007
LOI DE 2007 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA SANTÉ ET LA SÉCURITÉ
AU TRAVAIL
(HARCÈLEMENT ET VIOLENCE)

Ms. Horwath moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 29, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to protect workers from harassment and violence in the workplace / *Projet de loi 29, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail pour protéger les travailleurs contre le harcèlement et la violence dans le lieu de travail.*

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.

1400

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Members of this chamber will know that the Lori Dupont inquest came up with a number of recommendations. Not surprisingly, one of them was this very action that you see to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to make it possible for workers to refuse an unsafe work environment when that work environment includes harassment, bullying and other kinds of violence in the workplace.

Unfortunately, this bill has been here many times before, but the government has not chosen to move on it. It's not the first time it has been recommended by a coroner's inquest. Women are dying at work and others are dying at work as a result of this bullying and violence. It needs to stop. We need to pass this bill.

PROTECTION OF MINORS
IN AMATEUR SPORTS ACT, 2007
LOI DE 2007 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES MINEURS PARTICIPANT
À DES SPORTS AMATEURS

Mr. Ouellette moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 30, An Act to provide protection for minors participating in amateur sports / Projet de loi 30, Loi visant à protéger les mineurs qui participent à des sports amateurs.

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. Jerry J. Ouellette: There are tens of thousands of volunteers doing a fantastic job, providing hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours in the province of Ontario, yet we found a small loophole in that in some areas there is still no requirement to ensure that convicted sex offenders be subject to submitting a vulnerable person's police check. What this bill does is ensure that convicted offenders are required to submit a vulnerable person's police check with the association in which they are volunteering to ensure whether they should be working with kids.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome Julie Harmgardt in the west public gallery today. Julie was a page from 2003, and her brother Simon is a current page from Oakville. She is here today with her mother and her brother Andrew. She also presented a book to Minister Cansfield that she wrote on Killbear Provincial Park. Welcome.

As well, I would like to remind the members in the gallery that they are welcome to be here with us today, but to refrain from clapping, and welcome His Worship David Miller from the city of Toronto to Queen's Park today.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. Michael Bryant: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion regarding committees.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Michael Bryant: I move that the following committees be authorized to meet during the winter adjournment in accordance with the scheduled meeting dates agreed to by the whips of the recognized parties and tabled with the Clerk of the assembly:

- Standing committee on finance and economic affairs;
- Standing committee on public accounts;
- Standing committee on social policy.

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

Agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND FISCAL REVIEW

PERSPECTIVES ÉCONOMIQUES ET REVUE FINANCIÈRE

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I rise today to present the 2007 Ontario economic outlook and fiscal review, the next phase in our plan to move Ontario forward.

Our economy is as strong and resilient as Ontarians themselves. In fact, so far this year, the province's economic performance has exceeded expectations.

The fundamentals of our economy are vital and strong. We do, however, face some challenges, including the state of the US economy, the value of our dollar and the price of oil. These external forces are having an immediate impact on the manufacturing, forestry, agriculture and tourism sectors—and, most importantly, the families that depend on them. This is our immediate priority, and today I will announce immediate action that builds on our previous initiatives.

The government's plan, at its core, is about investing in our people and in our infrastructure so that, working together, we can foster the next generation of economic growth.

Le plan du gouvernement vise avant tout à investir dans notre population et dans notre infrastructure. Ensemble, nous pourrions favoriser la prochaine vague de croissance économique.

Ontario's highly diversified economy and highly skilled workforce are key to continued growth in both the short and the medium term. Stronger-than-expected growth this year will be followed by continued growth in each of the next two years, though private sector analysts have revised their expectations downward since the 2007-08 budget. Growth this year has been revised upward to 2%, with growth next year expected to be 1.9%, and 2.5% in 2009.

Underlying these revised projections are greater uncertainty in the US economy as a result of recent developments in the American housing market, the stronger-than-expected performance of the Canadian dollar, and the higher-than-anticipated world price of oil. In spite of these very real external challenges, growth is up, employment is up, unemployment is down, and real wages continue to improve. This year's budget will be balanced.

Le budget de cette année sera équilibré.

If the reserve is not required, we will have a \$750-million surplus, \$400 million more than we projected in the March budget. And we will meet our commitments over the next two fiscal years with no deficits and no tax increases. Our plan is balanced; our plan is prudent; our plan is the right plan for Ontario's future.

Our government is moving forward today with a \$3-billion strategy to boost competitiveness, which targets

immediate investments to those sectors, communities and families not sharing in Ontario's prosperity.

Le gouvernement McGuinty va de l'avant aujourd'hui avec une stratégie dotée de 3 \$ de dollars pour augmenter la compétitivité de la province. Les investissements immédiats de cette stratégie sont ciblés sur les secteurs, les collectivités et les familles qui ne profitent pas de la prospérité de l'Ontario.

The success of our plan to date gives us the flexibility to do more now. Building on past initiatives, we're now moving forward on our five-point plan to make Ontario competitive that we outlined in the recent general election.

Our government is taking unprecedented action.

First, effective January 1, 2008, we propose eliminating the capital tax for the manufacturing and resource sectors, including forestry. Further, we are proposing to cut the capital tax rate for all businesses by 21% retroactive to January 1, 2007. In so doing, we accelerate the plan we established in 2004, which will help foster investment and job growth right across Ontario.

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Small businesses create jobs and they are the economic backbone of our communities.

Our government will help small business by proposing to increase the small business deduction threshold to \$500,000 from \$400,000, retroactive to January 1, 2007.

Over four years, thousands of small businesses across the province will benefit from this \$100-million investment in their future; 20% of them are in the manufacturing and forestry sectors.

Finally, we propose an increase in the tax credit rate for the Ontario film and television tax credit from 30% to 35%, and for the Ontario production services tax credit from 18% to 25%, lending further support to this burgeoning sector of our economy, making Ontario the leading jurisdiction in this area.

Altogether, this \$1.1-billion tax package targets those sectors and communities under the most pressure. This package would help protect existing jobs, stimulate investment in new jobs and provide immediate cash flow to those industries most in need of working capital.

We are also proposing to expand our land transfer tax refund to resale homes to help out first-time homebuyers. Effective midnight tonight, newly constructed and resale homes would be eligible for a refund of up to \$2,000.

On infrastructure: The McGuinty government has been pursuing an ambitious plan of infrastructure renewal since taking office in 2003.

To create jobs and boost competitiveness, we will invest an additional \$1.4 billion in critical public infrastructure.

Every community has infrastructure priorities, and we want to get those projects started now. The Ministers of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Transportation, and Municipal Affairs and Housing will be providing details on how our municipal partners will soon be able to access \$900 million in new funding.

The most critical infrastructure investment for the Ontario economy is a new border crossing at Windsor. Stakeholders are unanimous: We need that crossing now.

The Detroit River International Crossing Study team will very soon present its preferred alternative for the new access road, plaza and crossing.

The government of Ontario will fully fund its share of the cost associated with that new access road, subject to the successful completion of all approval processes.

As we make these investments, while respecting trade agreements, we will strive to ensure that Ontarians benefit from this massive public infrastructure renewal.

Many Ontario farmers have faced particular challenges related to the Canadian dollar. The McGuinty government will provide \$150 million in new dollars to strengthen competitiveness and to help cattle, hog and horticultural farmers manage the current market conditions. The Minister of Agriculture will work with the farming community to get this help to our farming families quickly.

Tourism is another key sector in our economy that is being buffeted by external events. Today, we are investing an additional \$30 million to extend our Travel Ontario campaign and support economy-boosting cultural festivals.

As we address today's pressing challenges, we need also to continue and enhance investing in research, innovation and commercialization: the foundations of tomorrow's jobs. The Minister of Research and Innovation will announce details of \$50 million in new investments in these areas, an important step in securing tomorrow's jobs.

When we speak of sectors, we are really speaking about Ontario families. When even one of us is out of work, all of us feel a responsibility. We will expand and improve the nearly \$1-billion Employment Ontario program with \$40 million in new resources. This new investment will focus on a timely, rapid re-employment and training service to deliver immediate career counselling and retraining for people facing layoffs.

This government is taking decisive action to build on the strength of our economy, but we could do even more if we had the help of the federal government. Half of the manufacturing jobs in Canada are in Ontario. It's not just a provincial concern; it ought to be a national imperative.

Corporate income taxes in Ontario are already lower than the rate the federal government plans to reach in 2012. We're doing our part to encourage growth, and now it's time for Ottawa to do more. Let me give them an example of what they can do. They ought to extend the accelerated capital cost allowance for manufacturers by three years. If they do that, we'll match it with our contribution, the money it takes to implement that initiative.

Let's have a look at employment insurance. Most Ontario workers must work longer hours than workers in other parts of Canada, only to qualify for less employment insurance support. This is wrong. If the EI plan worked fairly, an average unemployed Ontario worker would see an additional \$4,000 in annual benefits.

It's time for the federal government to do its part for our cities and towns by providing municipalities with \$1.9 billion in additional funding for infrastructure and public transit.

I should also note that Ontario will not support a free trade agreement with South Korea unless Ontario businesses have equal access to the South Korean market.

Today, those of us on this side of the House call upon those on the other side of the House to join us in urging the federal government to be a full partner in building a stronger Ontario for a stronger Canada.

The people of this province are counting on us to move Ontario forward. La population ontarienne compte sur nous pour que l'Ontario aille de l'avant. They want us to be prudent fiscal managers and pursue real progress at the same time.

Working together, Ontarians will overcome the challenges before us and win opportunities, not just for a few, but for all. That's what this plan is about, that's what the McGuinty government is all about, and the people of Ontario deserve no less.

1420

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND FISCAL REVIEW

Mr. Tim Hudak: What a difference from the Ontario we've always known. All members who have lived here, were born here or moved here have always known an Ontario that was the lead province in economic growth, in job creation and in Confederation.

Under Dalton McGuinty, the province of Ontario is dead last in economic growth in previous years and projected to be dead last in economic growth in the year ahead of us. Some 150,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs have fled the province under the Dalton McGuinty government, and what do we hear from the McGuinty government? "Oh, it's a small contraction," "It's cyclical," or they accuse communities who are coming to try to find jobs as being crying babies. That's the attitude the Dalton McGuinty government has had towards the manufacturing sector and job creation in the province of Ontario.

Some 30,000 individuals have packed up and left the province of Ontario. We've always known in Ontario, whether you came from St. John's, Newfoundland, or Victoria, BC, that you came to Ontario to find your prosperity, start your company or to grow into a job. That's the Ontario we've always known. In Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, it's the opposite. Some 30,000 talented individuals have fled Ontario to go to other provinces.

I ask you why. In their first days in office, Dalton McGuinty increased taxes, despite contrary promises during the election campaign, on the backs of seniors and working families in the province of Ontario, up to \$900 per individual in the so-called health tax. With the fiscal room they have in this budget and previous budgets, you'd think there would be some break for seniors and

working families in the province of Ontario to give them a break from Dalton McGuinty's high taxes and runaway spending.

Let me tell you, it took from our first Premier, John Sandfield Macdonald, to Ernie Eves in 2002 to get government spending in the province of Ontario to some \$68 billion. Under Dalton McGuinty, government spending has gone up to some \$93 billion according to these economic statements, some \$2 billion more than they said they were going to spend in their recent budget. Despite nothing happening in the summer, despite an election campaign, somehow, some way, they figured out a way to throw \$2 billion more out the door without any results for the taxpayers in the province. You would think that in a \$25-billion runaway spending increase, you would think in some one-third increase in total spending in the province of Ontario, you would find some room to give a break to working families and seniors who have trouble making ends meet in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario—the higher taxes, higher hydro rates, runaway spending and higher user fees.

As our leader, John Tory, and our leader in the House, Bob Runciman, have put forward, a real economic plan would reduce taxes in the province of Ontario. We'd have a real people agenda to make sure that those—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order on the government side, please.

Mr. Tim Hudak: —are properly retrained to get back into the workforce. You would make sure that the level of red tape—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock, please. I'd just like to say to the government side, that there was minimal heckling when the Minister of Finance delivered his speech; I would just ask that that same respect that was given be given from the government side to allow the honourable member to complete his response. Thank you.

Mr. Tim Hudak: No mention whatsoever of the crying need to reduce red tape and the burden of regulations that are holding back entrepreneurs and small businesses in the province of Ontario; not one word in this economic statement when we see the butcher here in Toronto, the small business down in Grimsby and the burgeoning entrepreneur in North Bay trying to make ends meet and falling under a crushing blow of red tape. There's not one mention of the need to reduce red tape and regulation in the economic statement here today.

No plan whatsoever to increase our energy supply, which has always been a hallmark; one of the strengths of the province of Ontario was our abundant and affordable energy supply. We've seen it go up significantly in the province of Ontario, and there's no mention here whatsoever of any plan to increase our energy supply.

Don't forget, the week before this economic statement came forward, we saw an auditor's report that came out that said some \$1 billion in sales tax arrears had not been collected by the Dalton McGuinty government, an

increase of some 65%. So you increase taxes on seniors and working families and leave a billion dollars on the table uncollected. Shame on you; shame on all of you.

We also saw in that same auditor's statement, once again, criticism of the government for its reckless end-of-year spending: some \$1.4 billion for, I think, the third year in a row. We all know what that end-of-year spending got us: a \$1-million grant to the world's most famous cricket club as part of a \$32-million slush fund, where you got your hands finally caught in the cookie jar.

The Ontario PCs will continue to fight for working families and seniors, real tax cuts, and a reduction in red tape to make sure that Ontario gets back to being the lead province in Canada, its historic position, leading in economic growth.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND FISCAL REVIEW

Mr. Howard Hampton: I think people across Ontario—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): My apologies. Again, that same respect that I asked for the official opposition, I would ask that it be granted to the third party as well. Again, there was minimal heckling during the Minister of Finance's delivery.

The leader of the third party.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I think people across Ontario wanted to see a response from the McGuinty government today to the loss of closing in on 200,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs. But if you read through this so-called economic statement—and it's pretty light for an economic statement—there is very little, virtually nothing, dealing with manufacturing jobs.

Yes, the minister wants to make some reannouncements of things that have been announced and re-announced and re-announced by the McGuinty government before, things that are old news, things that after they've been announced and reannounced, we continue to see manufacturing job losses. The minister wants to talk about tourism, he wants to talk about community festivals, but there is very little, virtually nothing here, to address the loss of manufacturing jobs.

About the only thing which speaks to the issue is that the government now says they want to put about \$40 million into worker retraining. Just to draw a comparison, the province of Quebec announced just a while ago three times what the McGuinty government is announcing for worker retraining, and their job loss in the manufacturing sector has been far less.

To put this into perspective, if you look at job loss in the auto sector, the auto parts sector, the forest sector, the steel sector and in manufacturing generally, it comes out to \$7 billion in lost wages and benefits. What's the McGuinty government's response to that \$7-billion loss? Forty million dollars for worker retraining. Seven billion lost in wages and benefits of workers who do not have a job, and the response of the McGuinty government? A measly \$40 million for worker retraining.

This is not a response to the loss of one in seven manufacturing jobs in Ontario. There is no strategy here to sustain and reposition manufacturing jobs in Ontario. This is a McGuinty government that basically has folded up the tent and wants to talk about tourism and community festivals when the real issue is the loss of good-paying manufacturing jobs.

I think people across Ontario are going to be disappointed again today by a McGuinty government that looks for photo ops, that looks for meaningless repetition of old announcements that haven't been effective, while literally thousands of hard-working people are losing their jobs virtually every week in this province.

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ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND FISCAL REVIEW

Mr. Michael Prue: I of course have had an opportunity to read the minister's speech. I am constantly fascinated by how he is able to announce and reannounce and reannounce again the same old chestnuts, the same old policies.

I look down at what he announced today. He has an infrastructure renewal of \$1.4 billion. Pardon me, but I've heard that old chestnut before. I've heard the promises before. I've seen the fact that there's been no action before. My real question to him is, how many times does he have to say this before he actually does something?

I look down at \$900 million for municipalities. He's promised this before; he has not delivered on anything before. How many times does he have to make these announcements, haul the mayors down from all over the place to listen to the same announcement, time after time after time until he actually chooses to do something?

He's talking about the border at Windsor. I think I heard 100 times in this Legislature in the last four years about people needing to do something about the border at Windsor, and today he only promises that they're going to take some future action. Nothing at all, again.

He's talking about research and innovation—same announcement; no details to date. He's talking about the old chestnut of the federal government—if only they would reduce corporate taxes, if only they'd change the unemployment insurance, if only they'd give money to cities. The fact is that it is his responsibility to do the right thing, and he has chosen just to blame someone else.

Last but not least, I cannot believe the thing about Korea. It has nothing to do whatsoever with this Legislature. It has everything to do with the federal government—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. The time for responses is complete.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would like to take this opportunity to welcome to the Legislature today Mr. Trevor Pettit, member from Hamilton Mountain in

the 36th Parliament, in the east public gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd also like to take this opportunity to ask all members to join me in thanking this wonderful group of pages. Unfortunately for them, it was a short session, but I trust it was an excellent learning experience for them. We very much appreciated your presence here, and we wish you and your families all the best. But most importantly, hopefully you've learned something, a little more about politics, and that one day you will pursue this noble calling. Thank you to all the pages.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Tim Hudak: I have a question for the Premier. One of your first bills in the Legislature was the biggest tax hike in the history of Ontario. You hiked taxes on the backs of working families, you hiked taxes on the backs of seniors, you hiked taxes on the backs of businesses, to the point where Ontario has the most uncompetitive business tax rate in all of Canada. Today you are giving part of that back but not making up for the massive tax increases you imposed, and as a result some 150,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs have fled the province of Ontario.

Premier, obviously you are admitting today you made an error in increasing business taxes, causing the flight of those jobs. Are you going to apologize to those 150,000 manufacturing people who are now out of work?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm pleased to take the question, but this is a bad day for the opposition. We have worked long and hard, starting over four years ago, to, first, begin by tackling a \$5.6-billion deficit which the previous government saddled the people of Ontario with. We then fought an election to ensure that this party could not take \$3 billion out of health care for the people of Ontario. And we now find ourselves, as a result of long, hard, painstaking work, in a position where today in this Legislature we're talking about \$3 billion in additional support for the people of Ontario and their economy. We're proud of the work we've put into this, we're proud of being able to be here today, and we're proud of the work that Ontarians are doing.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Clearly, Premier, today's economic statement is an admission of your failure in judgment as the Premier of the province of Ontario. You, sir, made the call. You made the call to increase the business tax rates in Ontario to among the highest in North America. You increased spending by some \$25 billion, and Lord knows how many spools of red tape you put on the back of small businesses in the province of Ontario. The

result: Some 150,000 families are without work because of your failed economic policies. In fact, just two months ago, you said you opposed business taxes. Premier, is this your apology? Are you saying you're dead wrong, or did Greg Sorbara simply screw up?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Keep the clock running. I'd ask the member to withdraw that last comment and not make a direct attack at a sitting member. You should be speaking to that member as a member from his respective riding.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I withdraw the term "screw up."

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The honourable member opposite says he's in favour of our government doing things to strengthen the economy and lend more support to workers who have lost their jobs. But when we came to the floor with a half-billion-dollar auto sector fund—which, by the way, landed \$7 billion worth of new investment—they opposed that. When we came up with a half-billion-dollar advanced manufacturing investment strategy, they opposed that. When we came forward with \$1 billion in supports for the agrifood sector, they opposed that. When we came to the floor with \$1 billion in support for the forestry sector, they opposed that.

Today we've come forward with \$3 billion in a package of business tax measures and investments in skills training, infrastructure and innovation. They again oppose those initiatives.

If the people of Ontario really want to know who's on their side when it comes to helping out workers who have lost their jobs and helping businesses get back on their feet and into the game to become more productive, they know whose side we're on.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm surprised the Premier would bring up the auto sector today. Premier, as you know, this morning—this very morning—we learned that Chrysler is shutting down its Windsor minivan plant: some 5,000 people given their pink slip two weeks before Christmas, and you dare to bring up the auto sector on the day that 5,000 people got their pink slips down in Windsor? The Premier well knows that for every job that he claims he created in the auto sector, some three more jobs in the auto sector have been lost. Dura Automotive, Dana Corp., International Truck and Engine, Freightliner, Ford, GM and Chrysler all have announced layoffs.

Let's face it: This is becoming a train wreck when it comes to the manufacturing sector, and what does the Premier offer today? His job retraining program works out to some \$230 an individual. That works out to an iPod. Thank you very much. Merry Christmas. Will you at least apologize to those workers for those meagre funds invested—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: You want to talk about support for workers who have lost their jobs? Let's understand what we did in our first mandate. We negotiated the first-ever labour market development agree-

ment with the federal government, which puts a half-billion more dollars in our hands here in the province of Ontario.

What the Minister of Finance has announced today is another \$40 million on top of the almost \$1 billion that is already in place. Just so the honourable member opposite understands, we're providing on average \$12,000 in training opportunities for workers who have lost their jobs. If the member opposite is truly concerned about Ontarians who have lost their jobs, then I ask him to stand up and publicly support our government's demand of the federal government that they ensure that our Ontario workers are not discriminated against and receive \$4,000 more in employment insurance, as they would had they been located in other provinces in this wonderful country.

1440

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is for the Premier. If a train leaves Thunder Bay carrying 100 tonnes of toxic goo at 100 kilometres per hour and arrives in Sault Ste. Marie with only 10 tonnes of toxic goo, can the Premier tell us at what point along the trip the minister should resign?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'll give the member full marks for creativity. But I think there's an important issue at stake here, and it has to do with the handling of hazardous waste.

We were the first government to ban the land disposal of untreated hazardous waste in our province. That is presently being implemented. The first phase came into place in August 2007. We're bringing Ontario now to an equal footing with the United States EPA standards. The fact of the matter is that when it comes to inspections as well, we are now nearly doubling inspections—500 this year, up from under 300 three years ago. All of our high-risk facilities have already been inspected this year. By any measure, we have come a long way forward when it comes to ensuring that we are properly managing and handling hazardous waste in Ontario.

Ms. Laurie Scott: What good is the banning if you don't enforce it? The Auditor General made it clear that this is happening: leaky trucks and trains travelling across the province, oozing toxic goo, threatening the safety of the people of this province. He has made it clear that it's not a data entry problem, it's not a paperwork problem; it's an enforcement problem. This is not an issue you can blame on previous governments. You can't blame it on the weather.

They have no one to blame but themselves for their negligence on this file. How could this government allow this shocking situation to occur? How?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'd like to say that we could have turned it around overnight, but let's understand what happened to the original Ministry of the Environment in that government. They cut the funding by 40% and let go one third of the staff. They now pretend that

they're concerned about enforcement, but when they had the opportunity they gutted the ministry and fired one third of the staff.

We have been able to move forward because we've hired more inspectors. In fact, we've hired, so far, 115 more inspectors. That represents a 50% increase in our inspection capacity. I think that could properly be called progress.

Ms. Laurie Scott: The Premier simply doesn't get it. Trains and trucks are travelling with toxic goo across this province and the government does nothing about it.

Here's what the Auditor General said: "Hazardous waste is basically being dumped some place where it shouldn't be dumped and it's not being treated."

McCarter said a day after his annual report was released, "That certainly is a risk to the environment. The environment ministry is ignoring their very own rules."

So, again, for the riddle: If a train leaves Thunder Bay carrying 100 tonnes of toxic goo and arrives in the Soo with just 10 tonnes of toxic goo, at what point on the journey should the minister resign?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think the real riddle here is, given their record, cutting the ministry budget by 40%, firing one third of the staff, that they can stand in their place today with the temerity, the unmitigated gall to put this kind of a question.

I think what Ontarians want from us is to continue to make progress. I can report once more: We've hired 115 more inspectors. That represents a 50% increase.

We are grateful for the recommendations and advice provided by the Auditor General. We will work hand in hand with the Auditor General to ensure that we continue to make progress on our watch, contrary to what happened on the previous government's watch.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Premier. Under the McGuinty government, we've seen the loss of 175,000 manufacturing jobs. That works out to about a \$7-billion loss in wages and salaries for Ontario working families. The government's response is a mere \$40-million workplace training announcement. Premier, is this the best your government can do: respond to a \$7-billion wage and salary loss with a \$40-million retraining announcement?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm sure that the leader of the NDP does not want to lose track, although he perhaps has difficulty grabbing hold of this, but we are ahead by 418,000 more jobs. If you take all the jobs we've gained and subtract from that all the jobs that we've lost, we're still ahead by 418,000.

When it comes to the supports we're providing to workers who have lost their jobs—and that's a real and pressing issue from a family perspective; we understand that. That's why one of the first things that we did in our first mandate was to negotiate, for the first time ever, a new labour market development agreement with the

federal government. That gave us an additional half-billion dollars.

The leader of the NDP now knows that what we're talking about today is adding \$40 million more by way of supports to an initial \$1-billion Employment Ontario fund. He knows that, and it would be helpful, I think, were he to admit that.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I think what the Premier needs to admit is that much of this money would have been spent by the federal government in their jurisdiction. They've transferred it to Ontario, but in total, there is an inadequate response. Let me put it in a perspective that I think Ontarians would understand: \$7 billion lost in wages and salaries; only \$40 million in a worker retraining effort. That's like trading Sidney Crosby, Chris Pronger and Robert Luongo and getting Wade Belak in return and saying that it's a good deal.

Premier, with 175,000 Ontarians losing their jobs, with a loss of \$7 billion in wages and salaries alone, don't you think we deserve a response of more than \$40 million?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, it's true that we have lost some jobs, but overall, we're up by 418,000 new jobs. Using the leader of the NDP's math, if you take those 418,000 new jobs, we're talking about \$28 billion being added to our economy as a result.

Let me tell you a little something about what we're doing in order to help our workers who've lost their jobs. The average investment per individual—this is not a maximum; in fact there is no maximum when it comes to training and upgrading dollars—is \$12,000. We're providing retraining for, on average, 22 weeks. If retraining is required in another community, costs can be supported depending on financial need.

We understand that there are real and pressing issues for those Ontarians who have lost their jobs. It's very important to those families in particular. That's why we are proud to make this additional \$40-million investment today.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Howard Hampton: Premier, you should read what some of the economists are saying about your so-called attempt to avoid people seeing how bad the manufacturing job loss is. Economists point out that workers who are losing their jobs in the manufacturing sector suffer wage cuts of 25% or more, implying a loss exceeding \$10,000 annually. That's what's happening out there. You wonder why the poverty rate is skyrocketing in Ontario? It's because good jobs are being lost and your so-called McJobs aren't doing it for working families.

Premier, explain to all those people who've lost their jobs and who are at risk of losing their jobs why there isn't one single thing in this budget that will do something to help reposition and sustain manufacturing jobs in Ontario.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that the leader of the NDP knows that the new jobs that are being created are

very high-paying jobs—I think 95% over \$19.50 an hour. Those are good-paying jobs. Those are the kinds of new jobs that are being created.

Again, we understand that there are some real challenges. That's why we have come forward today with a \$3-billion package. In part, it serves to supplement the benefits and supports that are there for workers who've lost their jobs.

I'm surprised to hear that the leader of the NDP is not standing up and commending us for the tax initiatives that we've taken today to enhance the competitiveness of our businesses so that they continue to grow, so that they enhance the level of productivity, but most importantly, so that they can hire more people. I would have thought that the leader of the NDP understood that the single most important thing that we can do for an unemployed worker, in addition to providing essential supports, is to create more jobs. That's why we're proud of the fact that overall, we are ahead in this economy with 418,000 new jobs.

1450

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Premier, the fact of the matter is that manufacturers aren't hiring new workers; they're laying off workers. Despite your attempts at re-announcements and re-photo ops here today, the situation is getting worse. You boast again in your economic statement about \$1 billion in assistance for the forest sector. Well, this morning, Domtar announced they're shutting down one of the most modern paper machines in Ontario—125 more workers out the door.

How do you consider this a response? You make re-announcements that haven't been effective before, but even as you make those reannouncements, more and more manufacturing workers continue to lose their jobs across Ontario. How is your government's response in any way fair to those workers who are losing their jobs?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The leader of the NDP is saying that what we talked about today was a re-announcement. Nothing could be less accurate. We're talking about \$3 billion in a brand new announcement today.

In particular, one of the things that folks in the forestry sector have been telling us is, "You've got to do something about those capital taxes." We've been hearing that for at least a decade in the province of Ontario. As you know, we have put in place now—we had in place a plan to phase out capital taxes, but we've announced today for the Minister of Finance's statement that capital taxes for that particular sector will be gone as of January 1, 2008.

So what we've done is, we've just changed the rules today, in keeping with the request of the forestry sector, in order to ensure that we enhance the competitiveness, to make sure that they can get productivity-enhancing equipment, make those investments, get back on their feet, get back in the game and start hiring back people. For the leader of the NDP to say that there's nothing new here means that he doesn't understand what we've announced.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Premier, I understand all too well. Let's just take the Dryden announcement that was made today. The paper machine that's being shut down is one of the largest, most modern paper machines in Ontario. This is a mill that's had over \$1 billion in new investment in the last 10 years. What's the company doing? They're going to shut it down. They're saying to you that your so-called \$1 billion in forestry assistance doesn't do the job. They're saying to you today that anything you've announced today isn't doing the job.

Premier, these are real people. In Thunder Bay, at least three workers who have been laid off from forest sector mills have committed suicide. Many more are in very deep depression. Do you think they would find anything, anything at all, in your economic statement today that would lead them to believe that there's a better future for them, a better future for manufacturing jobs in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think that one of the things that is demanded of leadership, particularly in challenging times in challenging sectors, is that you speak to the future with a sense of optimism. I don't hear a word of that coming from the leader of the NDP; not a single word of that.

People out there can despair on their own; our shared responsibility is to give them good reasons to be hopeful. That's why we have finally put ourselves in a position—we got rid of their deficit. We held off their insistence at cutting \$3 billion out of health care. We've come to the floor today with \$3 billion by way of new investments, supporting tax competitiveness, new innovation, new supports for our workers. We can't turn this around overnight, but I have an abiding confidence in the people of Ontario, and in our workers, to come together and see ourselves through this difficult period.

We will do our part here in this Legislature. Hopefully, the leader of the NDP will get on board at some point in time and speak about the bright and promising future that's there for all Ontarians. At the same time, it would be nice that we should stand up to the federal government.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question, the member from—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Premier, let me tell you what those workers wouldn't find inspiring.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question. One, two, three. Correct?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question, the member for Nepean—Carleton.

Mr. Howard Hampton: This is the leadoff question. It's my second supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): With respect—

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Howard's right.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Then we're all wrong.

Interjections.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I think there have been two questions from the leader of the NDP in this round.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Okay. Final supplementary.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Premier, I'll tell you what people don't find inspiring. When there's a job crisis, what people don't find inspiring is that your government comes today with essentially empty reannouncements and then says, "We blame Ottawa."

Let me tell you what I think workers would find inspiring. Those workers who have been laid off in the forest sector, and many who have been laid off in the auto parts sector, might find it inspiring if they knew there was going to be an industrial hydro rate which would allow manufacturers to continue to manufacture here. They might find it inspiring that your government was going to put in place a jobs commissioner to actually take action and put together strategies to help reposition jobs.

Premier, why aren't there any initiatives in your budget aimed at sustaining and repositioning manufacturing jobs while you spend all kinds of time trying to blame somebody else?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaking of old chestnuts, the leader of the NDP is floating this notion once again of a jobs commissioner. I don't understand how increasing the size of our bureaucracy is going to create jobs for individuals in the forestry sector.

I can tell you what we have been able to do to date, whether you're talking about our auto sector investment strategy, whether you're talking about our manufacturing sector investment strategy—and that's \$1.5 billion all told; the agri-food sector, \$1 billion; the forestry sector strategy, \$1 billion. What we've been able to demonstrate, what we've been able to communicate to the workers of Ontario and entrepreneurs alike, is that we are there with them. We are on their side. We understand that there are some things over which we have no control, whether that's the value of the Canadian dollar, the price of oil, the sluggish US economy or the advent of globalization. We don't have control over those things, but here in Ontario we do have control over certain kinds of things, and one is where we choose to invest as a government. That's why we're proud today to come to the table with yet another \$3 billion in supports for the economy and Ontario workers.

WATER QUALITY

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is for the Minister of Education. The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board was forced to turn off literally hundreds of classroom fountains because of your made-in-Toronto bureaucratic regulation on aging school lead piping.

The problem is that most of the schools in Barrhaven are brand new. They were built after 1990 and they are not exposed to lead piping, nor are they exposed to elevated levels of lead in the water. Now Barrhaven schools

are forced to shut down fountains because the school board does not have enough custodians to flush the fountains, even though they really don't need to be flushed at all.

Will the minister commit to me today to relaxing the bureaucratic standards so that water fountains in my constituency will flow?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: If what the member opposite is asking is whether we will lower standards and expose kids to risk, the answer is no, we will not do that.

What we will do is provide water for those kids. The Ministry of Education has been providing bottled water. The testing standards have gone up. The fact is that there's a new regime of testing that is in place in terms of lead in the water. So we are following that regime. The school boards are going through that testing and we have been providing bottled water to the students who need it in those schools.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: "A new regime" is right. I'm going to read something from the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board chair, who said, "This is a very bureaucratic process and position."

The biggest problem in this, other than that we have brand new schools in Barrhaven that are not exposed to lead, is that the schools and people don't need made-in-Toronto regulations for South Nepean. This blanket approach has parents in Ottawa concerned that there is lead in water where there is not.

Let me read this from the CBC: "Megan McNeill-McKinnell said it made parents wonder what was wrong with the water... 'So you start to think about what has been happening, how long it has been going on for and how come we didn't get information about it.'" It's misinformation created by her ministry.

Again, the schools in Barrhaven are brand new. They are not exposed to lead or lead piping. Will they relax these Liberal flushing guidelines for lead because there is no lead piping? Will she let the kids in Barrhaven drink the water in their schools?

1500

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the member opposite should talk to her environment critic, who is not looking too comfortable at this moment. The fact is, I am the Minister of Education for the whole province of Ontario; I am not the Minister of Education for Toronto. The standards that are in place in Toronto have to be in place in Ottawa, in Kapuskasing, in Timmins and across the whole province. Every child in this province deserves to have safe drinking water, and we're going to ensure that that's the case.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. When will this government take seriously the recommendations, the latest of which came from the inquest into the murder of Lori Dupont, that call for legislation to ensure that workers are not subject to harassment and violence in the workplace in this province?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to thank the member for her interest in this important issue and begin, I guess, by expressing on behalf of all of us in this Legislature our condolences to the Dupont family and all impacted by this tragedy. I want to also thank the coroner's jury for the good work that they put into this review. We're going to be taking a very, very serious look at the recommendations. We're looking forward to a thorough review of those recommendations, and we'll move forward on that basis.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Today I introduced workplace harassment and violence legislation, and there's an entire movement in this province that is trying to get this new law put in place. It's the women's movement, it's the labour movement, it's ONA and OPSEU and the OFL and CUPE—literally all of the unions who represent workers in these kinds of workplaces—and now the coroner's jury as well. Everyone wants action.

Nurses are being brutalized. Women are being killed. It's reprehensible that the McGuinty government has not acted to prevent these kinds of tragedies in this province. When will the minister actually act, heed our call for workplace harassment and violence protection in Ontario's workplaces?

Hon. Brad Duguid: We received these recommendations just this week and we're going to take a very thorough look at the recommendations. This government does not tolerate violence anywhere, let alone in the workplace, and we will not tolerate it in the future. We think that these recommendations are worth having a good look at. We're going to have a very thorough review of them. Employers across the province should know that under the Occupational Health and Safety Act they have a duty to take every precaution to ensure that the health and safety of their workers are protected, and that duty extends to the issue of violence as well. However, we will definitely review these recommendations and give it a good, thorough study.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, improving access to family care is a cornerstone of medicare, and ensuring retention of physicians is central to its goal. Ontario's family physicians should be adequately compensated to ensure that we are competitive with other jurisdictions. My question is: What has our government done to address the issue of physician compensation and retention?

Hon. George Smitherman: I'm pleased today that CIHI has come out with some data that I think people will be interested in looking at. Our government has increased physician compensation quite dramatically every year since coming into office, and today's report shows progress made over the 2004-05 report. The CIHI data shows that Ontario pays doctors more than the national average in every subspecialty area. Put another way, the gross pay of physicians in Ontario has increased

11.4% in the two fiscal years between 2003-04 and 2005-06. That means that our doctors are making an average of \$30,000 more than the national average and that Ontario has risen to third in Canada in average gross billings for physicians—a jump from fifth just the year before.

The resources that we put to work have worked for Ontarians. Some 500,000 more Ontarians are enjoying access to family health care provided at the community level by Ontario's hard-working physicians.

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: The report the minister mentions is interesting, and it serves as a very good reminder of this government's success in improving access to family doctors. This government has dramatically increased the number of family health teams in the province, along with alternative models of physician compensation. I would like the minister to explain how the data released today takes into account the investments by this government.

Hon. George Smitherman: The data shows the benefit of the earliest investments from our agreement almost four years ago with Ontario's doctors. It captures about \$400 million worth of investment. In subsequent reporting cycles we'll have the advantage of learning the impact of \$652 million of investment which occurred in 2006 and 2007. And yet to come, starting on January 1, 2008, is a further \$364 million worth of compensation for Ontario's physicians. All taken together, we're making tremendous progress at ensuring that Ontario's physicians are appropriately compensated for the quality of work that they do with Ontario communities. We're really, really excited that here in Ontario we've championed new ways of practising, like the family health team, which brings together doctors, nurses and other practitioners to enhance the comprehensiveness of care and to be able to provide care for even more Ontarians—progress to show in results today and further progress to be shown as further data comes forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just want to take this opportunity to apologize to the leader of the third party. In conference with the table, you were correct, and we were wrong. Our apologies to you.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. This week, Minister, you appointed yet another supervisor for yet another Ontario hospital. What is of note is that these hospitals are providing care in the high-growth communities, such as Grand River Hospital in Kitchener, Stevenson Memorial in Alliston and William Osler Health Centre in Brampton. I also understand that there is a peer review team looking at the hospital operations at Rouge Valley Health System. Historic underfunding of growth hospitals has resulted in a \$945-million gap in hospital funding for Ontarians living in high-growth communities, such as the community of Burlington. The gap continues to widen, without targeted growth funding. To prevent the appointment of even more supervisors in more high-growth

areas, can the minister please tell us when he will provide Ontario's high-growth hospitals with at least the \$100 million in growth funding that his party promised during the election?

Hon. George Smitherman: It's always a delight when the Conservative Party, the official opposition, stands in the Legislature of Ontario, just a couple of months after campaigning in favour of a \$3-billion cut to health care. It's not enough that they, alongside the New Democrats, stand as the parties in this Legislature that, when they had the privilege of governing and responsibility for health care, in two successive years cut by hundreds of millions of dollars the funding for Ontario's hospitals. Over four years, every Ontario hospital has received more money, and I rather predict, on the basis of the three-year indication that we've provided, that each will see more money in the coming years.

We have instituted growth funding. We've appointed fewer supervisors than the party that came before us, and the people of Burlington have benefited from the wisdom of people across the province who elected a party and defeated another one that promised to cut \$3 billion out of health care.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: The \$945-million gap speaks for itself. On behalf of the millions of Ontarians living across the 905/GTA area and other high-growth communities, I'm disappointed that the minister is unable to provide Ontarians with a detailed plan about an election promise.

The funding gap for hospital care, including in Burlington, is getting wider: \$221 million in this year per resident compared to \$217 million last year per resident. High-growth hospitals are currently negotiating their accountability agreements with LHINS, and those will outline the range and volume of services that will be provided. Not having adequate funding for growth will impact local access and mean longer waiting in emergency rooms.

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Mr. Minister, where is your plan to address hospital issues in high-growth areas, and why won't you get it rolling by keeping your party's \$100-million election promise? Aren't you even concerned about the impact—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Health.

Hon. George Smitherman: Rather than being concerned, indeed I'm optimistic, because the people of Ontario have already made sure that one thing doesn't happen, and that is that that honourable member's party would be here working on their detailed plan to implement their campaign platform, which would have seen the closure of hospitals all across the province of Ontario.

If the member wants to see our plan for high-growth areas, take a look from the highway at the construction cranes that are on site at Trillium hospital, or come to the groundbreaking at Oakville, or visit the new hospital in Brampton, or go to Richmond Hill and see the construction crane, or come and visit with us in Markham as

we break ground on a new hospital, or go and visit the new regional cancer centre in Oshawa or even go to the community of Ajax, where recently, alongside our newly elected member, we broke ground on a long-awaited renewal of that hospital.

The people in the high-growth areas can see the money coming as the construction cranes bring new buildings, and they have been saved from the \$3-billion cut proposed by that honourable member's party.

FOOD SAFETY

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Yesterday I stood in this chamber and brought forward the case of Karl's Butcher and Grocery shop, in business for 46 years, forced by this government to close because of these draconian measures, forced to put \$200,000 into his business to be able to stay open, despite the fact that Toronto Public Health said he didn't need to do any of it in the first place. Today, I'd just like to ask this minister if she will stand and finally admit that the McGuinty government is actually working on behalf of the big meat-packing businesses, the Wal-Mart-sized businesses and against small neighbourhood business.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm happy to stand in this House and clarify for the member opposite that for this government the health and safety of people in our community who access food products is a priority. In the year 2001, the Food Safety and Quality Act was passed. It was never proclaimed until we came to government. When it was passed, we passed regulations. Along with that, we provided a \$25-million fund so that those facilities that would be impacted by the regulations would have an opportunity to gain support from this government so that they could make their establishment comply with these new health regulations.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Adam Wesierski at Kingsway Meat Products actually applied for that paltry \$25,000 about three months ago and hasn't yet heard back from this government and meanwhile has had to mortgage his house to finance his business. When will you actually address this outrageous situation? When will you stop closing small businesses across Ontario? Finally, when will you admit that you are the true butcher of Main Street?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would ask that the member withdraw that.

Interjection.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: What I can say to the honourable member is that we certainly do want to do whatever we can to support small food processors in the province of Ontario. That is why we established the \$25-million fund. When this situation came to my attention, I asked officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to contact this business to ensure that all of the resources that are made available by this government were known to the business and that we could do all that we could to assist them to comply with

the regulations so that this operation could continue to provide safe, quality meat products to people in the community.

My staff continue to be very prepared to support this business. I would also caution the member that there have been numbers presented in this House. These are numbers that are estimates that have been provided. I would say, though, that my ministry would be very happy to work with this business to ensure that the most cost-effective way to meet the regulations is found—

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

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Minister, over the last several months I've heard from many small and medium-sized enterprises about the challenges they face as a distinct segment of our business community. With small and medium-sized enterprises accounting for 99% of business and more than 50% of jobs in Ontario, it is imperative that we work with local business communities to address their concerns and ensure that Ontario remains a great place to do business.

Over the last month, I understand that you have been meeting with small and medium-sized business leaders from different regions across the province, including a visit to my riding of Ottawa Centre, in an effort to understand the unique challenges that businesses face. Can the minister please enlighten the members of this Legislature about those meetings?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: First of all, I want to thank the member from Ottawa Centre for asking this question. I also want to thank him for actually helping me out to organize the discussion sessions in Ottawa. We had about 60 small and medium-sized businesses participate in this discussion in Ottawa, and it was a very worthwhile session.

In addition to Ottawa, we have done these sessions in Mississauga, today we did one in Toronto and my PA did one in Chatham, and the main purpose of these sessions is to get feedback from small and medium-sized businesses so that we can work together to create an environment for small and medium-sized businesses to succeed.

In the supplementary I will highlight how some of those things actually have translated into what the finance minister presented today.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Many of my constituents who participated in the round-table session provided me with feedback that was very positive. They were pleased that they were invited and found that the session was a great means to network and share ideas.

Small and medium-sized business owners contribute so much to our local communities. They unlock their creative potential and contribute to innovation, investment and job creation in every part of the province. Minister, can you please tell us what your ministry has been doing over the past year to support small and medium-sized businesses across Ontario?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I want to thank the member again for asking the question. He has very rightfully said that these discussions have been very important and that has shaped the framework on which we work now.

I want to thank the Minister of Finance today for outlining \$1.1 billion in tax reductions over the three years, which include the capital tax elimination for the manufacturers effective January 1, 2008, and a 21% reduction for all capital taxes effective January 1, 2007, for all businesses. These are some of the things that our businesses have been asking for for a long time, and I want to thank the minister for taking that into consideration.

In addition to that, we have been working very hard to actually reduce some of the paperwork for the small businesses, and I'm pleased to report that we have reduced it by 24%. We also have about 46 enterprise centres in Ontario, including nine satellite centres, which really help small businesses to do what they do best, which is to run their businesses.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Earlier this year, your predecessor requested of the Ontario Parks Board, and received, the recommendations to lighten the ecological footprint of logging in Algonquin Park. This report was received by citizens in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke with shock—nothing less than shock. As you're well aware, the management of Algonquin Park forest has never been better, ensuring sustainability with minimal impact to the other users of the park.

Minister, why would you go down this road without consulting the stakeholders, including First Nations?

1520

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: I thank the member for the question. As a matter of fact, I did meet with the parks board and I did receive the recommendations, and I asked them to explicitly go back—with the Algonquin Forestry Authority and themselves, to go out and do further consultation, including First Nations. I asked them to do that a couple of weeks ago. So it's well under way. We do need to have a thorough consultation before any final decisions are being made, and we'll ensure that that does occur.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That's you asking the Ontario Parks Board. What about you, Minister? Are you aware that there are thousands of direct and indirect jobs dependent on the proper management and harvest of timber in Algonquin Park? In fact, the harvest of Algonquin Park improves the health of the silviculture of that park.

What assurances can you give the people today that you will not proceed with any changes to the harvest program in Algonquin Park without you having full consultations and discussions with all stakeholders concerned, including First Nations? You, Minister, not the parks board.

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: I said that the parks board and the Algonquin Forestry Authority would be doing joint consultations on my behalf. I spoke with some members from the member's area who in fact are involved in the logging, and they were delighted with this particular response because they felt that that kind of consultation had to take place. So in fact, it is going to happen. It will be fulsome, and nothing will be done until I'm satisfied that full consultation has taken place, including First Nations.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is for the Minister of Labour. Like many suppliers of health care equipment supplies to people on workers' compensation, a small business in my riding got a letter on October 30 that said, basically, "We are writing to inform you that effective March 3, 2008, the workers' compensation "will require all approved purchases of health care equipment and supplies to be made from one of our three ... suppliers"—the big-box stores. Can the minister tell me why he is opposed to small business getting a part of the business of the workers' compensation?

Hon. Brad Duguid: This is an issue that I was just made aware of, actually just within the last 24 hours, by the member from Niagara Falls, and I thank him for bringing it to my attention. I thank you for bringing it forward to me today, but I have nothing further. I'm going to have to take a look at this, and certainly I'll report back to you with any details I receive.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: First of all, it's very convenient that we are here today in this House in order to raise this issue. You know darned well what the issues are. You're the minister responsible for compensation. The issue here is a very simple one. You're saying that only the big-box stores are going to be able to supply medical supplies and aids to people who are on workers' compensation, pushing out the small business people.

My question is a really simple one: Are you prepared today in this House to stand up and say that you're going to stop this practice and ensure that small businesses across Ontario are going to be able to supply those services that they've long supplied to the injured workers of this province?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I thank the member for bringing this to my attention, and the member for Niagara Falls as well for bringing this to my attention. It is a priority for us to make sure that every cent that is spent within that system goes to the workers, so we want to make sure that the workers are being looked after in everything that's being done in this area.

I thank the member for the question. I'll certainly look into it further. At the same time, our priority remains to be with the workers, and it will continue to be thus.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Mr. Charles Sousa: My question is to the Minister of Research and Innovation. As a lifelong resident of

Mississauga South, I can attest, having seen first-hand, to the economic growth and prosperity that innovation can bring to the local and provincial economy. In my role as director of business development at RBC Financial Group, commercial markets, I have gained an understanding of the challenges that entrepreneurs face in gathering seed money, which is critical to grow their young and innovative companies into Ontario's industry leaders of tomorrow, into the next generation of innovative jobs and businesses that will provide high-paying jobs for Ontario families.

Minister, can you please outline steps your ministry has taken to foster the growth of young and innovative firms here in the province of Ontario?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank my colleague for the question and congratulate him on his election to this place.

The McGuinty government continues to strengthen Ontario's ability to support our innovative, high-growth companies. The government has partnered with some of our largest pools of institutional capital—OMERS, RBC, the Business Development Bank of Canada and Manulife Financial—to create an Ontario-focused, market-driven \$165-million fund of funds, the new Ontario venture capital fund. I want to thank our partners for joining my ministry in this initiative.

This innovative initiative is part of the McGuinty government's Ideas to Market strategy, a \$160-million investment being made over four years by my ministry. The Ideas to Market strategy uses these programs to encourage early investment and management expertise for promising born-in-Ontario innovative enterprises. It will help them attract further investment, succeed with their innovations, stay in the province and, most importantly, create good-paying jobs for Ontario families.

Mr. Charles Sousa: It is when an innovative firm is in its start-up stage that it most needs capital to survive and grow. Ontario generates a number of start-up companies, but few companies grow to the point where they can secure venture capital financing. As a result, these same companies often relocate to other jurisdictions where they can get the capital and investment support they need. How is the Ministry of Research and Innovation creating a climate in Ontario that attracts talented fund managers and large investors and ensures that our province's emerging companies can find the capital they need to grow in Ontario?

Hon. John Wilkinson: The Ontario venture capital fund is designed to address the challenges of innovative start-up firms, creating a climate that attracts talented fund managers and large investors.

You know, 20th-century governments kick-started the venture capital market through tax credits to individual investors. But unlike my critic in the NDP, the member for Beaches—East York, I don't spend my time watching reruns of *Back to the Future*; I focus my efforts on the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. Rather than take advice from the NDP, our government has listened to the advice of business leaders such as Richard

Rémillard, executive director of Canada's Venture Capital and Private Equity Association: "We have always believed that it is vital that we build a strong venture capital market in Ontario if we want to build world-class, high-growth companies here, and it is very encouraging to see that the government of Ontario recognizes this reality. We have supported this program since it was first announced."

In the 21st century, the McGuinty government understands the need to ensure that large pools of institutional capital are available right—

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

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I'll direct my question to the Minister of Natural Resources because of the example I intend to use, although I'm sure it will apply to other ministries.

Minister, herein lies the problem: As I'm sure you're well aware, this is a very important time for the Outdoors Card renewal, and there are potentially tens of millions of dollars coming in. Most recently, I renewed my Outdoors Card at \$136.77, and was happy to do so. The problem lies in the fact that the card is not valid until January 1, at which time the GST drops by 1%. The difficulty is, when you purchase your card prior to that, there's an expectation that you're paying the additional 1%. What is your ministry doing or how are you accounting for that 1% problem?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: I thank the member for the question because it is of concern to us. As of December 12, the implementation of the 1% reduction of the GST has not been approved by the government of Canada or by the Canada Revenue Agency, so it's been very problematic for us as we're trying to get the Outdoors Cards done, the fishing licences out right away. Obviously, it is a challenge for us.

We are working to implement that reduction by January 1, 2008, but for those that are already printed, we've put it in and it will stay, especially within the fishing licences, for example. Where we can rebate, we will rebate without question, but we're just at an impasse because it has not been approved yet by the government of Canada.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: One of the difficulties is that the licence issuers have been calling and asking how to handle this situation. They have no information. They're not receiving calls back to get direction on how to handle this specific issue. I'm assured it applies to ministries such as transportation or other ministries issuing licence fees as well. Can you send or will you be sending out direction to those licence issuers who sell millions of dollars on behalf of your ministry so they can understand how to handle the process?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: Absolutely. One of the biggest changes, of course, has been the communications strategy, because you keep waiting for this, thinking it's going to be passed. We will do our absolute utmost. We

were trying to get the regs out early in order to facilitate folks and then we stumbled around, trying to wait for this GST approval as well.

So you're right. We will do this. We will make sure that we get the information out and communicate this challenge that we've been dealing with, and how we're going to resolve it as well.

1530

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Premier. My private member's Bill 6 has been referred to the standing committee on general government. I can't emphasize enough the importance of this piece of legislation to the people of my community and Ontario. If that piece of legislation had been in place when many plants closed in my area, those workers would have had protection in all monies owed to them.

When will your government take the initiatives necessary to create and support new job initiatives for Hamilton and the surrounding area so that these unemployed workers have an opportunity to seek equally valued employment?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to thank the member for bringing his private member's bill forward.

In a question to the Premier—I guess it was late last week—the Premier indicated that he would be discussing the matter with me. The Premier has, in fact, done that and indicated that he would like us to take a close look at the member's bill and see if, in fact, there is something there that we can do to assist workers who have lost their jobs.

As the member knows, the federal government recently introduced a bill aimed at protecting employee wages. We're taking a close look at what the federal government is doing and the status of that legislation. We do, in fact, support that federal bill. We want to see if there are ways that we can work in concert with the federal legislation to do all that we can to assist workers who have indeed lost their jobs.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'm glad to hear that the minister is looking into it, and the Premier. I appreciate that initiative. However, I've heard other ministers mention some initiatives by their departments, in reference to talking to local mayors and other community leaders. This has happened before in previous governments and in my community.

The time for talking is over. The time for new committees to investigate strategies is over. Now is the time—not tomorrow, not next week, not next year, but now. When will we get some concrete plans from the ministry about real initiatives that can begin now for my hard-hit community?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I appreciate the member's impatience, but he just put his bill in on Thursday and we're having a look at it now. It is going to take some time to

both review his bill and to take a look at the direction the federal government's going with their legislation.

It's very important in these matters that governments are in sync when they're responding to the needs of workers who are struggling. We're going to make sure, as we move forward, and judging by the excellent statement that we saw today from our Minister of Finance, that this is a matter that's of great importance to this government. We recognize the importance to the people of Ontario of ensuring that our workers are treated fairly. We will do our best to take a look at what the federal government is doing and to work in concert with them.

ABOLITION OF BRITISH SLAVE TRADE

Mr. Kim Craitor: My question is to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. I was pleased to learn today that the minister attended a function at St. Lawrence Hall to close the McGuinty government's year-long commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. This important piece of legislation had an impact which was felt over the world, including my riding of Niagara Falls. I'd like to take a moment to recognize a leader in our community in black history, Wilma Morrison.

My question to the minister is, what other steps has the government taken to commemorate the passage of this very significant act?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the honourable member for asking such an important question.

The 1807 act to abolish the slave trade outlawed the practice of slavery throughout the British Empire, including here in Ontario. Ontario's participation in the commemoration of this event was part of a larger movement around the world. Throughout 2007, various Commonwealth states have implemented activities designed to raise awareness about the history of the slave trade and its legacies.

In Ontario, the Honourable Dr. Jean Augustine was appointed chair of the Ontario Bicentenary Commemorative Committee.

On March 21, 2007, the McGuinty government introduced an all-party resolution to declare March 25 as the International Day for the Commemoration of the 200th Anniversary of the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

PETITIONS

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Paul Miller: Today I have a petition from the Ontario Health Coalition with 18,387 signatures. This petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario reads as follows:

"Whereas the Uxbridge hospital is struggling to keep its emergency room open past the October provincial election; and

"Whereas the community of Uxbridge fears losing its emergency and other health services at its local hospital as health services are rationalized and restructured across the province;

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

"To ensure that the provincial government creates a comprehensive and clear plan to make sure that small hospitals remain vibrant providers of a range of services, including fully staffed emergency rooms; and

"To ensure that no other smaller or rural community faces the loss of local emergency services or any other services under this or any other provincial restructuring of health services."

I agree with this petition and affix my name to it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Petitions?

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'm proud to rise today as the representative for the riding of Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington to speak out for the people of my riding as their Progressive Conservative member.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We were asking for petitions at this point; then we'll move to orders of the day.

The member for Willowdale.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. David Zimmer: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas attention to white collar or corporate crimes in Ontario, particularly within the unregulated time-share and time-share-like industries such as holiday, travel and vacation clubs, have not been given the priority they deserve by our government, thus causing grave financial, mental and emotional ruin to many unknowing customers and their families;

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

"To regulate more stringently, through stronger and more appropriate legislation, time-share and time-share-like industries in Canada....;

"To appoint a committee or investigative body that will look into and address the weaknesses and loopholes of the current Consumer Protection Act, 2002....;

"To take immediate proactive steps by launching a full-scale investigation into the modus operandi of these time-share conglomerates....; and

"To consider" various other "industry ... regulations...."

I agree with this petition and I'm pleased to affix my signature. I deliver it to page Diem.

POPE JOHN PAUL II

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm pleased to present a group of petitions calling for the creation of Pope John Paul II Day. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the legacy of Pope John Paul II reflects his lifelong commitment to international understanding, peace and the defence of equality and human rights;

"Whereas his legacy has an all-embracing meaning that is particularly relevant to Canada's multi-faith and multicultural traditions;

"Whereas, as one of the great spiritual leaders of contemporary times, Pope John Paul II visited Ontario during his pontificate of more than 25 years and, on his visits, was enthusiastically greeted by Ontario's diverse religious and cultural communities; and

"Whereas Bill 194, the Pope John Paul II Day Act, 2007"—a new act has been introduced today—"did not pass before the Legislature was adjourned....;

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

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario designate a day as Pope John Paul II Day in honour of his extraordinary contribution to our communities."

In support, I affix my signature.

IDENTITY THEFT

Mr. Michael Prue: I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is a reported epidemic of fraudulent loans involving notarized affidavits by/from loan-handling lawyers' affiants that claim debts will be carried by other people's credit worthiness and/or equity in property; and

"Whereas banks, financial institutions and lending houses claim innocence in that they rely on third parties to perform potential debtors' identity validation and financial due diligence in cases of loans and mortgages they approve on the basis of third-party representations; and

"Whereas it is perfectly legal for banks to readily approve loans they consider financially risk-free using third-party affidavits that make debtors of people who are completely unaware, uninvolved and never see the money; and

"Whereas, by way of example, people have signed their support to reopen a quashed OSC investigation;

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

"That an investigation concerning identity theft be conducted into banks', financial institutions' and lending houses' lending policies, practices and procedures (as per reopening OSC file no. 20050316-17043) to identify weaknesses in the law and lending-system procedures for appropriate amendments to the law to strengthen specific areas of responsibility for potential debtors' identity validation and financial due diligence that will safeguard people's wealth and equity in property from fraudulent loan applications, specifically in cases of third party representations using notarized affidavits by/for loan-

handling lawyers that may benefit themselves and/or their affiants.”

It is signed by hundreds of people, including the top signature, “Jack Layton, House of Commons.” I am in agreement and will sign my signature thereto.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Mike Colle: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, even though job creation in Ontario is far outpacing job loss, one lost job is one too many; and

“Whereas last year the average unemployed worker in Ontario received \$5,110 in regular employment insurance benefits while the average unemployed person in the rest of Canada received \$9,070; and

“Whereas, on average, the federal government provides an unemployed worker in Ontario with \$684 less for job training than it provides for an unemployed worker in another province; and

“Whereas fair funding could mean additional investments in important areas such as enhanced apprenticeship programs, labour market integration for new immigrants, and skills training for older workers; and

“Whereas Ontario workers deserve the same opportunities as other Canadians to improve their skills, find meaningful work, contribute to Canada’s prosperity and support their families;

“We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to press the federal government to be fair to Ontario workers by providing equal funding for employment insurance benefits and job training compared to other provinces.”

I’ll affix my name to this petition.

DRIVER LICENCES

Mr. Toby Barrett: These petitions are entitled “Delhi Wants Its MTO Office Back.” Many of us went door-to-door in Delhi, but there are also signatures from Simcoe, Lynedoch, La Salette, Courtland, Otterville, St. Williams and Port Rowan.

“To the Parliament of Ontario:

“Whereas the community of Delhi has historically had a driver’s licence issuing office; and

“Whereas the current government sent out a request for proposal for a new operator of a driver’s licence issuing office in Delhi; and

“Whereas many individuals in the town of Delhi responded to the RFP and paid \$68 in application fees to the Ontario government; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government, after collecting this money from Delhi citizens, has decided against reopening an issuing office in Delhi; and

“Whereas the residents of Delhi are currently being forced to drive 20 kilometres to the nearest issuing office;

We, the unsigned, demand the McGuinty government to revisit the proposals already received and reopen an

office to meet the needs of residents within the community.”

I affix my signature to these ones.

IDENTITY THEFT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads:

“Whereas there is a reported epidemic of fraudulent loans involving notarized affidavits by/from loan-handling lawyers’ affiants that claim debts will be carried by other people’s credit worthiness and/or equity in property; and

“Whereas banks, financial institutions and lending houses claim innocence in that they rely on third parties to perform potential debtors’ identity validation and financial due diligence in cases of loans and mortgages they approve on the basis of third party representations; and

“Whereas it is perfectly legal for banks to readily approve loans they consider financially risk-free using third party affidavits that make debtors of people who are completely unaware, uninvolved and never see the money; and

“Whereas, by way of example, people have signed their support to reopen a quashed OSC investigation;

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

“That an investigation concerning identity theft be conducted into banks’, financial institutions’ and lending houses’ lending policies, practices and procedures (as per reopening OSC file number 20050316-17043) to identify weaknesses in the law and lending system procedures for appropriate amendments to the law to strengthen specific areas of responsibility for potential debtors’ identity validation and financial due diligence that will safeguard people’s wealth and equity in property from fraudulent loan applications, specifically in cases of third party representations using notarized affidavits by/for loan-handling lawyers that may benefit themselves and/or their affiants.”

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

FEDERAL ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: This petition has to do with the number of seats in the federal Legislature. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the government of Canada has proposed legislation to increase the number of seats in the federal Parliament, resulting from recent data reflecting population growth; and....

“Whereas this legislation discriminates against Ontario electors by making their vote count for less in the House of Commons in comparison to electors from other parts of the country such as British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec; and

“Whereas this discrimination against Ontario” on the part of the Stephen Harper government “is nothing new; and

“Whereas we have seen” the government of Canada “take a dismissive attitude toward our cities by failing to heed the call of Canada’s mayors for 1% of the GST for municipalities; and

“Whereas the Stephen Harper government has demonstrated an apathetic attitude for the challenges [that] the sluggish US economy and a strong Canadian dollar are placing on our manufacturing sector by failing to come up with a plan to aid the McGuinty government’s efforts in this regard; and

“Whereas this injustice hits at the very heart of democracy by creating a House of Commons where every single Canadian vote doesn’t carry the same weight;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we congratulate the Premier for undertaking this initiative.”

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and since I agree—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. Further petitions? The member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

HIGHWAY 35

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your new position in the chair.

“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.”

It’s signed by many people from my riding, and I attach my signature to it and will hand it to page Diem.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I’m enjoying the support of the member for Eglinton–Lawrence on this petition. It’s addressed to the Speaker, the government of Ontario and the Legislative Assembly.

“Whereas the people of Ontario deserve a universal, high-quality public health care system; and

“Whereas numerous studies have shown that the best health care is that which is delivered close to home; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government has fulfilled its promise to create new family health teams to bring more doctors to more Ontario families;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the McGuinty government’s efforts to improve access to family doctors through innovative programs like family health teams.”

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

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ORDERS OF THE DAY

HEALTHY FOOD FOR HEALTHY SCHOOLS ACT, 2007

LOI DE 2007 PORTANT SUR UNE ALIMENTATION SAINE POUR DES ÉCOLES SAINES

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 12, 2007, on the motion for second reading of Bill 8, An Act to amend the Education Act / Projet de loi 8, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l’éducation.

Mr. Jim Brownell: On a point of order: I’d like to take a moment this afternoon and introduce John and Margaret St. Marseille from my riding. They’re here in the members’ gallery. Annie has been a page here—a great experience—and I just want to thank them for coming down and supporting their daughter here at the Legislative Assembly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): While it’s not a point of order, welcome to Queen’s Park.

Debate? The honourable member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I’m proud to rise today as a representative for the riding of Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, to stand up and to speak out for the people of my riding as their Progressive Conservative member. Isn’t it fitting that a brand new riding has the opportunity to bring a brand new message to Toronto and Queen’s Park, a brand new message delivered with conviction, spoken with passion and that resonates with resolve and respect?

The people of Ontario and my riding are blessed with an exceptional ancestry and rich history. Our forefathers came here long ago into a vast land of wilderness and hardships, with little more than their dreams and ambitions on their backs and in their minds. However, they would not recognize Ontario today with all our modern technology, our highways, hospitals, high-rises, industry, and schools, and with so many conveniences. But all of what we have today is built on the foundations that our ancestors laid.

Many of our ancestors came from the Old World, where property ownership, individual freedoms and

political representation was unknown. These rights and freedoms were the exclusive domain and privilege of the aristocracy, but with their new freedoms and their labours, they built a new world and a new country. They created prosperity with freedom.

However, if our ancestors could see Ontario today, they would see that many of the rights, freedoms and justice that they cherished are being eroded, and we must help to rebuild them. They would see the Old World aristocracy they fled migrating into a New World bureaucracy. The people in my riding and myself know that when legislation removes the individual's responsibility, we create an irresponsible society, and if we remove the rights and freedoms of others, we will lose our own rights tomorrow. We also know that respect for the law is complete only when laws respect people.

The Premier's response to my questions last week illustrate the growing difference between urban and rural Ontario, a difference filled with a cradle full of nanny-state legislation. Last week, I was referred to as an anti-government champion. Whether I'm a champion or not, I do not know, but I am a strong advocate for good government.

The Premier also stated that he has significantly different views than I. Well, I'm sure that's clear to everyone here. I would say that we are at least a country mile apart on our views about Ontario. The Premier illustrated the difference, saying that he can't take care of his lands—he needs government to do this; that he can't educate or care for his children—he needs government to do that as well; and that he can't build the economy—he needs government. "Can't" is the word that characterizes the Liberal government, and what I am not.

In rural Ontario, we can: We can take care of our lands and our waters, we can take care of our children and our families, and we can build our economy, if the government stops telling us we can't. In rural Ontario, we know that governments are created to prevent injustice, not to create injustice; that government is here to represent the people, not to fund special interest groups; that government is here to protect people and their property from others, not from themselves; and that rewards are found by taking risks. Eliminate risk, and rewards are lost. Our true heritage and our unique culture must flourish throughout Ontario, both urban and rural—people who can, not people who can't.

I learned a lesson a long time ago: If you tolerate injustice, you will accept tyranny; if you tolerate falsehoods, you will breed liars; if you tolerate a little bit of stealing, you will encourage cheaters; if you tolerate excuses, you create dishonesty. The lesson in life is clear: In life, you get what you tolerate.

I prefer honesty over tolerance. Political correctness is often the cause of this tolerance. We have become fearful to speak truthfully for fear of offending someone, somewhere, some time. However, it's better to be truthful than to make excuses.

As I look back on the flowery words and the beautiful phrases of the throne speech, the government claims to

have a plan for today's economy. It claims to have a plan for jobs, the best jobs, to build the strongest economy, to work with businesses and labour to attract, retain, and create good, high-paying jobs. Then I look at the reality: the tobacco farmers going bankrupt by government policy, the butcher shops being forced to close, the mills in the forests full of layoffs and silence. I see a never-ending attack of expensive overregulation that is destroying our small businesses. Our contractors cannot hire our youth because of rigid apprenticeship ratios, and the cost of doing business in Ontario is so high, people are leaving or simply closing their doors.

In my view, our rural economy and industries such as Hershey's, Nestlé and Domtar must stay in Ontario, not leave for Mexico or China, and they cannot be placed on Ontario's endangered species list. In my view, we must remove the red tape, the regulations and the incompetence so that our farmers' markets, our tourist resorts, our sawmills and our butchers can flourish, not flounder—and where our children can expect more than a minimum wage.

A throne speech full of hollow words ought to be expected after four years of broken promises. I know that legislation for the public good grows government and that legislation that protects individual freedoms trims the bureaucracy, that legislation requires objectives in order to measure accountability, that people who bear the consequence of legislation must be the decision-makers and also own the expense. Finally, I understand that there is an exception to every rule, and that legislation is needed for those rare circumstances, not the common occurrence.

1600

For two weeks now, I have witnessed the workings of our provincial Parliament. I see representatives who have put forth significant time and effort to be elected and who have an unquenchable thirst and desire and vivid dreams to make changes and improve our province. However, I also see theatrics. I hear the scripted lines of the actors and the actresses, the cameo roles of the stars. I see the makeup artists, the stage hands and the special effects people. They are all here to create a wonderful illusion and fine entertainment.

I'm here to advocate for the people of Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, to provide them value and to show them that their democracy and mine is real, it is tangible and it is concrete.

I know that the reality of government is that privileges, no matter how small they may be, create injustice; that the size of government increases as the level of individual responsibility decreases; that those closest to the problem are best suited to solve the problem; and that political leaders are chosen to lead, not to follow.

Recently, there has been much talk regarding electoral reform and even a referendum. It must be clear to all of us here in this House that what is really needed is parliamentary reform.

When I look through the looking glass, I see that only 52% of the people still bother to vote and find value in

this Legislature. I look forward to restoring the confidence of the other 48% and to giving them cause to participate in our democracy. We know that what we need is freedom, democracy and justice, not the nanny-state mentality so prevalent in today's Liberal government thinking.

I want to reiterate the pride I feel for having been chosen by the people of my riding as their voice and as their representative in this Legislature. I look forward to the years ahead, working with my colleagues in making a more prosperous Ontario, a more effective Parliament, an Ontario that is full of honest and reasoned discussion and debate and where the Queen's Park inscription in the hallways, "Where minds and souls find freedom," resonates throughout Ontario.

I'd like to thank everyone and wish you all a very merry Christmas.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I thank the honourable member and ask if there are any questions or comments.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's certainly my pleasure to make a few comments on the speech by the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington and congratulate him on his election to this Legislature. I know that the maiden speech or the inaugural speech of a member is often their first opportunity to reflect upon the great honour that brings them here. I think he did that very well in his speech, although there are other things that he perhaps shared with us that may not be exactly the same as anybody else. But that's what is great about this place; right? The reality is that everybody comes from a little bit different perspective—in some cases, a big difference in perspective. Nonetheless, that's what makes this place work, that everyone comes with ideas, with passion, with experience and with commitment to work on behalf of the people who send them here. That is certainly, I think, an obligation the member demonstrated very clearly he's prepared to uphold for the people who sent him here to have a voice for his community.

I think that the Legislature will be graced with another inaugural speech tonight as well, from the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, someone who was elected in my own city to come and join me here and bring perspectives from the great area of Hamilton-Stoney Creek, to talk about his experiences, which I think will be enlightening for people. He's also someone who is very passionate about his community and also very concerned about some of the very serious issues that face Hamiltonians, not only in terms of job loss but in terms of environment and in terms of poverty and many other issues.

Thank you very much for the opportunity.

Hon. David Caplan: I too want to congratulate the member on his election and on his inaugural comments.

This is a very important place, where 107 members gather to share the different views and perspectives that our neighbours, that our electorate have and on their behalf we share them. While I understand that the member has particular views and passions, I profoundly dis-

agree, and I know that the people of Don Valley East profoundly disagree with the view and the anti-government sentiments that the member brings forward. That's quite all right. That's allowed. That's encouraged. That's the way this place is supposed to work, where we have an exchange of ideas and views. It doesn't mean that the member is better or worse, or that I or any other member is, but we do all have a very sacred and solemn responsibility to uphold and to promote the views of the people who sent us here.

I do firmly disagree with the member in the sense that there is, I truly believe, a positive role for government to forge the kind of society that is a progressive one, that promotes and defends and upholds the rights of all individuals, certainly, but also acts in the best interests. In fact, that's the debate under government order G8, a bill to ban trans fats or regulate trans fats in our schools, and to ban junk food. This kind of measure is long overdue. I've heard from members of the caucus that the member is in that many members over there too believe that this is an appropriate response and action for governments to be taking. I know the member may disagree with the government taking these kinds of actions, and he is free to express them. He is free to vote against them and I am free as well to disagree with the member. But I congratulate him on bringing his views forward and look forward to many other opportunities to debate him in the future.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I am so proud to stand here in support of my good friend from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox-Addington. He is my next-door neighbour. I'll tell you something: I'd rather be nowhere than standing one seat away from him today in this caucus, the Progressive Conservative caucus. The cookies can be all baked by them. I'll tell you that this is a man who knows where he stands. He knows he stands for responsible government, good government, property rights. He stands for his people and he's not afraid to say it like it is. That's why the good people in his riding sent him here.

I think it goes to speak to what my good friend from Hamilton said and what the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal said about this place being a debate about ideas. I can tell you something: He fits a really great spot—a great niche—in our caucus in talking about the rights of the individual and the rights of private property. He is a voice of reason when it comes to some libertarian views which have not been seen in this chamber, thanks to a government that thinks they ought to be doing everything for everyone else. It's great to have this exchange of ideas. It's great to have another strong member from eastern Ontario to work with myself, the member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills, and the member from Leeds-Grenville and the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. We're probably the most quiet members in this entire Legislature, but our voices will be heard on some of these very critical issues of eastern Ontario that need to be addressed.

Whether it's the job losses that happened under the watch of this McGuinty government, whether it is the

infrastructure challenges that we're facing in eastern Ontario or whether it is the agriculture crisis that we're seeing in different parts of eastern Ontario, it's going to be this guy. It's going to be Randy Hillier, the voice of the people, a man who is able to make his mark with landowner groups right across this wonderful province, who's going to make his mark, speak for his people. Do you know what? He's always going to do the right thing, and not everyone here can say that.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's an honour and a privilege to be able to speak in this House. We are going to be debating Bill 8 today, a bill purportedly to ban trans fats. As I will enlarge later, the reality is—and this is a disturbing reality—that all too often what is brought before this House is fluff, puffery and marketing. Do we get real action? We get a lot of announcements.

1610

Two years ago, in 2005, a bill was passed allowing this government to promote energy efficiency by overturning covenants that would prevent the use of clotheslines at people's homes. We're not talking about anything earth-shaking; nothing that would cause the wheels of industry to fall off. We're not talking about anything that would in fact cause huge disruption anywhere. This is a small problem. If in fact the government took action, if in fact the government took the power that it gave itself when it passed the bill and acted and said, "Yes, if you want to contribute to dealing with our pollution problem, our smog problem, our climate change problem, if you want to put your clothes on a clothesline, you can do that. You can ignore these covenants"—two years later, no action. You hear from the mayor of Aurora, who speaks out on this. But do we hear, do we see action from this government? No.

Mr. Kennedy, when he was the Minister of Education, announced a ban on junk food a number of years ago. As my colleague Rosario Marchese was saying the other day, it came around, it went around, and it's come back again, once again a reannouncement without concrete action on the ground.

It's wonderful to have these bills. It would be better if the law was enforced.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington has two minutes.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I want to thank the members who responded to my inaugural speech, and of course, thanks for a rousing response from my neighbour and friend Lisa MacLeod from Nepean-Carleton.

I do look forward to those disagreements. I do look forward to the discussion and the debate. That is how people learn, by engaging in discussion and debate. And I look forward to the other side becoming knowledgeable about all these subjects that we like to talk about.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Paul Miller: I would like to start off my comments on Bill 8 with a little history about the community I represent and about myself.

My community, Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, is a culturally diverse community with a proud tradition of hard-working, sports-minded and creative people. My riding stretches from the borders of Grimsby in the east to Ottawa Street in Hamilton in the west, from the base of the escarpment to the south to Lake Ontario in the north. It has a mix of residential dwellings, small businesses, light industries and heavy industrial plants in the west. At the extreme easterly border there are even fruit farms touching the Niagara wine corridor.

History plays a big role in part of the area I represent, which could easily have gone the way of too many of our industries, falling under American control. In 1812, the Americans declared war on Britain and invaded Upper Canada from the Niagara Peninsula. An American force crossed the Niagara River and captured Fort George—now Niagara-on-the-Lake—in May 1813. With about 3,500 troops, they moved in pursuit of the British, who retreated to Burlington Heights, where Dundurn Castle now stands.

The American troops reached Stoney Creek on June 5, 1813, and settled down for the night. The Gage House was used by headquarters by the two American generals, Winder and Chandler.

At Stoney Creek, a surprise night attack was made possible through the daring assistance of a Stoney Creeker by the name of Billy Green, a local 19-year-old civilian. Billy Green went on to Burlington Heights to warn the British that the Americans were in Stoney Creek. The British decided on a night attack, and Billy acted as a scout, since he was a very experienced woodsman in our area, which he knew very well.

About 700 regulars of the 8th and 49th Regiments of Foot, under Lieutenant-Colonel John Harvey, stopped the American advance and allowed the British to re-establish their position in Niagara. During the 40-minute battle, hundreds of soldiers died, and the British captured the two American generals and some field artillery.

The Americans retreated to Forty Mile Creek—now Grimsby—and then to Fort George. The Americans never advanced so far into the Niagara Peninsula again. Each year in Stoney Creek, a re-enactment of this battle, the battle of Stoney Creek, is held in Battlefield Park.

My community is also well-known for the Winona Peach Festival, held at the end of August each year, and for the Stoney Creek Dairy, famous for its ice cream.

About my history: I come from a family of mostly steelworkers. My grandfather, my father, my cousins, uncles and brother were all tied to the steel industry. Stelco and Dofasco played a significant role in our lives. Our combined years of service in the steel business as a family surpasses 300 years.

We are also a family of diehard sports enthusiasts, at every sport, including competitive swimming, baseball, hockey, boxing, football and racquet sports. Some of my family members have competed at very high levels in their choice of sport. In my own personal endeavours, I have refereed hockey, umpired baseball, as well as playing all sports, including football. Right up until last

year, I was playing competitive old-timer hockey. I do believe that the exposure to sports and teams helps any individual develop the qualities needed to be a better person.

Why did I enter politics? I'm sure we've all been asked this question at one time or another. My interest was activated at a very young age. In the early 1960s, I was invited to visit a good friend of my family, James Tucker. We all called him Uncle Jim. He was an MP for the riding of Trinity-Conception in St. John's, Newfoundland. How did he come into contact with our family? My father was a chief petty officer in World War II in the Canadian Navy, stationed in St. John's. Officers were allowed at the time to live off base and were billeted by local families. Jim Tucker and his family were the host family to billet my father. That was where the friendship began, although, of course, it wasn't until later in the 1960s that Jim became a member of Parliament.

While in Ottawa, at the age of about 13, as a guest of Jim Tucker, I had the opportunity to meet Lester B. Pearson, John Diefenbaker, and the visiting Prime Minister of Australia. At the end of the amazing experience, because Jim wasn't able to take me back to Hamilton, he asked a newly elected MP, a young lawyer from Hamilton East, if he would mind bringing me home. That member was none other than John Munroe. So I came home on the train from Ottawa with Mr. Munroe.

I'd like to point out that both Mr. Tucker and Mr. Munroe were Liberal caucus members. I hope, in my present capacity as an NDP member, that the kindness shown to me at that time will continue.

In the years to follow that experience, I worked on several election campaigns for my uncle, a Hamilton councillor who eventually became Mayor Bill Powell. Bill was my mother's brother. At one point in his career he was a CCFer, and then an NDPer, during the Tommy Douglas years. I guess I eventually came to my senses to follow in my Uncle Bill's footsteps by endorsing the ideals and policies of the NDP.

In 1994, I decided to run myself, for city council in Stoney Creek. I was successful in my first attempt, serving my first term, then being re-elected to a second term, serving six years in all. After the amalgamation with the city of Hamilton, I left politics for a few years until circumstances and new experiences gave me the itch again, and here I sit.

Why did I get back into politics? To be honest, I only left it in an official capacity. I continued to be active in my union at Stelco, as I had been my whole working life. The work I did for the union evolved to the point where I was given the opportunity by my local union president, along with a national and international executive, to join their newly created lobby program in Ottawa. This program was designed to help change labour legislation governing pensions, benefits, employment insurance, and health and safety working conditions. I worked in conjunction with other unions regarding similar and different issues important to these unions. For example, I worked hand in hand with the transportation unions, mining

unions, ACTRA, Telus workers, and fishing unions under the steel umbrella, like the snow crab fisherman of northern New Brunswick. As well, I joined the paper mill workers from northern Ontario. The work that brought me here to Queen's Park was the lobby against the closure of paper mills in Kenora by Abitibi. In all, I've worked on nine different lobbies.

These valuable experiences, through these nine different lobbies over a period of about three years, gave me a deeper insight and brought me face-to-face, first-hand knowledge of the severe hardships that workers and their families have been going through. Every one of the lobbies I worked on and the people I met touched me deeply and began to resonate in me. I resolved that there was, is and will be a huge amount of work to be done to help and protect the working people of this province.

1620

The lobbying that hit closest to home for me was at the local level when Stelco entered CCAA. I saw that our pensions, benefits, and indeed our very futures were at stake. When I sat in union meetings and saw the frightened looks on the faces of pensioners who had invested their entire lives in their jobs, and the way the courts and companies in this province were treating these vulnerable, decent, hard-working people, that was the match that lit the fire to get me involved once again, but this time at a higher level. I knew I had a role to play.

When I started my apprenticeship at Stelco in the early seventies, the very week I was hired I had three job offers: electrical apprenticeship at Firestone, millwright at Westinghouse and ironworker at Stelco. Because of my family ties to the company, I chose Stelco. Lucky I did, because Westinghouse is all but gone, Firestone is gone and Stelco is now US Steel Canada, which is barely keeping its head above water in Hamilton. When I started at Stelco, we had 13,400 hourly employees at Hilton Works, with seven or eight subsidiaries throughout Hamilton employing hundreds of other good-paying jobs. When I left Stelco in June, we were employing just over 1,700—unbelievable.

As many of you know, Hamilton has become the home to dozens of major companies, offering plenty of employment. It has been the industrial heartland of Ontario. But now all those subsidiaries of Stelco that employed all those people, of course, are gone, along with Firestone, Massey-Ferguson, Procter and Gamble, Continental Can, Dominion Glass, Westinghouse, Inglis, Otis Elevator, Canada Works, Frost Fence, Levi Strauss, Rheem Canada, Camco, American Can—the list goes on. In the seventies, it was almost bumper to bumper traffic along Burlington Street and you could have to leave work early to get a parking spot. But you could fire a canon off and not hit anything now. Hamilton is becoming an industrial ghost town. For this reason and others, I was saddened to see in the throne speech no concrete plan, no specifics of substance to bring Hamilton back to its heyday.

Along with job loss, our city has been hit with social downloading costs which have all but crippled our city

and surrounding communities. We have a population of almost 600,000 with the surrounding areas, and there are 90,000—90,000—seniors, single parents, children and handicapped people living below the poverty level. That's almost 18% of our population. This is an embarrassment to this province. With such a well-to-do province and so many other communities that are well off, it's a sad story.

The NDP and Mr. Hampton have asked time and time again for this government to do something now, not four years from now. We can no longer afford to procrastinate. We have a crisis on our hands in the Hamilton area, as well as in other fine communities in this great province. Our call must be answered to give real help to those most vulnerable in our society: more subsidized housing, increases to the minimum wage, tenant protection, dental health coverage for low-income families, reinstatement to low-income families of pain management therapies like chiropractic and physiotherapy, increases to ODSP and Ontario Works rates, an immediate end to the clawback of the national child benefit, and better health care for seniors.

We need a minimum standard of 3.5 hours of daily nursing and personal care for seniors in long-term care, and more hospices to give people some comfort and dignity when they are facing terminal illnesses. Family caregivers need our support now.

We must reinstate Ontario's traditional role of paying 50% of public transit operating costs so cash-strapped municipalities that are struggling can freeze transit fares and get more cars off the road.

We need a fair funding system for local sports associations, not favouring one city over another.

And we need to fix, once and for all, the educational funding formula.

Beyond these, we need an expansion of the passenger rail links to Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and the Niagara region to cut down on the number of cars clogging our highways. The existing rail lines could include more passenger service, which would improve the environment and be more efficient and could be used to enhance our economic development and tourism in the Niagara corridor.

Equally crucial to the economy is the revitalization of our industrial heartlands. We have to stop eroding our base industries with foreign takeovers. We must have more Canadian control and content. This erosion in our economy of good-paying jobs must stop now, before we lose all control over our future.

In closing, I would be remiss if I did not thank the many volunteers, my campaign committee, my friends and supporters, my friends in the South Asian community, and my brothers and sisters in the steel industry for their steadfast support, but, most of all, my family. To my wife, Carole, I say that without your love, support and encouragement to help me strive to be the best I can be, I would not be sitting here today. Thanks to my recently deceased mother, whose devotion to the community and to others was an inspiration to me; to my

father, who has been gone for some 15 years, whose work ethic was unwavering; to my brother, Bob, and my sister, Lois, for setting excellent examples of hard work, achievement and contribution to their communities; and to my children, Paula, Meredith and Sheri, who make me proud every single day. I thank you all.

Finally, I would like to thank all the support staff here at Queen's Park and in my constituency office for their excellent work, and our leader, Howard Hampton, and the caucus members who have made me feel so welcome and have gone out of their way to advise me and guide me through this process. I'm honoured to be able to serve the constituents of Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and I look forward to the fulfilling challenges that lie ahead over the next four years.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I thank the honourable member for his remarks. Questions or comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: I want to congratulate the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for a very sincere and heartfelt inaugural speech. Certainly, he demonstrated his passion for his area and passion for his causes. I think that's what brought us all here, and I think he did a very effective job of transmitting that to us here and the people back home.

It's interesting, he mentioned his history with the steel industry. I just reminded myself that my father worked for 18 years in the steel industry too. He worked for American Standard here in Toronto. We sometimes forget that Toronto has a lot of workers in industry of all kinds. Many of those industries have closed down. If I recall correctly, my father worked for 18 years, and I think he ended up with a pension of \$85 a month. After 18 years working in a mill, in intense heat and horrible conditions, he walked away with literally nothing. So I can understand the member's passion for workers.

It's an interesting contrast. We had the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, who had a passion for helping people and the importance of the government's role in giving people a helping hand. On the other hand, we just had the Conservative member with his opening speech, who was basically saying, "Well, we don't need government. Government should back off." That's the real challenge we have here in this Legislature, that we've got to find the appropriate mechanisms, whether it's an industry, whether it's a city, whether it's a group of individuals. Sometimes they do need government. They can't do it themselves, whether they're children, the disabled, the elderly who are on small pensions, or cities that are in tough times. Sometimes government has to be proactive, and it cannot do it without the support of this Legislature to get these people the help they need.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to congratulate the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek on his inaugural speech today. I also worked in industry, and I can relate to a lot of the comments that the honourable member made in his inaugural speech. I commend him on his remarks for standing up for the downtrodden in Hamilton and all of Ontario. I look forward to working

with him and with all the members of the Legislature as we advance the interests of the people of Ontario—his riding, my riding and all the ridings.

I'd like to wish all of the members the best of the season, and a merry Christmas.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to say to my good friend and colleague the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, congratulations on what is your inaugural speech, although you've already made an impression on this House over the last couple of weeks. You've managed to introduce the first private member's bill of the session; and not only did you introduce the first private member's bill of the session, but you actually got it passed and into committee. It looks like we're going to get, hopefully, at the end of the day, some committee time.

1630

I've been watching with interest because, as his colleague and as his whip, he's really good at doing his House duty most of the time. We're going to be working on improvements in that particular area very soon. I just also want to say that he's made an impression on all of us here. For somebody who has come in from municipal politics, from a trade union background, he brings a wealth of experience and he brings, I think, some presence when it comes to being a strong advocate for the people of Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. He knows as well as I that a number of us in this Legislature represent ridings where we've had some economic difficulties. Hamilton, I know from the discussions I've had with the member for Hamilton—

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Centre.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Centre. They always change the names on me. That's why I would never be the Speaker in this place; I just couldn't do that. I'd say, "Hey, you, it's your turn." But Hamilton has undergone an extreme amount of difficulty economically over the past number of years, and what's been very frustrating is that the response by this government has been not even lukewarm. This is really the sad part.

I look at places across the constituency that I represent and across northern Ontario, even in the previous Minister of Natural Resources' own riding, where entire communities have lost their single employer and the response of the government has been, "Do you guys want to borrow some money?" It's like saying to the person who has limited out on their mortgage and their line of credit and their Visa and everything else, "We've got a solution for you. We're going to lend you more money." How are you going to pay for it if you have no revenue coming in?

I congratulate the member on a fine first speech.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I enjoyed very much my colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and, in fact, my neighbour. Under some boundary changes, I am his neighbour both to the east and to the south. I want to congratulate him on his very successful election victory. Welcome to the assembly. Already, as my colleague from Timmins–James Bay said, he has been very impactful in his first session in this Legislature with a successful private member's bill.

I went through Mr. Miller's riding a few times in the campaign because, as I said, we're neighbours. He had a very effective campaign, obviously. Certainly Tara Crugnale, our candidate, was an excellent candidate who had my support, but I will tell you that I was also impressed with Mr. Miller's campaign. I saw a lot of orange NDP signs at the busy intersection at Centennial and King, I guess it would be. Very eye-catching.

Mr. Miller, the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, and I have a number of issues in common, both representing Stoney Creek taxpayers and both advocating for Hamilton area issues. I agree with his observations that the manufacturing sector has been hard hit by the Dalton McGuinty government's policies.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: As Rosario would say, they've been whacked.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Some 150,000 manufacturing jobs have "fled" from the province of Ontario, as my colleague from Jim's Bay—James Bay. Timmins–James Bay. That's terrible. I'm not getting as much sleep as I used to. They have been whacked, and sadly, the Hamilton area has been a poster child for those job losses.

I also share his goal of improving transit systems in the area, those links within the larger area of Hamilton and, importantly, the links then from Hamilton into the GTA. I know getting a better deal for Hamilton taxpayers will be something that we will have in common as well. When a deal was made for the GTA municipalities, sadly, Hamilton was left out. We'll work together to correct that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has two minutes.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd just like to express my thanks to my colleagues for their kind words, and I look forward to working with all members of government in the next four years to do what's best for the people of my community and for Ontario. I'd also like to thank the member for Hamilton Centre for her kind words when she initiated the announcement that I'd be speaking today.

We are in a transition period in government. Our province has been hard hit with lots of downloading problems and manufacturing loss and job loss. I think this government, and all sides of the House, are going to work toward improving the situation with this economic—well, I guess I'd call it a windfall today that has been announced by the Liberals. I hope that the governing body is going to send some money towards Hamilton and Niagara to bolster our struggling situation. A lot of times, the money that is announced on days like this has a tendency, for some reason, to stay east of Burlington, including Burlington, in the province. It's unfortunate, because it's almost like the western part of our province is forgotten.

Mr. Peter Kormos: And so are the north and the south and the east.

Mr. Paul Miller: And the Welland area, too, as Mr. Kormos points out.

I think it's time that we started throwing some of the government money a little west of Burlington. There are people west of Burlington. There are some pretty large cities: Windsor, Hamilton. We need help. We're in rough shape. All these announcements about infrastructure and all these announcements that have been made today have been made before, and frankly, I haven't seen a heck of a lot of improvement in our area.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I wanted to start off by wishing everyone the best of the season and a Merry Christmas in the days to come.

I also wish to congratulate the previous speaker, the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, on his very fine inaugural address. He spoke very, very well, and I was interested in hearing about the history of his riding and of Stoney Creek and about the battles that were fought between the Americans and the British at that time.

I wanted to start off by quoting an author. Her name is Venice Bloodworth. She was an author of a type of physics known as metaphysics; the word “meta” in Greek means “after.” Basically, she said 60 years ago in one of her books that the greatest battles in the future would not be battles of steel and bullets but battles of ideas. And what we have before us today is a set of ideas that are contained in Bill 8. The bill which is in front of me now is An Act to Amend the Education Act, and the idea that's contained in this act is quite simple. It's an idea to ban trans fats from food and beverages sold in school cafeterias. It's a simple idea, yet it's a very important one, and in the next couple of minutes I want to explain why.

I've had a chance to visit a lot of the schools in my riding of Scarborough Southwest, both the high schools and the public schools, some of the larger schools in the riding like Cardinal Newman and Neil McNeil, which is on the border of my riding, and many of the smaller schools like St. Agatha and Mason Road Junior Public School. A lot of the kids have to eat their lunches at the schools and have to eat whatever is provided for in the cafeterias, so they are limited in their choice. We here in the Legislature have the opportunity to change what that choice is.

The act in front of us says schools have to begin to eliminate trans fats from their cafeterias. I guess a person would ask, “What is a trans fat?” Maybe 20 or 30 years ago, nobody would really care what a trans fat was or wouldn't really know what a trans fat was. The definition of trans fat is quite simple. It's an industrially created product. What's basically done is that plant oils are hydrogenated, they're heated, and the goal of it is to put that into food, for baking or for other reasons, to extend its life on the shelf. The end result of the trans fat is that it's not beneficial for human beings to consume that.

It's universally recognized now that eating trans fat increases your risk of coronary heart disease. How does it do that? Most people understand now about good

cholesterol and bad cholesterol. A trans fat reduces your good cholesterol, known as your HDL, and raises your bad cholesterol, known as your LDL. For pretty well anyone who is over 40 years of age—and I fall into that category—when you go to visit your doctor for your annual checkup, they will do a blood test and will look for the levels of your cholesterol. Many people do suffer from high levels of bad cholesterol and low levels of good cholesterol. These problems don't necessarily start from the first day you decide to consume this food; it takes several years of consuming the bad trans fat and putting it into your system. Years and years of this cause the veins in your body to collect the bad cholesterol and put a lining of the bad trans fat into your veins, which eventually causes the heart problem because the space for the blood to flow through the veins becomes narrower and narrower, as we all well know.

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I'm not a doctor, but I think the idea is quite a simple idea, and the solution or the act that's put before us today is a very simple one; that is, stop selling products that contain this trans fat which causes the bad cholesterol and lowers the good cholesterol, which leads to coronary disease.

When I visit schools in my riding and I see the kids having their lunch at their school cafeteria, I don't want them, in Scarborough Southwest or in any part of Ontario, consuming bad trans fats, because 20, 30 or 40 years later those trans fats will cause them to have heart disease, will cause them to have coronary disease and problems with their health.

The McGuinty government is taking a proactive approach here in saying, “Let's get this material removed from our schools. Let's provide the kids, the students with healthy food in their diets, alternative food than what is presently offered in cafeterias.” A lot of it, the hamburgers and french fries, are coated with or contain trans fats, which are then consumed and stay in the system and cause the bad problems.

The idea contained in here is a simple one: It's prevention—preventing trans fats, preventing bad health, preventing heart attacks, preventing expensive health care when these people end up in hospitals years from now having bypass surgery, which is very, very common. I've met hundreds of constituents in my riding who have told me they've had bypass surgery. One of the main reasons they have it is that their veins get clogged. What do they get clogged with? Trans fats. Why wait until a person is 45, 50 or 60 years old to deal with the problem? Why not deal with it at the high school level or public school level? I'm sure children don't want to see themselves 40 years in the future in a hospital bed or on an operating table having to go through the experience of bypass surgery, which then costs the government millions of dollars every year in bypass surgery operations, more and more, as the solution to this problem. If we prevent it, then the number of operations goes down, and the number of people who have to go for surgery is reduced as well.

Prevention is the key. Whether it be in the area of health, whether it be in the area of fire, crime, car accidents or any other type of activity, the key word nowadays in the 21st century is “prevention”—to prevent these types of things. Even on the global stage, whether it be war, genocide or anything, the idea is to prevent it before it happens. This idea before us here today is a simple one: Prevent this illness, prevent this disease before it happens.

I would be remiss if I didn't add something else very briefly in my statement here today, and that is that I look at the federal government—and I know we've been having discussions about what the federal government does and does not do. One of the big problems is that they import a lot of products and they don't put the expiry dates on their products. We've got a lot of products coming into the country from other countries without expiry dates. These things sit on shelves for nobody knows how many years. Nobody knows what is in these products after something has been in a can, a bottle, a bag or some other container for 10, maybe 12 or even 15 years, since there's no expiry date on it. I call upon the federal government—and it's something that I'm going to be undertaking more of in the next few months. Constituents have brought this to my attention as well, that we need to start dating some of these products, saying, “This product expires in two years,” or in five years, to have an actual expiry date on it, so that it's not just sitting on a shelf and someone accidentally buys it and then gets sick as a result or ends up consuming a huge amount of trans fat.

This is something that needs to be addressed quite strongly. That's something the federal government needs to look into. God knows why we allow—maybe God doesn't know why, but there is a reason, I guess, why the federal government is allowing the importation of some of these products without any expiry date from countries throughout the world.

Getting back to the bill itself, I applaud the Minister of Education, Kathleen Wynne, and I applaud the government and the Premier for bringing this bill forward. It's an important first step and it indicates and signals that this government is concerned about the health of the students and the young people of this province. It amends the Education Act, so it's important. It's not simply a stand-alone act; it amends an important piece of legislation, the Education Act, and adds a section to it concerning the health of our students and concerning the food they eat.

I personally think it's a strong message to send and that it says we are concerned. We are concerned about the children. We are concerned about their future. We are concerned about their health. Someone might say, “Well, they're young and whatever they eat is going to be consumed and will run through their system and will not be kept in their body.” But we know better now. Studies have shown, and we can go on the Internet and find out or we can talk to doctors or specialists or chemists or people who know this, that unsaturated trans fat starts

accumulating at a young age and causes that continuous growth throughout the years and causes the problem, eventually, of narrowing the arteries and perhaps even closing the arteries completely.

So many people we see, even the television celebrities we see, have suffered from heart attacks and strokes as a result of clogged arteries. It's only if they're able to be caught in time—whether it be by the hospital when they arrive or by someone who's around who's able to catch them in time and bring them to a hospital and let them quickly have that bypass surgery.

I remember maybe eight or nine years ago that David Letterman, of all people, who is a night show host on television, suffered a heart attack. It was just by luck that he got to the hospital in time. He was unconscious for a bit, they were able to do the bypass surgery, and now he's back on television. I think Henry Kissinger had bypass surgery years ago—so many people. We all know people. We could all name people who have had bypass surgery.

That surgery costs money. It costs hundreds of thousands of dollars per surgery. When you think about the entire province of Ontario and the over 12 million people in it, and the number who have had this type of surgery, it's a real strain on our health system. Of course, a lot of this is paid for by the Ministry of Health to save these people and to keep them alive and healthy.

Prevention, starting early right in the classroom, right in the school, right in the early years, is the way to go and the way to prevent this type of illness from ever surfacing at all in the first place.

I think this is an excellent piece of legislation. It's an excellent first step. It's an excellent way to tell our children and our students that we care about them, that we want to help them, that 30, 40 years from now we don't want to see them under a knife on an operating table in a hospital getting double, triple, quadruple or whatever bypass surgery. If more than one vein is clogged, then more than one vein has to be replaced. It comes either from the leg or some other part of the body and is placed into the heart region.

It was interesting, because even this past election as I was canvassing, at some of the doors where I knocked people would have a shirt on, and I met one gentleman whose shirt was cut fairly low and you could see the scar starting just below the throat. We began talking, and he said he'd recently had that exact surgery, bypass surgery, and that it was caused by eating certain kinds of food, and as a result they had to open up his body and place new veins into his heart. So we want to see that decreased.

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It's interesting that our government does this in other areas as well. We've been big on preventing crime, and that was started last term as well. We've been big on education on all sorts of other levels, to pre-empt things from happening that would cost us—the government or the people of Ontario—more money further down the road.

This government is very, very direct in what its message is: to prevent and keep people healthy, to focus on health, to focus on education, and to focus on a good Ontario. We are on track, I believe, to creating the greatest place in the world to live. I can't think of any other place where this type of action is taken, where this type of legislation is brought in, and where it becomes one of the first major pieces we're debating here right after the election. One would say, "Why aren't we debating other things?" But what's more important than the health of our young people, the ones that will be taking care of us when we get older down the road, the ones that will be the doctors, the nurses, the lawyers, and the leaders of our country and our province in the future? We're looking forward into the future and trying to make them as healthy as possible so that they can help us, help themselves and help our society, and also not cost our society any money.

I know we have pages present here today—they're either listening or not listening—but what we're doing today and what we're passing today will probably help them down the road in their life when they move on from this Legislature and their school years, and move on to university and hopefully adopt a healthy-eating lifestyle. We even created a Ministry of Health Promotion here, which I think is important, to promote the health and well-being of our people here in Ontario, and I applaud the government for doing that as well.

With those comments, I stand today in support of this legislation and hope that it moves on to committee and is fully debated there, that we hear from deputants, and that it comes back for third reading sometime when this Legislature comes back.

I thank you for the opportunity, and look forward to questions and comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions or comments? The Chair recognizes the honourable member from Hamilton—or Halton; excuse me.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Halton—just a little northeast of Hamilton, Mr. Speaker, but thank you for taking a stab at it. I know this is going to be an issue that you are going to study hard, and by the time we come back—when do we come back? At the end of March or something? This government doesn't like to work very hard, but I think we come back at the end of March, and we'll be hard at it. I know that you'll know all of the ridings in the House by that time and be able to go through them as well as the table does when they're reading a speech.

The member spoke about trans fats and where they come from, how they are a non-naturally occurring product in our diets, and how they should be eliminated as quickly as possible. I think that industry, far beyond this piece of legislation—which is really just a photo op and a bit of fluff for this government—has eliminated the vast majority of trans fats that existed in our diets and in our foodstuffs over the past two, three, or four years. This was something that was recognized early on as being bad for people, bad to take into our bodies, and as such, the vast majority of that has been eliminated from food

manufacturing. Many manufacturers are advertising on their packaging that trans fats are not included in their manufacture, and that's a very good thing for our diets and for the future of our health care dollars, let alone the health and well-being of our citizens in Ontario.

So it's an interesting bill. It's typical that it is going to create a little photo op for the government, but it's really not going to do very much, because we're not going to look at lunches that are brought to school, we're not going to look at things that students bring into the classroom. All we're doing is making a very small attempt—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you, honourable member. The Chair recognizes the member from Hamilton Centre.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's my pleasure to remark on the speech from the member from Scarborough Southwest. I have to say that he did an admirable job of describing the difficulty that trans fats bring in terms of our physical well-being and then extrapolated that, of course, as many other speakers have in regard to this particular bill, to the resulting cost or burden on the health care system in the province of Ontario. He did an excellent job at that.

The problem is that when you look at what the bill does and what it doesn't do, you begin to learn very quickly that the bill does not, in fact, ban trans fats, which is what I think the government is liking people to think is what the bill does. But, in fact, it doesn't do that. That is one of the things that's problematic with this particular bill: that the government is saying one thing and when you read the bill, doing something else entirely.

What the bill says is that they can at some point regulate trans fats, or perhaps they may do something to make a difference, but the bill itself does not do that. I think the one thing that we need to be wary about in the province of Ontario is the idea that trans fats are the only evil or the one place for everyone to put their attention. I think that leads to a situation where perhaps attention is not being given to other issues and concerns when it comes to what kinds of snacks and foods our children, our young people, our youth particularly, are encouraged to or given the opportunity to consume in their schools. I think the government can get a lot more serious about this issue and be a lot more active about this issue. I know my friend Peter Tabuns from Toronto—Danforth is going to be speaking about this bill to give them some good ideas.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions or comments?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I just want to congratulate you on your new position. I know with your vast experience here in the House that you will be a very fair individual when you're in the chair looking after the affairs of this House.

The member from Scarborough Southwest—a very distinguished member. He had a great career as a former councillor in the old city of Scarborough, then went on to

Toronto after amalgamation. He knows these issues well, because he's a man that I know visits schools on a continuing basis in his riding of Scarborough Southwest. He knows of the need to get rid of trans fats in our elementary and secondary schools.

This is a very progressive piece of legislation building on our previous work, bringing back 20 minutes of mandatory physical education in our schools in Ontario and building on the good work of the member from Don Valley West, our current Minister of Education, who's really seen across this country as a leading light when it comes to education.

Next week on Wednesday, December 19, I will be visiting the grade 5 class in St. Paul's Elementary School in Norwood, Ontario, part of the great riding of Peterborough. That will give me the opportunity to bring this very positive message that we have here on Bill 8 about eliminating trans fats in school cafeterias at the elementary and secondary level.

You know, this government has a history of building in Ontario—building on what we've done in the previous four years and looking forward in a very optimistic fashion at building the next four years. We had the Minister of Finance just this afternoon deliver good news about the economy in the province of Ontario. We will continue over the next years to talk about our good news, whether it's in health care, whether it is in education, whether it's economy. We need all of us together to talk up the Ontario economy this time because there are a lot of positive things that are happening.

To the member from Scarborough Southwest, I want to take the opportunity to wish him and his family a very merry Christmas. Keep up your good work. The electors of Scarborough Southwest made the right decision on October 10.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions or comments?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Thanks to the member for Scarborough Southwest for his comments on the bill before us today: a lot of platitudes about how banning trans fats is going to revolutionize diets in young people across the province of Ontario.

I do want to ask, perhaps as the question aspect of questions and comments, the underutilized part of the so-called two-minute hits—Mr. Speaker, if you will I'll ask some questions of the member as opposed to making comments of my own. Perhaps he could reflect in his two minutes' summation time what foods specifically will no longer be found in cafeterias if this bill were to pass? For example, I ask because Frito Lay announced not too long ago in the news article of the Associated Press—September 24, 2002, actually—that Frito Lay, whose chips are frequently a target for nutritionists, “said Tuesday it would eliminate an especially harmful type of fat from its product and offer more reduced-fat snacks” by early next year—

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: That was five years ago.

1700

Mr. Tim Hudak: As my friend from Halton says, that was five years ago. Frito Lay said it will switch from

hydrogenated oils containing trans fatty acids to corn oil in cooking some of its more popular salty chips, such as Doritos, Tostitos and Cheetos. So a lot of these so-called snacks will still be available in the schools; they're simply not trans fat. They'll have other types of fat products in them.

Similarly, I think the minister has given herself the ability to exempt certain foods on special snack days, like pizzas and such, so those will continue to be in schools. So perhaps the minister could respond to my question to tell me specifically what snacks will no longer be in school cafeterias. Or is this bill more so one of “the emperor has no clothes,” a lot of noise but actually, at the end of the day, no substance?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The member for Scarborough Southwest has two minutes for his summation.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I wanted to thank the members from Halton, Hamilton Centre, Peterborough, and Niagara West—Glanbrook for their comments.

Just quickly to answer the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook, it's not for me, with the greatest respect, to pick out those foods, because in the bill here itself, subsection 318(1): “A board shall ensure that a food or beverage offered for sale to pupils in a cafeteria of a school of the board does not contain more than the prescribed amount or percentage of trans fat.” I figure the prescribed amount will probably be done through regulation by cabinet. I would think that it's pretty plain to see that there are certain foods—I've seen them in the schools that I've gone into—that contain high levels of fats, and the kids might not know about it.

Frito Lay does a number of different things. They bake some of their chips. Baked chips are fine; they're baked. If you want to put them into hydrogenated oil, then you're going to create a trans fat. If you're going to put them into some other type of oil, you'll be creating perhaps even some other type of by-product which is not going to be healthy for the person.

Again, I am not the expert in the area. We are legislators, not doctors. I do appreciate the comment, but there are also chocolate bars and other items that you can see on the side say they contain high levels of trans fats, which are not healthy. Those contents can be read on the side. But the boards of the various schools will decide that, and I encourage that—just like somebody decided 30 or 40 years ago to put fluoride in water. I was young at the time. It was a great idea, because we have the best teeth here. The people in Ontario have great teeth, and the reason is that someone put fluoride in the water. It was a decision made and upheld, somewhat controversially. But as a result, if you travel abroad to other countries, and I don't want to mention names—China—you'll see that their teeth are not the greatest, with the greatest of respect. Fluoride protects our teeth; hopefully this bill will protect our youth.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm pleased to rise on debate on this bill. To my friend from Scarborough Southwest, I don't

know if I actually got the answer I was looking for on naming specific snacks that will no longer be around if this bill passes—

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Apples are okay.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Apples? There are some sensational apples grown in the province of Ontario. Chudleigh's Farm is one renowned for the high-quality apples. I will, while we're on the topic of apples, point out that the apple growers, tender fruit growers and grape growers in the province of Ontario are still looking for a replant program to help them compete with farmers that are unfairly subsidized abroad. I hope that's something the agriculture minister will be looking at in the time ahead. Regrettably, it was not part of the economic statement today, but I know that members on this side of the House will continue to press that issue.

For the record, I want to make sure that I didn't give the wrong impression in Hansard today during question period. I should have said "a temporary shutdown of the Windsor plant" today in question period. Some 5,000 workers, sadly, have been given notice two weeks before Christmas of the shutdown in the new year. I gave the impression that it was a permanent shutdown. I regret giving that impression. It's a temporary shutdown, but nonetheless, it illustrates that the auto sector is hemorrhaging jobs in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario in Ford, Chrysler, GM and in the parts sector. For every job that Dalton McGuinty claims he created, some three jobs have been lost in the area. Certainly, to hear the Premier herald his record when it comes to the auto sector on the same day that 5,000 people got the notice of the temporary shutdown in Windsor is not at all helpful.

To get to the bill at hand, I think it's important too that we set the stage. This legislative session has been, I say to my colleague from Halton, about two weeks?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Two weeks.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Two weeks, this legislative session.

We had the general election campaign and then we had about, what, two months? Almost two months. October 10 was election day. The House came back into session, if memory serves, December 4, was it?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: December 4.

Mr. Tim Hudak: December 4, or so. Mr. Speaker, you correct me if I'm wrong.

So, almost two months of a break between the election day and when this House came back into session, and then what did we actually see? The only bill that's really been debated in that entire time is a bill to eliminate trans fats from school cafeterias. It's not even clear—and I've not yet had an answer—in terms of what snacks are actually going to be missing, because many manufacturers now don't use trans fats. So Frito-Lay chips, for example, that many people would associate with an unhealthy food choice, particularly when consumed in large volumes, would still be in the school cafeterias. I hope my friend from Peterborough, who I know has followed this issue intensely, given the Quaker comments he was making the other day, perhaps can inform the House of exactly what snacks will disappear the day after this bill is proclaimed.

It was interesting that my colleague from Scarborough Southwest also noted that by regulation it will determine the trans fat level. So it doesn't effectively really ban trans fats; it allows the executive council to determine the percentage of trans fats that will be permitted in foods. I do look forward to finding out, maybe through estimates committee, what particular civil servants will be in charge in determining that percentage of trans fats. I'm not sure, in a day and age when 150,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in Ontario, when wait lists are growing for important health care procedures and we're seeing increased violence in our cities and in our schools, that investing money in more civil servants to determine the appropriate percentage of trans fats would be a priority for most taxpayers. In fact, I think quite the opposite.

Back to my main point: We had a two-month break, practically, from the last election campaign. You'd think a government in its second mandate would have some grand ambition of where it wants to take Ontario, some big plan to improve our schools, our health care and the state of our economy, for example. The only bill that's been debated is this rather meagre offering to, I guess, shift the types of Frito-Lay chips that are going to be there in the school cafeterias.

Our first day in the Legislature—and, really, it has not even been a two-week session in terms of debate of bills. Our first day we elected the Speaker, and congratulations to the Speaker and his Deputy Speaker, and the member for Scarborough Southwest for putting his name forward, among others. The second day, we had the speech from the throne, and then the first week was done, really, right? We had the Liberals comment then on the speech from the throne, and the first week was done. So no bills were debated. Then in the second week the official opposition commented on the speech from the throne. Then the third party commented on the speech from the throne. All of these sessions, by tradition, ended early. There were no evening sittings. So, in reality, we've only had a couple of days of debate on actual bills, and if you look at the grand plan and the great resolve for the 2007 fall-winter sitting—rather meagre offerings. The only thing here is this trans fat ban. I don't even think it's going to pass before the session has expired. I don't know.

I think that reflects a government potentially dangerously adrift, if they think that the most important priority in the province of Ontario in the meagre days that we sit in 2007's fall-winter session is this trans fat ban.

Let me talk about the bill in a bit more detail. Even if you agree with the Dalton McGuinty government that the most pressing issue for this Legislature to deal with immediately after an election is a ban on some snack foods in cafeterias, even if you agree with that, you would wonder, is this the most important issue in education in Ontario?

Having had the opportunity to go door-to-door—whether it's in Glanbrook or upper Stoney Creek, Pelham, Grimsby, Lincoln or West Lincoln—I don't think this issue came up once at the doors. I don't think I

had one individual who said to me, “You know what I really want to see? I really want to see those cupcakes banned from cafeterias,” or “My goodness, there’s just too many doughnuts being scarfed down in our schools.”

1710

Instead, when it came to education priorities, certainly the massive increase of portables in the province of Ontario under the Dalton McGuinty government has been extraordinary. Parents were talking about the failed so-called hard cap policy of the McGuinty government and its impact on a large number of portables, split classes, and a record level of three-way split classes now in evidence in the province today. Double splits are commonplace.

Let me give you an example. The Niagara Catholic board, under the McGuinty government, has seen an 11% increase in the number of portables in their area. Wait lists for autism services, whether outside of school or support in school, have increased. And I would suggest that far more parents are more concerned about assisting autistic children in their learning, or getting rid of all these portables, than they would be about banning Frito-Lay chips or what have you. It does show a curious set of priorities by this government.

Here’s a story from the Toronto Star, September 3, 2007: “Cash-Strapped Schools Struggle to Root Out Sources of Violence; Back to School Lessons in Safety, Co-Operation and Tolerance.” Let’s hear some of the text:

“One week before Jordan Manners was killed at C.W. Jefferys, a student at an east-end Toronto high school was severely beaten by as many as 50 students as 200 others watched.” Doug Jolliffe, who heads the Toronto district of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation, made some comments about this.

The story goes on to note that “a report last week cited ‘serious safety concerns’ ... almost all the city’s high schools have had their share of assaults on teachers or students, not to mention bullying and intimidation.”

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I know that this member cares deeply about publicly funded education in Ontario, but according to 23(b) in the rules of debate, he should be staying to the subject at hand, which is Bill 8.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I’ve been listening very carefully to the honourable member, and he has been talking about education and Bill 8.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: We always pull out 23(b) when we don’t like the way things are going.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I know. My friend from Halton is correct. I’m clearly talking about Bill 8 and the strange priorities of Bill 8, particularly in light of the increase in school violence in the city of Toronto and across the province of Ontario. I know the minister doesn’t like to hear that or be reminded of it, but it is a fact. It needs to be addressed, and I’m surprised it wasn’t a priority piece of legislation as opposed to the attack on Frito-Lay chips.

According to the article, “Toronto trustee Cathy Dandy goes one step further. She believes ‘what happened at C.W. Jefferys could happen anywhere’....

“After Manners was killed”—a great tragedy—“the Toronto District School Board struck a panel, headed by lawyer Julian Falconer, which released an interim report last week on the conditions at C.W. Jefferys.

“While it identified serious problems there—almost 40% of students reported they had been threatened with physical harm, and 37% said they had been assaulted—the panel felt the numbers would be no different at any other Toronto school.”

So I would have expected a piece of legislation to come forward to address the violence in our schools—the weapons in the school place, on the school grounds—in the article I’ve just spoken of, but instead of trying to ban weapons or make some strides in reducing school violence, we’re going to ban doughnuts. That’s what the priorities of Bill 8 tell me about where this government is at when it comes to educational priorities in the province of Ontario.

Let me go on to a few other items. Standardized testing: I was very proud to be part of a government that brought in standardized testing in the province of Ontario so that we can measure how our students are doing. To make sure that we’re achieving and competing against the best in the world is a reality in this year.

I know that at the time, in fact, the Ontario Liberals opposed standardized testing. They didn’t think our students should be measured, I suppose. They were satisfied with an education system that didn’t follow how well students were doing. While in opposition, Dalton McGuinty vehemently opposed standardized testing.

It was an unpopular position, obviously. Dalton McGuinty had another one of his classic flip-flops on this position, and the 2003 version of Dalton McGuinty was different from that which we had seen in the 1990s. So in 2003, Dalton McGuinty embraced standardized testing, contrary to the positions he had taken here in the assembly only a short time before. Then he made one of his infamous Dalton McGuinty promises, promising that 75% of our students would meet or exceed the provincial standard on province-wide tests. Dalton then later backed away from that promise, one of the 50 or so broken promises of Dalton McGuinty’s mandate, and Dalton then later clarified that the target applies only to grade 6 students and would be set for 2008, conveniently after the next provincial election.

Dalton McGuinty at the same time watered down the standardized testing and watered down the standards in the curriculum. He made 165 high school courses easier in 2005. He compromised standardized testing; for example, students now being allowed to use calculators, given more time, more multiple-choice questions, and only spending six hours being tested compared to 10 on earlier tests. So despite the fact that he lowered the bar when it comes to standardized testing in the province of Ontario—and you’ve got to wonder about this approach. In order to try to get to an even watered-down campaign promise, to lower the bar for our students in order to achieve a political goal is, I think, a sad comment on how seriously Dalton McGuinty took these tests. In fact, he

wasn't really committed to them in the first place. So he watered them down—I've given some examples of such—and despite lowering the bar, Dalton McGuinty still fell well short of the commitments he had made in the 2003 campaign. The 2007 standardized testing results for students in reading, writing and math released by the EQAO did not come close to meeting the student achievement guarantee in Dalton McGuinty's 2003 platform. The results show that despite lowering standards, only 64% of grade 6 students met or exceeded the provincial standard in reading, 61% in writing, and 59% in math. Dalton McGuinty promised 75% and barely got the bar to 60%.

So again, if not addressing school violence, I thought we might see some sort of emphasis on the quality agenda, trying to ensure that our students can compete, when they graduate, with the best in the world, to try to raise those scores, to try to get somewhere near what Dalton McGuinty promised the parents in 2003, but no. Instead, the main priority for Dalton McGuinty in this new session—set aside the economy, job loss and health care—was to ban trans fats in certain snack foods in high school and elementary school cafeterias. This follows, of course, with the priority in the first mandate of the McGuinty government, which was to ban gummi bears from elementary schools, to chase the Three Musketeers down the hall and out the door in elementary schools. Meanwhile, class sizes in many grades increased, portables increased, there was a lack of capital investment in local schools, but, my goodness, there are no more gummi bears in those snack machines. The Three Musketeers have been vanquished. They are no more. More portables, larger class sizes in many grades, standardized testing falling below what was promised—that's not important. My goodness, there are no more Bar Sixes hanging around our school cafeterias.

Dalton McGuinty made certain promises to address shortcomings in the funding formula: promises too on that infamous list of 50-plus broken promises. Dalton McGuinty reallocated over \$500 million in local priorities grants and the learning opportunities grant away from the classroom and towards teachers' salaries. Now, if you were going to make an increase in teachers' salaries, support staff, principals, etc, you would think you would bring new money in from the provincial budget in order to do so, but what Dalton McGuinty did was he robbed from the local priorities grant and learning opportunities grant, meaning that less money was invested in going directly to students as a result of these changes.

1720

In 2005, the Auditor General conducted a thorough review of the ESL program. The report concluded that the Ministry of Education did not require or bother to track the efficacy of these programs or that the moneys allocated were actually spent on ESL. I know the Minister of—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All right; we were doing really well for the last couple of hours. I'd

just ask that the cross-floor banter tone down a little bit. I know people are trying to wish each other merry Christmas and season's greetings, but most of you aren't in your seats, and I can hear your conversations up here. The honourable member.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Thank you. I enjoy my colleagues' comments. I don't know if they're exactly wishing merry Christmases across the floor.

Interjection: We are.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Thank you. Merry Christmas to you all as well.

So you had money allocated—and I know the Minister of Citizenship is here, and I congratulate him on his new portfolio. Because this is before his time, the by-election, I know he was probably banging on the cabinet table yesterday because the Dalton McGuinty government took money that was allocated for ESL and spent it elsewhere. This is not just Tim Hudak; it's the Auditor General in the 2005 report.

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I was talking about the Auditor General's report and the billion dollars in lost revenue and such. So they robbed from the ESL—English as a second language, to try to help people adapt to the workforce—and they spent it elsewhere, caught red-handed with their hands in the cookie jar.

In 2007, People For Education conducted a survey of school boards. The survey reported that there had been a 29% increase since 2000 in the percentage of elementary schools with ESL students, but over the same period, the percentage with ESL teachers declined 23%. Some 150,000 immigrants a year come to this province, talented individuals who want to put their entrepreneurial spirit, their hard work into the economy, to prosper, to do well, pay for their kids and grandkids, provide for a better future, and the McGuinty government robbed from that fund and saw the number of ESL teachers decline by 23%. So you thought you might have seen that maybe one of the first bills of the Legislature would address this issue.

But do you know what? There's those Frito-Lay chips sitting there in the cafeteria that really get on Dalton McGuinty's last nerve. It's a strange obsession with menus. You would have thought maybe the principal, you would have thought the teachers, you would have thought the students, you would have thought the parents would have been the most important person in the school, but do you know who's the most important person in the school? It's the lunch lady. It's the people working in the cafeteria who have such control, I guess, over—well, actually they don't, because it's going to be assumed by the minister's office to determine the level of trans fat, and interestingly, they will set regulations to determine what kinds of snacks are okay on snack days. So I'm looking forward to the minister's first recommendations to decide, if you have pizza, if you can have mozzarella and cheddar or if you just have to decide one or the other. I really hope the Minister of Education does not divide this province along the lines of thin crust versus extra

crust. Heaven forbid we enter into that debate. I'm being a little bit sarcastic, but this is what this bill is about as the priority of the McGuinty government in its first session.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions or comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It is always such a pleasure to respond to the comments made by the member for—Lincoln Erie?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Niagara West—Glanbrook.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yeah, whatever it is. I told you that if I ever became the Speaker of the House, you'd all be in trouble because I'd say, "Hey, you, it's your turn."

Anyway, it's always a pleasure to comment on his speech, and I thought, "He's right, you know." You look at this bill, and it's very typical of what the government does, sort of the *modus operandi* of the government. It's about a good thing. There's not a member in this House who can say we're not in favour of trying to limit trans fats or get rid of them. There's not a member in this House who disagrees with the idea that in the end we need to make sure that young people have a healthier lifestyle when it comes to eating. God, I can prove that just by opening my jacket. But I've got to say that when you look at the bill, it's pretty toothless. I've got the bill, and if I have the time later, I might get a chance to go through it. It's a voluminous bill. It's got so many pages in it: the front page—oh, it's a page-and-a-half kind of bill. And what does it really do? It only basically gives the government the ability to make regulations in order to get school boards to supposedly limit trans fats, but there are no targets in this bill; there's nothing serious about making sure that in the end we really do something about trans fats.

I remember Gerard Kennedy, the former Minister of Education, saying he was going to move on this. He did a whole bunch of press announcements over the period of a couple of years saying that he was going to tackle this issue and he was going to make sure that our schools were in such a situation where kids would all be eating so healthy. What was done? Gerard Kennedy left the Legislature and nothing happened. Now he's somewhere in Ottawa trying to repeat his successes in the province of Ontario.

I commend the member from Erie—what the heck is the riding?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Niagara West—Glanbrook.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, it's changed—Niagara West-Flamborough—for his comments, and I look forward to many other comments over the next four years.

Mr. Bob Delaney: It's always a pleasure to listen to the comments of my colleague from Niagara West—Glanbrook. He talked about things that people talked to him about at the door during the election. I was at the doors during the election and I learned very quickly that the best thing I could do, among the some 6,000 doors that I made it to, was just stand there in the Toryest of Tory polls in Tory-blue Streetsville and say, "I'm Bob Delaney. I'm running." And they would say—well, most

of it wasn't repeatable. It had to do with this proposal by a leader who isn't present here regarding faith-based schools. All people wanted to talk about was faith-based schools. We would say, "We could get rid of trans fats." "Let's go back to faith-based schools." And when it was all done, they'd say, "There are four votes in this household. Why don't you put your sign up?" And I put my sign up. All those polls that were blue in 2003 were red in 2007.

I personally have a lot of time for the member for Niagara West—Glanbrook. He is indeed an articulate, enthusiastic spokesman for his point of view. In fact, I personally think from my vantage point over here on this side of the House that he would make a terrific party leader.

This bill is really about banning trans fats. Banning trans fats is really important for us in western Mississauga, especially in the five brand new schools that were built on the watch of the first term of our government: two badly needed high schools, three badly needed elementary schools in a growing, prosperous, dynamic area of Mississauga—Streetsville. We have five brand new schools in western Mississauga, all of which will be trans fat-free courtesy of this bill.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I would like to congratulate my colleague the member for Niagara West—Glanbrook for his comments. The one thing he always does when he speaks to any piece of legislation is to make sure that he's got a lot of important points that need to be put on the record.

I heard the last member speak, and I would say to you, I don't think I heard anybody at any door ask me, when I was elected, would I please pass a bill related to trans fats? It wasn't what I heard at the door. I heard at the door from people who said, "You know, Elizabeth, when you were Minister of Education, you had a plan to deal with the funding formula for schools," and that funding formula had been recommended by Dr. Mordechai Rozanski. They said, "What happened to the funding formula? Why, over the period of four years, did the Liberal government under Dalton McGuinty take absolutely no action? And why are they continuing to postpone taking any action? They made a promise and they've broken their promise." That was part of over 50 promises that were broken.

Another promise that was broken was the \$6,000 they were going to give to the people in long-term-care homes for personal care. The other promise they broke was their promise to shut down the coal plants, and it goes on and on and on. That's what I heard about at the doors. I heard a lot about broken promises. I didn't hear about trans fats. I just want you to know that this should have been brought in in the context of making our schools healthier with physical activity.

1730

Mr. Paul Miller: I really find this conversation interesting. The member across the floor mentioned that he's proud of the fact that five schools in his area are now going to be trans fat-free. That's good. I commend the

member, but let's talk about the arenas in his area. Let's talk about the gymnasiums in his area. Let's talk about private clubs in his area. Are they trans fats free? I don't think so.

We tell our kids to go to the hockey rink, work out, play, lose weight, and what do we do when they come out of the dressing room? We go and get chocolate bars out of the arenas. So if we're going to do it, let's do it right. You can have lots of food supplements that aren't full of these trans fats.

But as I repeated yesterday, you have to stop it at the source, and the source is the manufacturers. Since 1901, these trans fats have been put into our foods. You can't just stop it at the vending machine; you've got to stop it at the manufacturer. I don't see anything in this bill that's going to regulate the manufacturers of trans fats. That's where you want to go. You go to the source. You don't go to the end result and close a few vending machines in a high school. That doesn't cut it.

If you're going to do a bill, do it right. Go from the source to the end result. This is not what's happening. This bill is a good start, but it doesn't go anywhere near where they should be going with this. I ask that member across the floor: Does he give out Halloween candies at his house? I bet he does—full of trans fats. But then he says that the kid who goes to high school can't have it, but he'll hand it out at his door on Halloween night. I think what's going on here is a little hypocritical. Either you do the bill right or you don't do it at all.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I'd just ask the honourable member to consider what he just said at the end there and perhaps withdraw.

Mr. Paul Miller: I will withdraw the word "hypocritical"; sorry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Isn't that word allowed here?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I'm not too sure.

The member for Niagara West—Glanbrook has two minutes for summation.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I appreciate the comments from my colleagues on my comments on Bill 8. I'll stick to my guns on this. I think the average person in Ontario would rather see guns and knives and the kind of rampant school violence we've seen in many schools in Ontario under Dalton McGuinty's watch banned, as opposed to banning Captain Cupcake.

I'd expect that the taxpayers in the Glanbrook and Stoney Creek growth areas want to see investments in new schools or Park school and repairs in Grimsby. Central needs to be rebuilt. Blessed Trinity in Grimsby is the portable capital of all of Niagara. I think they'd rather see the McGuinty government have an emphasis on capital rebuilds and getting students into the schools, aside from portables, but no, they're going to ban Hostess Twinkies as one of their priorities in this new legislative session.

The McGuinty government often likes to talk about the number of jobs they claim they've helped create in

Ontario. In fact, Ontario's record is at the bottom or near the bottom in job creation in all of Canada. But I also want to point out that of the number the Premier usually uses, around 400,000, almost half are actually public sector jobs. We're going to see this increase with this bill when I see the minister is given the power, under section 320, "prescribing the meaning of 'special event day.'" This is going to be some hot discussion at cabinet and caucus, isn't it, if there's a hot dog day, a special event day? Hot dogs are kind of commonplace these days and wouldn't meet the definition of "special." But what about pizza day? Are we going to have the whole debate about double crust or the classic thin-layered pizza?

I also look forward to the number of civil servants hired by the Ministry of Education to help define in each type of food what per cent of trans fat would be appropriate. I just wonder why this is a top priority today of the Dalton McGuinty government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's a pleasure to rise to speak to this issue: Bill 8, Healthy Food for Healthy Schools Act. Anyone who has tuned in to this, anyone who has read newspaper reports would think that this government was actually going to take action to protect the health of children. But unfortunately, I don't think one can assume that. The fact that this bill has been put forward on the floor and is being debated, the reality that this bill will probably pass and be adopted, doesn't mean that the children, the students, in this province are going to be protected.

In 2004, federal NDP MP Pat Martin put forward a private member's bill calling for the banning of trans fats nationally. He actually took the structure of that bill, the direction of that bill, from legislation that had been adopted in Denmark. A number of years ago, Denmark actually took action nationally, comprehensively, on trans fats, and they have had real impact on their health statistics. They have seen a notable decline in heart disease related to consumption of trans fats. They know that taking substantial action changes health statistics, changes the impact on the health care system, the cost of looking after people. It makes a difference in people's daily lives.

As the member for Scarborough Southwest said earlier, there's no question that when you consume these foods with this industrially processed oil, it coats your arteries, it causes heart disease. Frankly, it makes sense to take action on this particular problem. Unfortunately, I don't think we can rest assured, I don't think we can rest comfortably, that this government will actually deliver the goods.

I should note that my friend Pat Martin brought forward a private member's bill in 2004. His private member's bill did not get enacted in law in 2005. The NDP brought forward a motion repeating the direction of that bill. That was actually passed by a significant majority in the House of Commons. However, Paul Martin, who was the Prime Minister at the time, did not decide to

actually listen to the voice of Parliament, did not decide to actually take the action that Parliament had recommended be taken. He did not bring in legislation that would deal with this health problem.

What we have today is a bill that continues the Liberal approach to policy-making. It's an approach that relies on appeals to industry. It relies on making sure that you look like you're doing something, sound like you're doing something, appear like you're doing something, but in the end you don't ruffle any feathers because you actually don't do much at all, if anything.

I know that you can look around at the respective communications people in the different ministries, and they'll take these announcements, they'll take these bills, they'll weave them all together so that people out there watching this broadcast will think, "Well, finally someone's doing something about this cardiac-system-crippling, heart-disease-inducing health problem." But I would say to you who are watching this, you who are listening to the debate this evening, those of you out there with kids in school concerned about trans fats and wanting to make sure that your children have something healthy to eat: Don't expect that this bill will actually deal with the problem.

I look at some examples of actions, or, more accurately, inactions, taken by this government and governments like it—previous federal Liberal governments. As I said in an earlier comment, in 2005 this Liberal government here on these benches passed an act giving themselves the power to intervene to promote energy efficiency and conservation. They gave themselves the power to actually overrule covenants in housing subdivisions so that people who want to put up clotheslines to dry their clothes without burning fossil fuels or causing nuclear power plants to be running overtime—they gave people the power for that very little energy demand to put up clotheslines. Have they in fact taken the opportunity to use that power and actually make the situation change? Have they actually done what they advertised they were going to do when they brought forward the legislation and had it adopted? The answer simply is no. Anyone who thought they were going to act, anyone who thought that things were going to move forward, would be cruelly disappointed.

1740

Similarly, last summer we heard the Premier speak about climate change, speak about his concern—scientific concern, ethical concern, emotional concern—talking about how he was going to make sure that all his actions would be transparent and accountable, that the Environmental Commissioner would be given the power to assess what he had done, to report back to the Legislature, that he would actually make real things happen. He would take substantial steps to deal with this global problem. We're waiting. We're waiting.

In 2003, the Premier said that he'd shut down all the coal plants in this province by 2007. Midway through the last term, he broke that promise. There are a lot of folks who are well aware that this is a government that governs

on appearance, not on substance. That, unfortunately, is what we're witnessing again with this legislation. This bill says that the minister "may" develop regulations to ban trans fats, but doesn't say "shall" make regulations to ban trans fats. So, two years from now, we may be in the same position as with as the energy efficiency and conservation acts, with nothing actually done. It gives the government power to regulate trans fats in foods sold in school cafeterias, but it doesn't compel the government to actually follow through on the act. It's permissive. The permissive language, coupled with the Premier's remarks the day the legislation was announced, indicates the real level of action that's being taken here.

Rosario Marchese, my colleague from Trinity–Spadina, went to the announcement that the Premier made. He thought, "Surely, if the Premier is going to a school making an announcement about healthy school foods, talking about junk food, trans fats, this is going to be substantive, this is going to be real, this is going to move things in this province." What did the member from Trinity–Spadina find? When he spoke in this Legislature, he recounted what had actually happened at that press conference. The Premier said, "We're getting rid of junk food in our schools." He was asked by a journalist, "What are you really getting rid of?" The Premier's reply: "Well, we're not getting rid of anything. We're simply going to consult with the manufacturers."

There you are. We're going to have a long consultation. We will have a series of headlines every so often: a big headline, a little commentary story buried on page 10, then another headline. Then maybe an editorial, maybe an opinion piece. All kinds of opportunities, but in the end, will substantial change happen? In the end, will our kids actually have less exposure to junk food? Will trans fats be moved on? No. Who knows? Lightning may strike; we shouldn't rule out the unusual. Someone on these benches may win the lottery and move on. Stranger things have happened.

But what the Premier has done with his announcement and what we're doing with this bill is just another symptom of that Liberal syndrome: announcement, re-announcement, announcement of that previous announcement. It goes on and on.

I can see that the new member from Hamilton Mountain is disturbed by my comments. She's saddened by an apparent cynicism on the part of one of her new colleagues. She came here with hope. Truly, that's clear, isn't it, member? She came with hope, and yet the bills are presented and there is nothing but distrust on the part of us in the opposition. Because in fact we've gone through this before too many times—too many times. It goes on.

Now, in the past Gerard Kennedy was Minister of Education—

Interjections.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's encouraging to me that I'm being heard by people on the Liberal benches. They've stopped reading their papers.

Mr. Peter Kormos: But can he beat Bob Rae?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I have no idea. I have no idea about the suggestions from the member from Welland, but I do know this: Gerard Kennedy said junk food was gone.

There was a great quote, actually, that my friend Rosario Marchese brought forward. I really enjoyed it so I have to read it all to you, because I think your night will be more complete if you hear it. He was quoting from the Thunder Bay Chronicle, and he had Gerard Kennedy saying—school boards were told that “if they have contracts with pop and junk food companies to sell their products in elementary schools, cancel them.” That’s pretty straightforward, eh? My God, strong action, strong words; at last, someone on the move, a province having its problems dealt with.

Well, it’s almost 2008, and just a week ago our critic for education, the member for Trinity–Spadina, was at the school where the Premier was talking about junk food. Strangely enough—I know it’s shocking; maybe you don’t believe me; others would—he found junk food in vending machines. It was a brutal experience for that member. He is still suffering the scars from that experience.

Mr. Peter Kormos: He may never recover.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: He may never recover. It’s a very, very grim situation.

What he had to say—and I think he’s quite correct—is that this is driven by the financial crisis in the schools. Never forget that. We went through big debates in the election. I know before the election the Premier and the Minister of Education were talking about how, “We have fixed the funding formula,” or “We are about to fix the funding formula.” But when I talk to trustees here in Toronto, they have deep financial problems. They’re looking at big crunches in the budget year to come. Not just here but all over Ontario, school boards are trying to balance their budgets by having contracts with vending companies. They’re trying to work whatever deal they can to keep the doors open.

In my neighbourhood, Toronto–Danforth, we have a problem with junk food but we also have a problem with the fact that the financial crunch means that young people—children—can’t access the school facilities unless they have money to pay, and they don’t. So instead of spending evenings playing volleyball, basketball or floor hockey in their schools, they’re just hanging out. It doesn’t make sense, if you care about the health of our young people, to starve the education system for funds and to leave facilities unused, empty, when in fact students need to use them.

The new member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek was right. Having a complete range of activities, having access to sports, to facilities, to coaches, to the facilities that we’ve already paid for that are sitting there locked, that we can’t utilize—it means that our youth, our children, our young people, who are not going to be protected from trans fats by this bill, are also not going to get the opportunity to develop themselves physically, not

going to get the opportunity to actually deal with the development of healthy bodies.

The other night, my colleague from Nickel Belt, new member France Gélinas, had an opportunity to speak to this bill. It was her maiden speech and, I have to say, she’s pretty good. I liked her remarks in Hansard. I liked watching her on television. I think she’s going to make a big difference here. She showed in her comments on this bill exactly that astute approach to health issues that we need around here. She realizes that there’s the larger context that we’re dealing with when we talk about healthy foods, healthy children. She said, “This bill certainly would lead one to believe that great changes are about to come.”

I’ve addressed that earlier, as have a number of my colleagues. We all recognize that the obesity epidemic within our youth and our children is something that needs action, but when the Liberals link a bill that has so little in it to an issue that is so important, it lets the people of Ontario down. Really, all the bill is doing is that they now have the power to set a target for the content of trans fats, and that’s it. That’s all. Will they actually take action? Will they, in fact, set that target? Will they, in fact, clear trans fats out of the schools? One would expect that the Gerard Kennedy experience of speaking big and doing little will revisit itself upon this Legislature and on this province.

1750

When the new member from Nickel Belt spoke, she talked about what are called the determinants of health, and for those of you who have dealt with that jargon before, you know what I’m talking about. But for a lot of folks, there isn’t that common realization that if you want healthy people, people have to have a good job, a secure source of income; they have to have good homes; they have to have physical activity; they have to have good food. They have to have a range of things that, in the end, set the foundation for good health.

The member from Nickel Belt put it down very clearly. This government is dealing with, here and there, some high points that will catch public attention, but it’s not building that foundation that you really need for health. Even the high points you only get the headlines from, not real action. We know that if we don’t deal with childhood obesity, we’re setting the stage both for poor health for individuals—which can be tragic, can be deadly for those individuals—and also for very large, very difficult to manage health care bills in the years to come.

When you listen to the Minister of Health, you don’t get a sense of his understanding that you have to address all of those determinants of health if you want to have a healthy population and you want to contain the health care budget, the health care expenses in this province.

He was talking about health promotion strategies and the need to deal with this obesity problem. Here’s a quote from the Minister of Health—oh, actually, this is the Minister of Health Promotion. November 12, Toronto Star: “Stopping the soaring obesity rate behind a

worsening diabetes epidemic in this province may take a social engineering effort on the scale of anti-smoking campaigns that cracked the tobacco habit for millions, experts on the disease say.”

Well, you know what? That’s right. You need comprehensive, thoroughgoing, solid legislation that is backed by enforcement and political will to actually make a difference in people’s day-to-day lives. Unfortunately, that’s not what we see from this government.

Health Minister George Smitherman talked about the need to focus on treating the ailment, saying that in fact the prevention of the disease, the prevention of the problem, is going to have to compete with treatment. In a very limited way he may be right, but in terms of the broader vision of how to make sure that people are healthy in this province and that this province is in good shape, his limited vision is highly problematic. It’s as if the minister were saying, “You know what? Vaccinating against diseases is something we’ll deal with later. We’re too busy treating people who are sick.” Well, you have to treat the people who are sick, but you can’t set aside, you can’t forget about, you can’t downgrade the actual preventive step. If you do that, you will be overwhelmed by costs; you will be overwhelmed by misery; you will be overwhelmed by the demand on a health care system that cannot handle the problem. Increasingly, we’re facing that problem with the obesity epidemic, the growing diabetes epidemic.

If we’re going to deal with that, it’s not just a question of spending money on health care. It’s a question of taking concrete action in the schools; it’s a question of making sure we have sports facilities and access to sports facilities; it’s a question of dealing with urban sprawl so that people are able to walk, able to take transit, and are not car-dependent. If the government is serious about making sure that our young people are healthy, they need to deal with this problem comprehensively.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you to the honourable member. Questions and/or comments?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: This bill, as I said before, is interesting in that it’s hardly needed anymore. Trans fats are being well recognized. There are lots of things going on in Ontario, especially in the realm of education, that need attention. The safety of our schools is something that is paramount. Students in our schools are losing their lives. They’re getting beaten up. They’re being bullied. Our schools, which were a haven of safety in the past, are no longer such. They are places where people fear to tread. Teachers can be afraid. Teachers are afraid.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That is not true.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: It is true. You talk to teachers who are afraid to go into their classrooms in some sections of this city, and if you don’t understand that, you’re burying your head in the sand. Minister of Education, I say to you with respect, you should talk to these people and listen to the fear that they have of the students and the goings-on in their schools. Look at the students who are getting beaten up in school these days. Look at the bullying that’s taking place. Those are far more important issues in Ontario today than the trans fat issue.

We’ve come back in a four-day, two-week session to deal with this fluff, which is going to provide a photo opportunity for the minister, with respect. It’s not the kind of thing that Ontarians expect from their government.

Aside from that, I would like to wish all the members of the House the merriest of Christmases and a very happy and prosperous new year.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions or comments? Response? No? Further debate? The honourable member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: It’s a new riding name change. They’re all getting to know the new riding, from the old Victoria–Haliburton, then Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, and now it’s Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

What we are debating here: The member from Toronto–Danforth made some very good points and the member from Halton did too. We all want to protect our children. The banning of trans fats has been going on for a long time. Is this fluff or is it something that’s similar to the former Minister of Education who brought in all this banning, and yet we have pictures where they were still selling junk food in the schools? We have pictures of that.

The people of Ontario want to know—and the member from Halton said that. We’re in the Legislature for just a short period of time. There are a lot of issues facing Ontarians, and we’re dealing with a bill banning trans fats. That’s important, but is this the first priority for the government? I don’t think it should be. I think there needs to be education. The Minister of Education is bringing in the bill, but there are other education issues.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Careful. She’s a little sensitive on this subject.

Ms. Laurie Scott: There is some sensitivity. It’s Christmastime. We can all get along.

We should be educating our young people how to eat properly. Have we neglected that in the past? We have. I heard some of the members say, “We wish we had this when we were younger and that we had more education.”

The member from Toronto–Danforth in his comments did bring up the chronic diseases that we have, not addressing those properly. That is a huge burden on our health care system. It’s not protecting our people, the people of Ontario, and we’re not training the young people.

This bill is important. It shouldn’t be a major priority for the government.

Interjection.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Just hold on. Sorry, I’m not quite finished. I’m looking for a clock to see how much time there actually is.

Applause.

Ms. Laurie Scott: No, you’re not getting away that easily, but thank you. I’m still looking for the answer to my “goo” question from earlier today in question period. Somehow we didn’t get an answer to that but it is tied into education, because it was a math question, Mr. Speaker, as you’re looking.

I wish everyone in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock—the new riding name—a very merry Christmas. I don't know where the clock is. A very merry Christmas to all in the Legislature and to the people of Ontario.

I see the Speaker rising to inform me that—

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I thank the honourable member. I want to express season's greetings and a merry Christmas to everyone too and thank you for your co-operation today, my second day in the chair.

It being 6 o'clock, this House is adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday, March 17, 2008.

The House adjourned at 1800.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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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	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Transports
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
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Colle, Mike (L)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
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Dickson, Joe (L)	Ajax–Pickering	

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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) Elliott, Christine (PC) Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord Whitby–Oshawa Oakville	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Environment / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Environnement Minister of Tourism / ministre du Tourisme
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (L)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Gélinas, France (ND) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Nickel Belt 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) Hillier, Randy (PC)	Oxford Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (ND)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Third Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hoy, Pat (L) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex 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) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (ND)	Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora 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	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
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) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (L)	Brant Nepean–Carleton 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) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (L)	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge 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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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
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 Renouvellement 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
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président
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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	Parliamentary assistant to the Premier / Adjoint parlementaire au premier ministre
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
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Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (L)	Nipissing	Minister of Revenue / ministre du Revenu
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	
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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
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