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of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
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(Hansard)**

Thursday 20 March 2008

Jeudi 20 mars 2008

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

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**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

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*The House met at 1000.
Prayers.*

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**CHILD PORNOGRAPHY
REPORTING ACT, 2008**

**LOI DE 2008 SUR LE DEVOIR
DE SIGNALER LES CAS
DE PORNOGRAPHIE JUVÉNILE**

Ms. Broten moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 37, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act to protect Ontario's children / Projet de loi 37, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille afin de protéger les enfants de l'Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to standing order 96, Ms. Broten, you have up to 10 minutes for your presentation.

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to bring this important issue to the floor of the Legislature for debate this morning. Ask any parent and they will tell you that there is nothing more important than the protection of their children. This bill recognizes our collective responsibility as legislators to protect and prevent any further harm and be a strong voice for those children whose voices are often silenced. If this bill is passed, it would require all Ontarians to report images of child abuse and sexual exploitation. We all share a collective responsibility when it comes to the safety and protection of our children. Child pornography is a permanent evidentiary record of child abuse. This bill would make it mandatory to report that image, and the failure to do so would now be an offence.

If you saw a child being abused on the street, or you suspected abuse in their home or in your neighbourhood, you would have an obligation to report that information. If this bill passes, if you see a child being abused, but that image comes to you through a computer screen, you still have an obligation to report it because the abuse that that child is suffering, whether on the street or through the computer screen to you, is no less real, no less harmful, no less tragic. It is all of those things because it is an image of child abuse, clear and simple. There is no form

of child pornography that is not, in and of itself, illegal to hold, illegal to trade and absolutely a crime to commit.

It is evidence of a crime that is coming to you. If you receive that information, you need to report it. You need to report it to allow those who work every single day across our province, across the country and around the world, to protect children. Police enforcement agencies take that information and seek to find out if the child who is in that image is currently being abused and whether they can help protect that child. They take that information to find out whether the consumer, the individual who possesses that child pornography, has any children in their life who may be at harm and may need that protection.

The mandatory obligation to report that would be imposed takes away any confusion and leaves no question. Whether you are a computer repair technician or someone who runs a network in a business, whether you are a neighbour or babysitter or someone who is using someone's home computer, it is not your job to determine whether that image is or is not child pornography, whether that image is or is not illegal or what to do with that information. It will simply be your job, as a result of this bill, if it passes, to report that information to those agencies, be it law enforcement or child protection or any other agency such as CyberTip.ca, who may be able to make sure that that child is protected, and take that information and help and protect other children around the world.

I want to take a minute to acknowledge those who work in this most difficult area each and every day across our province and across the country. The voices of children are often voices that are very quiet and difficult to hear. There are people right across the province and around the country who lift those voices out of obscurity every single day. Many of those agencies and individuals have worked for so many years. They are the witness to very horrific images, and they act on all our behalf. I have been so pleased to have the support of many of those groups and individuals, and that support has culminated in the development of this bill and in bringing it forward.

I want to acknowledge some of them now. In the gallery today is someone who, for those who have worked in the field for a long time, almost needs no introduction: Paul Gillespie. Paul is president of the Kids Internet Safety Alliance, and a former Toronto police officer who has done more work and seen more horrific images than anyone can ever imagine. Paul's passion for this area continues as president of KINSA, and I'm so

very pleased that he has joined us here today. Paul will tell us that in the fight against Internet child sexual exploitation, the mandatory reporting of these images is an important step forward, because it gives police enforcement and child protection agencies the information they need to take more steps to protect more kids.

I also want to acknowledge the good work that has been done by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection. The executive director, Lianna McDonald, has been incredibly supportive of this proposed legislation and in helping bring it to fruition. The Canadian Centre for Abuse Awareness in Ontario—John Muise is the director of public safety for that organization, and Ellen Campbell is their president.

Beyond Borders has also been supportive. Beyond Borders works around the world to protect children from child sexual exploitation. The Gatehouse child abuse advocacy agency is one which is close to my heart and that I've had the privilege to work with over many, many years. At the Gatehouse, they see the lifelong harm that is caused to children when they are the subject of this horrific abuse.

The OPP and the Toronto Police Service, who are on the front lines of this work and who are frankly leading the charge around the world, have also been very, very supportive of this—what I believe to be a very important step—and I appreciate the work they do every day and want thank them for their support and comments as well.

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Why do we need a bill such as this? It's because, essentially, this is a horrific crime which is out of control on the Internet right now. Pick up any newspaper, watch any news broadcast, and almost each and every day, someone is charged with or convicted of a child pornography offence. In each and every one of those cases, there is a child who has been harmed, a child whose life may be at risk and who will suffer lifelong as a result of that crime.

The Internet has opened so many doors for us. It's given us access to information instantaneously, and it's a wonderful, wonderful tool. But with each development in society, we know that there are very, very dark corners. This bill says that if you happen upon one of those dark corners, where you find and witness a crime being perpetrated against a child, you cannot stand by. We cannot have a society of bystanders, where we all turn a blind eye. We know, each of us, as parents and grandparents and people with children in our lives, that we would do anything to protect our own children. We need to make sure we recognize that we need to act collectively when it comes to this virtual community on the Internet. You don't need to go looking for it; we're not telling anyone to undertake vigilante justice and go about searching to find out what their neighbours or whoever might be doing. But the point is that if you unfortunately happen upon it, this bill would say that you must report it, because that's how we can best protect children.

C'est si important que l'ensemble d'une communauté travaille ensemble, essaie de protéger les enfants en-

semble, et de donner un signalement obligatoire. C'est quelque chose qui va aider ceux qui travaillent pour protéger nos enfants chaque jour. Ils vont avoir l'information dont ils ont besoin pour pouvoir en effet mettre en vérité le fait que les enfants sont la plus importante domaine de notre futur.

With that, I certainly ask my friends across the House to support Bill 37 and stand with me when we vote later this morning. Then we will all be able to collectively say that on this day, on what is the first day of spring, we stood tall in the Legislature and took a step forward to help kids across Ontario and around the world, to protect them from harm and abuse, because those kids matter to us. We are going to signal that today.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I want to congratulate my colleague from Etobicoke–Lakeshore in giving a very passionate appeal to this Legislature for the protection of children, our greatest natural resource in this province. I'd also like to welcome Paul Gillespie and Lianna McDonald and thank them for the work they are doing for child protection in this province. There is no greater role for any of us in this Legislature and in this province than protecting those children who cannot protect themselves. That is why I will be supporting this piece of legislation. It's much-needed legislation, and I think that all three political parties in this chamber will support the honourable member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

I want to start today by saying that not only as a mother and a child advocate, but also as an MPP, I have been able to work on matters of child protection. This past winter, when I was in my own constituency of Nepean–Carleton, I got to meet with two survivors of child sexual abuse. They created something called the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Network, which will be launching later this spring, in April. These two people have been so courageous to talk about their experiences and how they want to prevent future sexual abuse of children. They are Kimothy Walker, who is a CTV News anchor in Ottawa—I have so much admiration for her and her ability to speak out about this issue—and Ron Jette.

The picture they painted for me in my office of what is happening to children across this province and across this country was mind-boggling. It was scary, and as a mother I was terrified. That's why I don't think Bill 37 could have come at a quicker time for me to be able to support something that I think is long overdue and much needed in this province. So I congratulate Kimothy Walker and Ron Jette for recognizing the need. Hopefully we'll all be able to work together on this legislation.

I think this is a step in the right direction. I've long been an advocate of a children's bill of rights for the province of Ontario, and I hope to table a piece of legislation this year on more protections for children. Every piece of legislation we look at, particularly when it comes to social services, Attorney General matters or justice issues, should be measured against the rights of

children and how we can best protect them. That is what I intend to do and I think that's what the honourable member here has intended to do, and I congratulate her for that.

I wish to speak briefly about some of the challenges of this legislation. Perhaps during the wrap-up the member can communicate some of my concerns and see if she is able to answer them.

One of the biggest issues is, how are we going to enforce the piece of legislation? It is much needed, and right now we do not have enough police officers to not only enforce the law with those doing the bad deeds, but also to enforce the law with the folks who should be reporting these atrocities. So I would welcome an answer to that.

The second thing—and I wish that the Attorney General was here, because, quite honestly, the penalties for people who are abusing our children are not stiff enough. I think that we ought to be having that conversation, that discussion and that debate right here in this chamber. I would welcome her views on that matter.

The third is, how do we assist the police, who are already doing an amazing job? As my colleague pointed out, the OPP are world leaders. How do we give them the resources so we can make sure that as many children as we can protect in this province are protected?

Those are some of the concerns I have. I wish to again acknowledge some of the great work that people are doing in terms of child protection in this province. I urge every single member in this Legislature to speak out on this, not only today in this chamber but when we go into our communities. We should be using every tool we've got to let people know that what some sick individuals are doing in this province is unacceptable. They should be challenged and they should be in jail.

As a mother, I want to again congratulate my colleague from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. This is a great piece of legislation. I offer you my full support and I wish you well today.

Mr. Mike Colle: I also want to personally thank the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for really being brave enough and courageous enough to take on this very difficult subject, because it's certainly subject matter that most of us want to try to avoid because it is so disgusting. But the harsh reality is that this kind of insane, criminal behaviour does take place in our society. It takes place internationally through the Internet. I commend the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for leading us into a more preventive activity here, because I think Bill 37 will be a deterrent. I think it will prevent some of these horrific things from happening. It will send a strong message out to these criminals that this kind of behaviour is not tolerated in the province of Ontario or anywhere in Canada. So I think it's going to have a great deterrent and preventive effect, and I really commend her, as I said, for putting this very thoughtful piece of legislation forward.

It is essentially based on the same model that we have in Ontario in terms of reporting incidents of abuse to the children's aid society. If we see or know of something

taking place in our community where a child is being mistreated, we have an obligation to report that. I think this is the same approach here, because the wide scope of the Internet is so pervasive that it is the new reality of what is going on in our community, through the Internet. Therefore, we need to join with the police and join with advocacy agencies who need the support of the public in counteracting this criminal behaviour.

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I see this proposed legislation as a way of partnering with these excellent agencies and our dedicated members of the police services who are, on a 24/7 basis, trying to deal with this scourge. It is an added benefit, I think, as the police have said, to have the public acting, in some ways—this is another dimension of what we have in all our communities: the Neighbourhood Watch program. It is almost like an Internet watch program. We are our brothers' keepers; we are our children's keepers. All of us who are parents of children or grandparents of children know first-hand how precious they are. We don't have to expand on that, but I think all of society has an obligation to protect children.

This legislation in essence empowers all of us to be more conscious of the responsibility we have to be our children's keepers. Because in many cases parents are overwhelmed with day-to-day work, with pressures, they need our help to protect children. Sometimes the incredible amount of money that is made on the Internet by selling the product of crime—it is so lucrative that these criminals will use any means possible to promulgate this kind of pornography on the Internet. Those of us who use the Internet know full well that you get bombarded by this junk 24/7, the spamming. It's just non-stop, because there are, I'm sure, hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars to be made in this criminal industry.

So I applaud, again, the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for taking this leadership step in enhancing our ability not only as a government but as a community to better protect and watch out for our precious children no matter where they live and no matter whose children they are. We will all be stronger as a community if we have this social consciousness of trying to ensure that our children are in no way brought into this incredible world and we will protect them any way we can. This is our chance to pitch in here and protect children. So again, this is a very thoughtful and much-needed piece of legislation and I fully support it.

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: I'd like to take this opportunity to support the honourable member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore on this bill to protect Ontario's children. This bill proposes the mandatory reporting of child pornography. It is a bill that will amend the Child and Family Services Act to protect Ontario's children. While I don't have children of my own, I have many nieces and nephews and a goddaughter. But I do believe that it is the responsibility of all Ontarians to protect the children who live in this province, and it is a very important bill.

I have spoken to a number of my constituents and there is overwhelming support for this bill. Some of the

comments that I have received include, "It's our responsibility to protect not only the children of Hamilton Mountain but all across our great province. Why haven't we done this before?" Another comment was, "We as a society must take action. Being a bystander is not right. Let's all take responsibility." The third comment was, "This issue affects all of us. It's easy enough to think someone else will make the call, but what happens if you don't?"

I would also like to just comment on some of the experts and what they have had to say. A quote from Rosalind Prober, president of Beyond Borders Inc.: "When it comes to the rights of children to be free from sexual exploitation and abuse, this bill makes it clear that everyone has the obligation to report, to help find children, rescue them and prevent years of future abuse."

Then we hear from Ellen Campbell, the president of the Canadian Centre for Abuse Awareness: "These are images of child abuse, plain and simple. This legislation will protect children by clarifying the duty to report."

Finally, I have a quote from Andy Stewart of the child pornography section with the Ontario Provincial Police. He says: "We deal with disturbing images of child sexual abuse and exploitation daily. The public needs to understand the severity of the abuse in these images and that reporting can facilitate protection, child rescues and prevent re-victimization. The most fundamental responsibility of any society is to protect its children."

I fully support all of these statements. I am in full support of this bill, and I applaud the member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore for the work that she's done. I congratulate her.

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise to speak in favour of this bill. I want that to be said at the outset, because I do have some criticisms and I think some things need to be looked at, but in the overall scheme of it, I think this is a bill that ought to go forward. It ought to pass here today in the Legislature and ought to be sent to committee.

This is a very serious matter. It is serious to all people of this province, all people of this great country, probably all people of the world. It is horrific that one can find images on the Internet and elsewhere of children being abused.

There was a time, many years ago, when I was a councillor in the megacity of Toronto, that I was the city of Toronto's representative on the child abuse committee of Ontario. We met about once a month in an office on Yonge Street. We helped to raise funds for the victims of child abuse, and we helped to fashion programs for those people who were abusers. It was a very sobering experience for me to witness the families, the children, even the abusers—to see the depths to which people were driven, the sadness that ensued, the children who had to have their lives turned around. All of that was very sobering.

I think, with all my heart, that we need to do something. I know what this bill purports to do is to try to look at ways of stopping the abuse that is coming across the Internet—primarily, but not exclusively—and the ways

that we can do it. I think that's where some of the difficulty I have is. I am sure that this bill will pass here today. I don't think there's anyone in this room who does not understand the magnitude and want to try, even a little, to do something.

But in my own heart of hearts, I have to question the deterrence value of this. I question this because people look at the Internet, and people will look at these disgusting pictures and other things, usually in the privacy of their own homes, in a secluded area. They will not be out there watching in a place where they can be seen. They will be doing it where they're alone and when they're in private and where they're not likely to be caught.

I wonder about the deterrence effect, because every day, sadly, when you see that there's been a shooting in Toronto, as an example, and you see that it was in a crowded nightclub or in a room filled with people and the police arrive 15 or 20 minutes later, look around the room and say: "This gentleman has been shot in front of all of your eyes. Who saw something? Did anybody see anything?"—sadly, you know all too often, and the police know all too often, and we all know, that even though it may have been witnessed by dozens of people, no one is willing to come forward—even though they were there and they can be proved to be there. There is no deterrence. Those people do not go to jail; they cannot even be charged.

So, sadly, I'm looking at this bill and I'm wondering how many people will actually be brought forward? How will they be caught? How will they be made to testify? How will they do the right thing? I don't know. I think the mere fact that we are asking them to do so is a good idea, and that's why I support the bill. But how anyone could ever be charged or forced to give this kind of information I find difficult.

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I think we have to look as a society, with this brand new legislation—and the member spoke eloquently about the dark corners of technology—at who is responsible for putting these websites up, and what responsibility do the companies that allow it to be put up have, the search engines? People go on these websites; they're traded by word of mouth. You can log on to one and find another, and so on and so on; you can keep going. Surely the companies that allow this stuff into the websites have a responsibility.

In my view, what we need to do is start enforcing that. In the same way we can stop magazines, the same way we can stop newspapers and have proved we can do that with libellous or slanderous material or with pornography in the past, we should start to think about doing this in a full-scale way against the search engine companies. They should be shut down if they permit it. As soon as they become aware that this information is going through their search engine so that people can access it, they should be in the forefront of shutting it down. That's where I believe legislation needs to go.

I've been accused in the past of wanting to be someone who is looking to stop ideas or things from being

printed—censorship and all that. I don't think so. But when something is so completely illegal and immoral as child pornography, I believe in my heart of hearts that we have that obligation to shut down those who permit it to happen. That would go all the way to the top. That would go to the Googles and everyone else who allows that to enter into the Internet and does nothing about it. As this legislation goes forward, I would like for us to start looking really strongly at taking the necessary steps to stop it at its source, to stop the avenue that people are using and to make sure that our children are, in all ways, protected.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to be able to rise today and make a few comments on Bill 37, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act to protect Ontario's children. I believe it's called the Child Pornography Reporting Act, 2008. I haven't had a lot of opportunity to review this bill—it just came in the last day or so—but I want to congratulate the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore for bringing it forward to begin with.

This is a debate that I believe has to take place in this House. We have to draw much more attention to the fact that these terrible crimes are actually being committed to the most vulnerable people in our society, our kids.

I have a lot of respect for the law enforcement agencies. I believe that over the last few years, they've been able to do a fairly good job in trying to identify a lot of the offenders and large organizations that do it on a mass scale, and I know there have been a number of important arrests. In my time as critic for community safety and correctional services, I've actually had a chance to attend a number of events dealing with Internet luring and child pornography, and I've actually toured Project P with the Ontario Provincial Police. I've got to tell you, people who are able to work in that field, day in and day out, deserve so much respect from the citizens of our province because these images would wear on anybody. They're the type of things that I can hardly imagine how you could not think of those images when you go back to your own family in the evening.

There are a couple of things I wanted to point out that I think are fairly important with this. One of the areas that I'm really concerned with in the bill is the whole idea of someone retaliating against someone who has reported a crime. In some cases these people who are on to child pornography could be family members, and there may be a lot of people who would have great fear of reporting the crime. One of the reasons they would fear it is that in many of the cases I've seen I don't think penalties have been nearly severe enough. If anyone has any comments on that—I'm not sure what the length of penalties is for people who participate in child pornography, but I can tell you that I've heard mostly complaints that they're not nearly strong enough. I'd be interested in the member's comments, if she could respond to any of that later on: What type of penalties are we seeing for people who are actually committing these crimes? I know that the penalty for not reporting can be a

fine of up to \$50,000 and two years in prison, which in a lot of cases I believe would be much more than the penalty that people receive for the actual crime. So I would be really worried about people not wanting to report the crime for fear of retaliation from someone committing the crime.

One thing I thought was fairly positive was when the federal government passed the Tackling Violent Crime Act, Bill C-2. It was just passed in the federal Senate a few weeks back. I know that it did raise the age of consent in Canada from 14 to 16, because a lot of law enforcement agencies were having a really difficult time with the 14- and 15-year-old kids who had been attracted to participate in sexual activities because of Internet luring. At least this would be a step that will help us somewhat, that now they will actually have the age of consent raised, and it should help law enforcement agencies as the children become older and more experienced.

One thing that this bill will need, though, is additional people to help enforce it. I'm not sure what kind of numbers we're talking about at this time. I know the government has tried in the past—all the governments have tried in the past—to increase funding in this area, but there's certainly no question that if we bring in the people who we would want to see report these incidents, we will need to have more officers available in that area. I call on the government—the federal government has on the table, I believe, \$156 million that the Ontario government has to agree to sign on to by the end of March to hire new police officers. I'm hoping that in the provincial budget next week and in the negotiations with the federal government, our government would not be foolish enough to turn down \$156 million over five years to hire new law enforcement officers. I know there is the whole thing about the length of the hiring of these officers and that this money is not sustainable into the future, but that would be step two. After we agree to take on the \$156 million to hire 1,000 new officers, then I think we should go back to the federal government and try to make sure that after five years, after this review, this would continue on and be sustainable funding for the future. It looks right now like it's not going to happen that way, but it's something that we can all work together on, to make it positive and make it happen in the future so we do have those officers who can work in these very specialized areas.

You know, I think one of the things that is important today, why we're having this debate—the member brought it forward. I know she has young children of her own. People hear about this on a day-to-day basis. We read it about it in newspaper articles or we see it in TV stories. You know, it's actually hard to believe that it even occurs in this world. I can't believe there are this many sick people out there who lure children through the Internet or participate in child pornography. In my mind it's absolutely hard to believe. But it happens, and we as parliamentarians, whether it's at this level of government, the federal level of government or with all the nations combined bringing their services together, somehow have to stop this from actually taking place.

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I want to conclude here by saying to the member that our party will be supporting this bill. We hope that your government members will come on side with it as well—and not just to stop here today, like so many private members' bills, but to move it forward in the future. I'm someone in this House who really believes in private members' time. I think we've seen some great bills come through here, and quite often, down the road the government will adopt the bill, one way or the other—like the bill that was brought forward yesterday by the Minister of Transportation, which was almost identical to the bill that Laurie Scott presented in this House in the last Parliament. Maybe if we had adopted Laurie Scott's bill in the last Parliament, we would have had less emissions into the air and more safety on the highways, but we didn't do it. So there's an opportunity here, no matter when we come forward with private members' bills, to actually try to get them adopted by the government—not just one or two per session but maybe eight or 10 or 20 per session.

I've seen absolutely magnificent bills presented in this House by all three political parties that just kind of get shut down. You remember last year, when the House adjourned on June 6? We still had three weeks to go, and what happened? There were all kinds—I think something like 110 private members' bills might have been brought forward for debate, but we didn't debate them, and that's very, very unfortunate.

To the member, I congratulate her again for bringing it forward. I think it's a bill that, at the very least, will draw more and more attention to this very, very sick crime of child pornography and Internet luring. I thank her for doing it and I wish her well as we proceed to pass this bill.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My apologies getting up; it's a little bit hard with these knees today.

I want to say up front, as my colleague the member from Beaches–East York said, that we will be supporting the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore's bill. We see this as a debate that needs to happen, and quite frankly, I think the more you try to bring this stuff out in the open and less behind closed doors and in the corners, the better I think that we're able to deal with this as a society.

I just use as an example the following: As we were growing up as young people, the whole issue of sexual exploitation of children was not something that we talked a lot about, but it happened in the times that we grew up. A number of people in this assembly might have been victims of that; I don't know, but the stats tell us that in fact far more went on than meets the eye. Part of the problem was that everybody was very hush-hush about it if it happened, and as a result of people not talking about it and not putting it out in society, people felt that they could do it and get away with it. So I think these kinds of debates are very helpful because they bring it out into the open, and they say to people, "This is not the type of behaviour that society should tolerate," for all the reasons that have been said in the debate this morning. I think the

more we put this out in the open and talk about the need for people to respect each other and not to engage in these kinds of acts, either involved explicitly in sexual acts with children or pornography, the more we send the message out there that it's not acceptable and that we need to as a society respect people, especially those people who are less able to defend themselves, such as children.

I do want to say, though, that the bill needs to go to committee. The way the bill is written, and as I read it this morning, there are a number of things that I think we're going to have to look at if you're going to make this bill work the way that the author wants it to work.

First of all, we know that we have limited powers here on this particular issue provincially, because most of this falls under the Criminal Code. And as we all know, I would imagine, there are already statutes in the Criminal Code that deal with parts of this. We need to find some way to complement and to try to find a way to assist, to help eventually changing acts in the Criminal Code that are federal to deal with some of this. That doesn't mean to say that we as a province are powerless or can't do this, because there are a number of things we can do.

I would urge that members vote for this bill. I can tell you that New Democrats will support it. But we do need to get it into committee, because I think we need to talk to people who are in the know about, first of all, the way laws are written, and speak to police enforcement and others about how this bill can maybe be structured differently. I note in this bill that we're making changes to one act, the Child and Family Services Act, but there may be a few other amendments that need to be made to other acts as well. I'm not going to get into that this morning—there's not enough time—but I think we need to make this a bit more comprehensive.

The other thing I want to say is, I think the author probably recognized that this bill will do nothing to get the perpetrators. As my colleague from Beaches–East York says, those people who engage in the practice of looking at pornography on the Internet are not going to report themselves. They, by and large, try to do it in a dark corner somewhere in their home, hope to heck nobody sees them, and figure they can get away with it. But I think the strength of it is that it allows those of us who might be surfing the Net and who quite unintentionally come across such a site to say, "Hey, hang on a second. Look at this," and report it to officials so that we can assist the police in tracking these websites and finding out who is going on those websites, in an attempt to catch the perpetrators.

We know that the police, such as the RCMP and the Ontario Provincial Police, have entire divisions of their police forces that deal exclusively with this, that watch Internet sites to try to determine who is hitting what sites in an attempt to shut those sites down, because I think the best way around it is to try to limit the ability of people to access this stuff, but also to catch the perpetrators, those who are engaged in the act. So if it's going to do anything, I think it might help us in assisting the police to

identify sources of pornography. But I don't believe for a minute that the perpetrators are going to say, "Oh, hang on, I've got to go report myself," and I'm sure the member doesn't believe that either. So I see this piece of legislation as a way to support the efforts made by our police.

The other thing I just want to say quickly is that there is a potential with this bill—and I think that's one of the reasons we have to look at it—for somebody to get caught up in a wrongful accusation. I had somebody come by my constituency office last spring or winter—I can't remember exactly when. It's a long story, but what happened is that this individual works in a fairly large office with other people, and there are a whole bunch of computers available, and for whatever reason the computers are not password-protected. I would think in this day and age everybody password-protects. What happened is that somebody was going on this individual's computer and was cruising sites such as the ones mentioned in this bill. The systems people came down to fix the computer and noticed all this stuff inside the registry or the history portion of the Internet, under options, and reported it promptly to the manager. The manager called this person in, and this person had to do a whole bunch of explaining that it wasn't him. I suppose, because he told me it wasn't him, that it wasn't. Maybe it was and maybe it wasn't. The point is, with this bill, you could end up in a situation where somebody somehow gets on to a person's computer, does a whole bunch of cruising on those sites, and all of a sudden, as a way of getting at the individual, makes an accusation, and how do you prove it wasn't you? So you could end up with a wrongful accusation.

I'm not saying I would not support the bill on the basis of that, but we need to think that through a little bit, because there have been instances where that has happened in the past. We need to figure out how to draft the legislation in such a way that people don't use this legislation as a tool to get back at other people for whatever.

I support the bill. New Democrats support the bill. We believe that as a society, at all levels of government, we need to do what we can to bring issues such as these out into the open. The more we talk about it, as a civil society, out in the open, the more we send the message that these actions should not be tolerated in a society such as ours and that in fact there should be, and have to be, laws to protect the innocent—in this case the children—and to get to the perpetrators. The more we talk about it, the better it is, because at the end of the day we send a very strong message that these actions are not acceptable and they are not things that should be condoned by a society such as ours.

I would expect this bill to pass at second reading, but again I say that I look forward to time in committee, because I think the member probably recognizes that we need to have an opportunity to have a discussion with those people who might be a little bit more informed about some of the practicalities of making a bill like this

work. I'm thinking there are probably amendments to a couple of other acts that could be made to give this a little bit more enforcement, to actually make a difference when it comes to enforcement. We need to take a look at a couple of other provisions to make sure that we do this right in the first place so that we don't end up with a bill at the end that is not as strong as it needs to be.

With that, I look forward to the vote.

1050

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am just delighted to be here this morning to speak in support of second reading of this bill. I was very pleased when the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore told me what she was planning to do. I have to tell you, I was a bit surprised that it was not already included in what our duty to our children is, so I welcome this as an opportunity to update the duty that already exists to report abuse and neglect if you are suspicious that a child is in fact being abused or neglected. So I want to thank and congratulate the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, who never stops making the world better. Thank you for that.

It sounds a bit like a cliché, but our children are our future. We need to not only provide them with the supports they need to achieve their full potential—this government has really been active in taking good steps towards that with things like the Ontario child benefit and many other good things we are doing—but we also have a responsibility for their protection. The adults in this world have to look after the kids, and it's as simple as that. We are always looking for ways to make sure our kids are safe. We are always looking for ways to combat abuse and exploitation, and we must continue to be vigilant.

The duty to report already does exist. In fact, I've got with me a copy of the booklet that talks about the duty to report. I just want to mention that the Child and Family Services Act, which we're talking about amending, recognizes that each of us has a responsibility for the welfare of children. The current legislation does a good job in giving our child protection system the framework and tools they need to protect children.

The definition of a child in need of protection in the CFSA includes a child who has been or is at risk of being "sexually molested or sexually exploited, by the person having charge of the child or by another person where the person having charge of the child knows or should know of the possibility of sexual molestation or sexual exploitation and fails to protect the child." Under the act, any individual who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been or is at risk of being abused or neglected has a duty to report that information to the children's aid society.

It's not a question of "Do you think I should report this?" There is no dilemma here. You have a duty to report it. I hope that people who are listening to this debate understand that they already have a duty to report any suspicion of a child being in danger. The duty to report specifically requires a person to report where they suspect a child has been sexually exploited or is at risk of

such exploitation by the person having charge of the child or where that person knows or should know of the possibility of sexual exploitation and fails to protect the child. The act does not, however, specifically identify a duty to report evidence of child pornography. This bill, if passed, would identify a duty to report evidence of child pornography.

I have a quote here from a remarkable woman, Barb MacQuarrie, who is the community director of the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children in London. They are from London, in my riding, but they are national and international leaders on this issue. Barb MacQuarrie told me I could use this in the Legislature. She writes: "Child pornography is child sexual abuse. It hurts real children in real ways. We all share an ethical imperative to protect the dignity and integrity of children by reporting anyone who would violate a child by viewing them in a pornographic image."

The list of people who support this initiative is long and diverse; from the police, to people concerned about children, the list is long. It has broad support, and I just want to add my voice to the people who want to say that we must continue to improve our protection of children. We must take away the guesswork on this. You don't have to debate this one in your head; you don't have to seek advice. If you see evidence of child abuse, you have a responsibility to report it, because any child pornography, by definition, includes child abuse.

I welcome this initiative. I look forward to further debate. We do have to take the next step, though. I urge all members to vote in favour of the bill, and then we'll continue to work to protect children.

It's really appropriate that this is a bill we're debating today, because the focus of this government has been very much on children, whether it's the improvements to our education system, where we're now starting to see some really exciting results with 10,000 more kids graduating each year than a few years ago; we're starting to see more kids getting the nutrition they need through the student nutrition program; we're starting to see kids get opportunities for jobs that they never had before. The Ontario child benefit starts rolling out every month this July. It is up to \$50 per child, per month, going to \$91 per child, per month. I always think of that as a grocery cart of food. I see \$50 worth of good, healthy food that will be going into homes that didn't before. That will start rolling out this July.

I'm out of time here, but I want to close by congratulating the member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore for her initiative on this matter.

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

Ms. Broten, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: I want to thank my friends all across the House for their indications of support with respect to this bill. I want to highlight a couple of the areas where I think the bill speaks very directly to issues of concern.

First of all, the bill protects the identity of the informant and protects them from any liability that might occur. That is critical. It also builds upon what is already a very strong provincial strategy with respect to combatting Internet crimes, where the province is working with groups like Cybertip.ca and others to put in place programs like Cleanfeed Canada, where Internet sites are being shut down. This bill speaks directly to everyone, and "everyone" includes those who provide service on the Internet, those who have the knowledge about what may be transferring across their networks. This bill very much speaks to those dark corners on the Internet. It parallels some steps that have been taken in US jurisdictions and a bill that is now pending in Manitoba, where police and child protection agencies have worked together, as I have brought them together in the development of this bill, to protect kids.

That's what this bill is about: the jurisdiction of the provinces with respect to protecting kids and the jurisdiction of the federal government with respect to the Criminal Code and all other matters. There may well need to be steps taken in that fight, and I certainly have committed myself to raising those issues as we tackle this scourge on so many fronts. We need to do our work here in the province; we need to do our work around the country and around the globe. But first and foremost, this bill is protecting Ontario's kids and telling Ontarians, "You need to report if you see that image of child pornography because it is an image of child abuse."

I look forward to seeing this bill pass second reading, advocating it and moving it forward.

1100

CANADIAN MASS TRANSIT
VEHICLES ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008
SUR LES VÉHICULES DE TRANSPORT
EN COMMUN CANADIENS

Mr. Bisson moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to promote the purchase of Canadian mass transit vehicles / Projet de loi 31, Loi favorisant l'achat de véhicules de transport en commun canadiens.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I've got a sore knee. It's hard to get up today.

I first of all want to say that this has been a long-standing issue for a number of people in Ontario, especially in places like Thunder Bay and others where construction of mass transit vehicles takes place.

Just to give you a bit of a historical perspective, Bombardier in Thunder Bay, as you know, in 1992 or 1993 had a memorandum of understanding with the province of Ontario that said that at least 50% of mass transit vehicles, light rail, etc. would be constructed here in

Ontario. For whatever reason, that particular agreement, that particular law, was struck down by the McGuinty government in the last term. I don't quite understand why they didn't continue with that particular understanding with Bombardier, because it is good policy from the perspective of the province of Ontario having an opportunity to utilize our public dollars to the best possible effect. It only makes sense that if the province of Ontario is going to spend money to buy buses, to buy transit vehicles of whatever type, be it GO Transit or subway cars or streetcars, as much as humanly possible we need to see how much of that can be constructed here in Ontario. We know, for example, that announcements that have been made recently, such as the announcement that was made earlier this week where some 300 hybrid buses have been delivered to the TTC—over 60% of the construction of those buses was not done here in Ontario but in fact was done in the United States.

So we say to ourselves: Why shouldn't we be utilizing public dollars to the best possible effect to make sure that we create jobs here in Ontario and sustain those that we currently have? Is this something that's radical, new and different? I would say no. If you take a look, this is typical legislation that exists in all kinds of other jurisdictions around the world.

For example, here in North America, the United States has a law that says that 60% of whatever monies that are invested by the federal government in transit vehicles—they have to be constructed in the United States. You have to remember that the United States is different than Canada: The federal government plays a much larger role than the states when it comes to the amount of money expended on transit. They have a federal law there that says that 60% has to be built in the United States. Even Mexico, south of the United States, has similar laws that say, I think, that 50% of their construction has to be done within Mexico itself. In the European Union, almost every nation has similar provisions.

Why? Because it makes sense. If we're going to spend public dollars, we should, as much as humanly possible, move toward trying to have that construction done within our own jurisdiction.

I listened to the government originally say, yes, they thought this was a good idea and that they were going to support the bill, and I was somewhat encouraged by that. I know my colleague the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan has a similar bill that he had in the House for two or three years in the last term and has reintroduced in this term that calls for 60%, so I look forward to his support on this bill, because certainly I'm going to support his. I think it's only right. It goes in the right direction, so I'm looking forward to that. But recently the government has come out and said, no, they're not going to support the bill, and I say to myself, what are the arguments?

One of the arguments put forward was, if you have a 50% content rule, it's going to force construction to happen outside of Ontario, because we export goods such as mass transit vehicles to other jurisdictions, and if we have 50% we're going to limit our opportunity in the

export market. I just say: Hogwash. We're already limited in the export market because the United States and others we trade with have similar laws. When the United States buys a transit vehicle and they happen to get a contract with Orion Bus out of Toronto, you can only do 40% of the construction here.

In fact, last week I spoke to the workers up at Bombardier, along with my leader, Howard Hampton, and they have similar content rules. For example, right now they're building the same type of trains that we have for GO Transit that are being sold to the United States, and when they do the construction of these trains up in Thunder Bay, they have to make sure that no more than 40% of the actual construction is done in Thunder Bay. It is then shipped off to the United States by rail and then the rest of the assembly is done in the United States. So we're not going to be limiting our opportunities for export; those opportunities have been limited by right of legislation that exists in other countries.

The other argument that's put forward—and I've heard people say, "This means there won't be competition." Again: Hogwash. We know, for example, that the province of Ontario said that by the year 2020 we expect to spend \$17.5 billion on transit vehicles, light rail and other things here in Ontario. If you're Siemens or one of the other companies that is in the business of constructing buses or whatever it might be and there's a large contract in the province of Ontario that you want to bid on, one of the things you're going to look at is the ability to build a plant of some type here in Ontario to do that construction. Members across the way will say, "Oh, they were never going to do that."

What does Bombardier do? Bombardier of Canada has plants in the United States, France, Germany and different parts of the wide world because there are content rules in those jurisdictions that say that if you want to build transit vehicles, a percentage has to be done within that country. You've seen the ads for Bombardier somewhere in some German city where a worker is taking a picture of a light rail transit car going across some old city in Germany. The person's very proud to show that that's Canadian technology. That train wasn't built in Canada. It might be Canadian design. That train is 98% built in Germany even though it's a Canadian company. What happens is, those manufacturers of these vehicles, whatever they might be, if the contract is large enough, are going to have to make a decision, "Do we want to bid on that contract? Does it make sense? If so, we need to do production facilities here in Ontario," which is only good for workers here in Ontario. It means we have an opportunity to make sure that the dollars we spend when it comes to transit are done here in Ontario.

I want to say to members across the way that there is another provision in the bill, if we take the time to read it. There is another argument saying, "Oh, we're going to end up with a non-competitive bid system." Hogwash, because the bill is written in such a way that ensures that there is a competitive bid process and that we don't put ourselves in a position of having to accept a product that

is of lesser quality. For example, if the lesser-quality product happened to come out of a Canadian company, we don't hamstring ourselves into having to buy a lesser-quality vehicle. That forces our manufacturers to raise the standard. It also ensures that there is a competitive bid process in place to make sure that is done.

Listen: It's not just us in the New Democratic Party, my leader, Howard Hampton, and the rest of the New Democrats who are calling for this bill. If you read the editorials across the province, it's fairly clear. The Toronto Star, which is well known to have a position on this, has come out in support, saying, "It's high time that we do." The Toronto Sun, the Thunder Bay Chronicle and a number of workers and companies across the province of Ontario have supported this initiative.

I'm asking members across the way to allow this bill to go through second reading. Let's get it into committee. If you think there are some things that need to be changed, I'm open to amendments. I'm not ideologically—not "ideologically"; I'm not wedded to the point that the bill has to be written exactly the way it is. If we think we can do something to strengthen the bill to make sure we get to where we want to go in the end, that's fine by me. We allow that to happen at the committee level. That's what committees are all about.

I say to members across the way: This particular bill is one that is going to serve the province of Ontario well in two respects: It's going to ensure that the dollars we spend are spent here in Ontario, and it's going to assist Ontario workers to have jobs.

In the last minute I have, I want to respond to one of the points that the Minister of Transportation made. He talked about one of the initiatives that the government has put forward and he said that 82% of that money is going to be spent here in Ontario. Yes, the construction of light rail, the construction of infrastructure on the ground: Of course a majority that's going to be done in the province of Ontario because you can't do a construction project that's putting tracks in the city of Toronto and build it in California. To use the argument saying that 82% of it already happens in Ontario is false. Eighty-two per cent of the construction certainly happens in Ontario when it comes to putting in infrastructure, but when it comes to the manufacturing of the products that are used, such as buses and trains, GO trains and subway cars, we need to make sure that a majority of that—or 50% of that, I should say—are built here in Ontario.

Quite frankly, we're not there. We know, for example, that the announcement made this morning on the double-decker buses—they're not built here in Ontario. A majority of that, about 90% of it, was built overseas.

1110

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

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I'm really quite delighted to be here to talk a little bit about the bill that my friend le député de Timmins–James Bay has put in front of us today. I think it's an interesting bill. The House, as some people know, gave unanimous consent so this bill could

be heard today. It didn't have the normal time limits that would be there, but the government and all members gave unanimous consent so it could be heard.

What I find entertaining, if nothing else, is that my friend, who I think has been here for some 17 or 18 years now, didn't avail himself of legislative research. I know that perhaps the NDP research budget is strapped, I know that perhaps they don't have the resources to possibly do the job they should do, but virtually every piece of information that the member just put out about other trade agreements and components in other countries and other provinces is wrong. It has a tiny, little bit of truth to it, but if you look at the entire issue, it is wrong. Not one single Canadian province has a commitment to purchase transit in their own province.

But I've got a news flash. I just received a note from the Ministry of Transportation telling me that, for the first time ever, the province of Quebec has a procurement policy for mass transit—for the first time ever. It never existed before. This morning it was announced in Quebec. It's a buy-Canadian policy: not a buy-Quebec policy, but a buy-Canadian policy.

My good friend the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan has a bill in front of the House that speaks to that, that speaks to the fact that a buy-Canadian policy should be instituted. We believe we should go forward to make sure that Ontarians and Canadians benefit from public investment in all sectors, not just transportation. The government is working towards finding ways to make sure that we absolutely maximize every dollar for public transit that is spent in the province of Ontario. I have every confidence that our good friends at Bombardier in Thunder Bay will be able to compete in that kind of situation and win the contracts, because our workers, our companies, are the best in the world. So I have every confidence that it will happen.

But my good friend seems to forget some things. He seems to forget that his party opposed subway lines. You can't have subway cars if you don't have the subway line. It just cannot happen. Fifty per cent of nothing is nothing.

I know about this. As the member for Algoma–Manitoulin, I've had the pleasure to serve that fine constituency for some 20 years. The NDP used to have a policy for many, many years, probably decades, that they would buy—or Ontario Hydro rather, the crown corporation, would buy, 100% of its fuel requirements for uranium from Ontario sources. They would buy 100% of that uranium in Ontario. There was only one place in Ontario you could buy uranium, and that was in Elliot Lake. The NDP promised continually, through every election campaign—every convention I could see, they all went there and everybody was very much in favour of buying that 100% of the uranium. We had a very vibrant uranium mining business in Elliot Lake. In that city, we employed about 4,000 miners with good-paying, excellent jobs. The policy of the NDP was to purchase 100% of the uranium there.

Do you know what happened? The NDP was elected in 1990, and within a few short months two northern

NDP ministers appeared in Elliot Lake to tell that community and to tell the workers that all 4,000 of them would be out of work, that they were cancelling the Ontario Hydro contracts to buy uranium in Elliot Lake. Do you know what the reason was for doing that? The reason for abrogating their policy was that it was too expensive to buy in Elliot Lake, that we shouldn't do it in Ontario because it cost too much money. That's what Ms. Martel and Mr. Wildman, when they appeared in Elliot Lake, said.

Interjections.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: My colleagues will be following me and we will discuss this with a little more information, but I seem to have struck a nerve. The 4,000 mining folks in Elliot Lake do not forget.

Ms. Laurie Scott: It's a pleasure to rise today to speak on private members' business—an opportunity for the first time in 2008. I commend the member from Timmins–James Bay for bringing forward Bill 31, the Canadian Mass Transit Vehicles Act, 2008. This being the first day of spring, it's also a pleasure to stand here, and hopefully the snow has stopped falling.

We're talking transit specifically in this act that's been brought forward. I can say right off the top that we're very supportive of the intent of this legislation from the member. It appears to me that the underlying intent is that we need to do our utmost to encourage this government to promote Ontario and Canadian businesses, and those who work for those businesses. It's even truer when it comes to decisions and directions that we take with the public's money, which this bill is reflecting—money that is entrusted by the people of Ontario to this government; most importantly, using taxpayers' money in the public's best interest. It's been said many times that it doesn't seem to mean much to the government side, who are doing everything that they can to deflect the fact that Ontario has lost—is it 180,000, or is it up to 190,000 manufacturing jobs?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: It's 210,000.

Ms. Laurie Scott: It's 210,000, the member from Halton tells me, who's going to also speak later to this bill. That's a big figure, and something that the present Liberal government is not addressing.

What else aren't they addressing about Ontario's economy? Ontario is facing the slowest growth in the entire country. The unemployment rate in Ontario has exceeded the national average for the first time in 30 years. Consumer confidence is down. Confidence in investing in Ontario is down. We have an out-migration of skilled workers in record numbers.

I can tell you that this affects my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, as well as the rest of Ontario. We've had sad news, as many parts of Ontario have had, with two manufacturers that closed down last year. Fleetwood RV shut its doors and Bonar Plastics announced that it's closing—hundreds and hundreds of good-paying manufacturing jobs. Those manufacturing jobs in small communities affect a large, large group of people—

Mr. Jeff Leal: Fleetwood's back.

Ms. Laurie Scott: —I'm getting to the story—from shops to restaurants, who depend on those local jobs staying in our community. I know that the member from Peterborough has been very anxious for me to say that we did have good news on a partial recovery for the RV industry. Great Lakes RV had a managed buyout, in cooperation with lots of local community members and workers from the previous plant, and has reopened its doors. We encourage them and I'm very proud of the effort that they've made. I hope to see that they will continue to expand.

Bill 31's intent, I think, relates very much to the tough economic times that are happening in Ontario. In—

Mr. Jeff Leal: What's the story about Fleetwood? FEMA—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member from Peterborough, order.

Ms. Laurie Scott: In December, I hosted a roundtable meeting with a number of small-business representatives in my Lindsay office, and they were feeling the crunch. It was in the first part of November. The Canadian dollar had gone up quickly, they had an increase in energy costs under this government, more red tape, and increasing tax burdens. They came and said, "We have to do something. We're hurting. Our businesses are hurting and we're going to go out. People have to be educated about why they need to shop locally and be more aware of where products are made."

From that campaign—and I'm quite proud of the community, the municipality, the chambers and the BIA in our Lindsay area. The press came on board; the local press did a fantastic job, and we all got together and got the Shop Locally campaign, where they had stickers on bags, people were educated about why they need to shop locally, and they came to the shopkeepers and said, "We're more aware and we're going to be more conscious of that." So that was a good success story, a local initiative, and it does speak to the intent of the bill that's here, from a different angle. It's all about shopping and buying locally, and being made aware of what's made locally.

Our small-business sector is hurting; our manufacturing is hurting. Yesterday in the chamber, the Minister of Small Business got a very important and relevant question and deflected it to the Minister of Labour and did not answer the question. No wonder Ontario's entrepreneurs and business owners are dejected. The minister representing them in this Legislature, the minister of small business, is silent on the issues that are facing them. I read statistics earlier. They cannot be ignored. With what's going on in Ontario, we have to be responsible to the people and do what we can to assist them. This government is not doing that, but Bill 31 here is addressing aspects that the government needs to focus on.

1120

Just two weeks ago, my colleague from Oxford, the critic for agriculture, came up to Lindsay for a roundtable meeting with local agricultural commodity representatives. Again, the point was made clear: the hard-

working producers need progressive, active and long-term solutions to meet the challenges they are facing. The inadequacies were brought up here, specifically for the hog programs in Ontario, the group of people who are falling through the cracks and need to be assisted. The critic for agriculture, the member for Oxford, made that point to the Minister of Agriculture. We've certainly heard about that in our communities, and I'm sure the member from Peterborough has been made aware of that, because our ridings are very closely associated and we have similar producers. I'm sure he's doing his best within his government to bring attention forward to the inadequacies, specifically to the hog farmers, in that.

Interjection.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I know the member from Peterborough is very actively engaged in the debate this morning. Let us talk about the proposed rail service from Peterborough to Toronto, which this provincial government does not seem to know much about. But the federal government has stepped up to the plate, money is earmarked for a rail project, and they're waiting for a commitment from the Liberal government here, from the Ontario finance minister.

Mr. Jeff Leal: No details.

Ms. Laurie Scott: The member for Peterborough again mentions details. There is certainly a commuter rail report, which I know the member for Peterborough was presented with last fall.

The finance ministers, both federally and provincially, are speaking. We were speaking with the Minister Cannon's office today, and certainly, they are working with the province; they need the commitment. I know the member from Peterborough is in support of the commuter rail service between Peterborough and Toronto, which affects ridings represented by members from both sides of the Legislature. I know that he's on for that commitment. I'm hoping that they see the light and will work with the federal government and the many municipalities that support this initiative of the rail line and the studies that have been done on the growth that has happened in our areas and how it's going benefit all of our areas.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Peterborough, come to order.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes, the member from Peterborough can get on the train, certainly, when it's up and going.

The need for investment along with the policies that produce results: That's what we're looking for, not band-aids. Clearly the Dalton McGuinty government is just reactive, it's not proactive; it doesn't have a long-term plan.

For those reasons, I support and appreciate the member from Timmins–James Bay for bringing forward this bill this morning. Private members' public business is a great morning in which we can debate openly, even those not on the speaking list, and discuss the challenges facing our economies.

I'm running out of time, so I'd better stop. The member from Timmins–James Bay has said that he wants it to

go to committee, that he's flexible, and if there are some better ideas that could be brought forward, he's willing to do that. I think we owe it to the people of Ontario that we should take this to committee and flesh this out more, and make this government more responsible to the people of Ontario.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like the start by complimenting my colleague on this bill. This bill is long overdue. We need protectionism in the province of Ontario for our workers and our industries. This is a big step in that direction. The government talks about job creation in the province—here's a perfect opportunity for this government to step up to the plate.

What is good about this bill? This bill would benefit numerous industries in our province, starting with the steel industry in Hamilton and Sault Ste. Marie, all the secondary industries that supply the steel plants: glass manufacturers, plastic manufacturers, assembly plants, automotive producers and parts manufacturers. Who works in these plants? Trades: welders, electricians, hydraulic experts, plumbing, pipe assembly. Millions and millions of man-hours could be produced in this province through these types of bills. Why aren't we moving on it? There's preventative maintenance of the fleets, jobs of labour mechanics, reassembly, recovery, rubber manufacturers—tires. Firestone left Hamilton and went back to the States. Gee, if we had these types of bills in place at that time, maybe Firestone wouldn't have left. Maybe Massey Ferguson wouldn't have left Hamilton. These are the types of businesses that have fled in droves from this country.

I was really amazed yesterday, when I looked in the Metro paper on Wednesday the 19th and saw, to my shock, two GO buses sitting in the Halifax port. There were five more being unloaded—GO buses; government-sponsored GO buses for Toronto. Where were they manufactured? After getting off a boat, I don't think they were manufactured in Canada.

The member across the floor mentioned Bombardier and their competitiveness. It's a tremendous company, a company that's known throughout the world for its quality. However, all our companies in Ontario and Canada cannot compete. Why? Because we can't match their labour costs. They're paying people in their countries a third, a quarter of what our tradespeople and labourers make in this province. How can you possibly compete in a contract, like the member said, if you're dealing against those types of odds? It's not going happen. That's why we're buying a lot of these things overseas, because we don't have the manufacturing plants to have them built here. We have an abundance of trades and skilled labour in this province that are not being utilized to their full capacity. There are hundreds and hundreds of fully qualified journeymen who can't get work or are laid off. Once they're laid off, they have to collect unemployment.

It's amazing that the member thinks that we can compete. The Liberals—the government—like to talk about a global market. Great; I'd love to compete in a global market if it was fair, but the deck is stacked against us.

We can't compete because we don't have the proper facilities to be sponsored by the government. They do band-aid solutions, they throw money at the automotive sectors, but what do these companies do—foreign-owned companies, I might add? They say, “If you don't give us \$200 million or \$400 million, we're going to leave. We're going to lay people off. We're going to shut down. We're going to go back to the States. We're going to go back to Japan.” Boy, that's a real good thing, holding us hostage: “We'll leave unless you give us taxpayers' money”—unacceptable.

What we need is more Canadian content and more Canadian jobs so we can, as the member wants to say, compete in this global market. If we had the proper material—we are the richest country in the world for raw materials. What are we doing now? We've even got diamond mines in Ontario. People are coming to us, but they're coming under their rules, not under our rules, not under our laws that protect our jobs.

This legislation has to change. The economic policies of this government are unbelievable. It's just, “Throw \$400 million here; throw \$300 million,” hoping that the ghost will go away, but he doesn't. He comes back to the trough for more—more and more and more. Where does it end? I'll tell you where it ends: It ends when we have Canadian content and Canadian jobs. That's where it ends. This bill speaks volumes towards that end.

Interjection.

Mr. Paul Miller: For the information of the member across the floor, when I lobbied in Ottawa, while I was there, we lost Falconbridge to Xstrata. Telus took over all the foreign-owned industry in British Columbia and Alberta. This is going on all over our country. Until we open our eyes and see what's really going on, we're going to be in trouble.

1130

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Thank you for giving me the chance to comment on Bill 31, Canadian Mass Transit Vehicles Act, 2008, which was introduced by my friend here on my right side, the member from Timmins–James Bay.

When he was talking about how made-in-Ontario bills or laws should be implemented in the province of Ontario, it's good for local consumption and it's good for media talk, the reality is that the member forgot we live in a province that is part of a whole nation and we have some kind of agreement with those provinces. We work together on many different levels. Also, some of the product has to be Canadian content in order to get support from the federal government, because some money is also attached to it. We cannot live in isolation.

Also, he does not remember maybe that we have a lot of agreements with the provinces around us and we have a good working relationship with them. We cannot, as a province, close the door on ourselves to say whatever we produce in this province we have to consume and we have to deal with.

We have to remember that we as a province have great ambitions, and these ambitions give us the ability to

compete on a provincial level, on a Canadian level, as well as on the international market, if we equip our people and our companies with the tools they need in order to be able to compete. That's why we create many different initiatives, one of which is Move Ontario 2020, which gives us almost \$17.5 billion to invest on transit in Toronto and the Hamilton area in order to create good communication lines, in order to give the ability to many people to commute without any problem and, in the meantime, stimulate the economy and create jobs. This initiative wasn't supported by the NDP and also didn't get supported by the Conservatives.

Our transit tax initiative, which creates a lot of jobs for many people in the province of Ontario and also helps municipalities to renew their fleets and their transit systems, also wasn't supported by the NDP. The subway extension from Spadina to Vaughan wasn't supported by the NDP.

All these initiatives would support our transit, which the member from James Bay was talking about all morning—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Of course the NDP supports subways.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: —that we should have made-in-Ontario products and consume—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: We had a whole bunch of construction going on, and the Tories cancelled it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Order.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: It is very important for us to remember our company; it's a great company. We have good skilled workers in the province of Ontario. If we give them the tools and initiative, I guess they'll be able to compete not just in Ontario, not just in Canada, but in the international market.

That's why, Mr. Speaker, we invested \$1.2 billion in a program called Next Generation to allow a company \$5 million and above to borrow money from the government, to get a loan from the government, to get grants from the government in order to support them and enhance their ability, enhance their products, and expand. We also partner with universities and colleges in the province of Ontario to have good products that give us the chance to compete not just in Canada, but also in the international market. These are the initiatives we should put in place, not just sit and complain. I know this is a very big issue for northern Ontario, an emotional issue, but we're not working on an emotional level here. We're working with reality. The reality is we are not just living in isolation in this nation or in isolation with the whole globe. We have aspirations. We have the ability to compete and to send our products everywhere on the whole earth if we put the right investment in the right place and if we work hard to enhance our products and our companies.

Mr. Speaker, I think we have to stop the talk; we have to act, and that's what we are here to do. We are lucky. We are privileged to have a government that understands the reality, understands the future of the province, instead of just sitting and crying. The member opposite said,

“We have to do this, we have to do this, and we have to close the door on ourselves in order to protect our company and our factories.” He has to remember we cannot consume the products we produce in this province. We have to have the ability and the connections to send the products outside this province, outside this nation, in order to give us the ability to keep prospering and continue being a hub for many different institutions and factories and companies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak. Hopefully, my colleague will continue later on and explain to the people of Ontario about the misconception about this bill.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I am pleased to talk about this, and it’s a very topical subject today.

The bloodshed that’s taking place on the TSX and the New York Stock Exchange may indicate that we’re headed down the road into some difficulties. Certainly the Canadian dollar is dropping, I think two or three cents in the last couple of days, and that would auger well for Ontario’s manufacturing sector. The government would be familiar with the manufacturing sector. That’s the one they’ve been ignoring for the last five years and one which has been decimated in this province to a degree that about 23% or 24% of the former manufacturing jobs that existed in Ontario no longer exist. Perhaps if I have some time, I’ll say more about that.

This bill would give some advantages to Ontario manufacturers of rail cars and buses, those kinds of things. I’m pleased to give at least moral support to this type of legislation. I think this particular bill should have made some mention of NAFTA and the World Trade Organization and their rules around this type of thing. Both the North American free trade agreement and the World Trade Organization specifically exempt transportation equipment. However, they also have sections in their agreements that call for fair trade between countries, and within those kinds of clauses there are elements where bidders on a particular manufacturing site have to be equally treated, no matter which section of the economy they’re in. So if a bidder who is manufacturing rail cars in Thunder Bay is bidding for a particular contract in New York City and somebody from Wisconsin is bidding on that same contract, those two contractors, if their contracts are similar, in other words, if you’re buying as much product in the United States and the two bids are similar, they must be treated in a similar fashion under NAFTA, and sensibly under the World Trade Organization, although that’s a much murkier area.

Canada’s trade balance—of course, we’re a trading nation. That’s when these types of agreements become sensitive and somewhat difficult. I’m not sure if Canada is the most trading nation in the world, but I think we must be one or two. Fully 33% to 35% of our gross domestic product is exported out of Canada. The value of our exports equals about 33% to 35% of our gross domestic product. We export a tremendous amount of our manufacturing and raw products and commodities. Therefore, our trading partners are extremely important

to us. It’s very important that we don’t upset our trading partners and thereby perhaps close some doors. We want to keep all the doors in the world open because we are more dependent on trade than almost any other country in the world. If you take that 33% of our GDP as exported and apply that to the United States, 2% or 3% of the gross domestic product of the United States would be exported. That just gives you an idea of the degree we have in that area and how we have to be very careful about where we go down that road.

There are huge stories around the world as to the protectionism that various countries have dealing with this kind of transportation equipment. One of the worst, I suppose, or the most protectionist around the world would be Japan, and certainly China has a lot of protectionism too. When it comes to transportation equipment, Japanese regulations are such that they effectively eliminate any competition, with the exception of their sole manufacturer, and that would be Kawasaki. Kawasaki effectively is the only company in Japan that can produce this kind of equipment, and that’s by government regulation. It contravenes a number of sections of the World Trade Organization, but as I understand it, to this point they have never been taken to the world court.

1140

As I mentioned earlier, this would certainly help the demise of the manufacturing sector. The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock has talked about some of those issues, which I agree with. Those kinds of closures that she talked about continue into 2008. We have seen that the Essex aluminum plant in Windsor is closing, with 600 jobs disappearing on February 6 of this year. Again, the Dana Corp. in Barrie closed, with 155 jobs disappearing in the province. Martinrea in Kitchener closed with 1,200 jobs on February 11; 1,200 manufacturing jobs gone from Ontario. The government has been touting the growth of Toyota in Woodstock, which is going to create something in the order of 900 to 1,000 jobs. Here’s 1,200 jobs gone in Kitchener at one stroke of the pen. So the bloodletting continues.

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise in support of this bill. I rise in support of this bill, and it’s not just because of this bill, but it’s because of the entire history not only of this city but of this province. We’ve been doing this for a long time. Twenty years ago I was first elected to public office in the borough of East York, as it then was. When I arrived there, the borough of East York had a policy. It wasn’t my policy; it was the borough of East York policy that we bought first from the businesses and the factories that were located in the borough of East York. Secondly, if we couldn’t find it there or if it was not cost-competitive, then we would buy it from factories and institutions of other places in Ontario. Third, we went to Canada. I don’t remember, in the whole time that I was a municipal politician, that we were not able to find the goods and services that we needed, first of all in our own community, second of all in Ontario, third of all in Canada.

I will tell you that that policy was maintained. It was maintained throughout my time in East York. It was maintained when East York was subsumed into the megacity of Toronto, and then Toronto had a similar policy. Toronto still utilizes that policy, and that is why the subway cars were purchased by the city of Toronto from Thunder Bay. The only other option, and there was an option, was to buy the cars from Siemens, a Dutch company, which were going to be manufactured in China. But the citizens of Toronto, through their council, said no. They said that they wanted to buy them here in Ontario to protect the jobs. It is a good municipal strategy that is still being used in Ontario and Canada's largest city. I am merely suggesting, and this bill merely suggests, that the government of Ontario adopt something that has been shown to work over many years.

The second point I want to make in the couple of minutes that I have is to refute some of the catcalls and comments that have been coming from the government bench about New Democrats not supporting subways. That is hogwash; that is nonsense. The New Democrats, between 1990 and 1995, established and were in the process of building four subway lines in Toronto. You all know that's true.

When the Harris government came along, they said no; they were only going to allow one to be built. One that was under construction was filled in with sand, and that was the Eglinton subway line, which to my mind, to this day, was the best of the options available. The one that was eventually built was the Sheppard subway line.

The Sheppard subway line, to my mind and to most people's minds even today, was not the preferred option. We built it because it was the only one left on the table. I remember that vote: It came down and it passed by one vote—Metro council in those days; one solitary vote. I like to think it was mine because even though it wasn't the preferred option, it was the one that we took because it was available and because we could build it.

To my mind, even to this day, the best option was the one that ran through Black Creek in the riding of Eglinton—Lawrence. I would assume that the member from Eglinton—Lawrence knows that that was the best line. New Democrats know that that is and remains the best line. So when New Democrats say, "Why are we building the one up through University and Spadina?" we have a legitimate question to ask. The question is not whether we should build it, because of course we should build it, but is there a better line that could be built? We think the one that could be built and should be built—and the best option for the city of Toronto and for the province—is the Black Creek line to the airport. That's what we think. And if you're going say we don't want this Spadina line, then you're wrong. We want it, but the first priority should be to build it to the airport. That's the thing. Liberals can put forward all the spin they want, because you've got it wrong again.

Those are the two points I want to make. I'm going to leave the remaining time to my leader, the leader of the third party.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I'm delighted to add my thoughts to this debate. There are just a couple of points I wanted to raise. The first one I'm going to raise is the NDP position on the subway line, because it sticks in my mind and it was the last point the member just made. I was just given the quote by your leader, Howard Hampton—who is going speak next, I understand—about the subway line to Vaughan. He says the following: "We don't need another subway mega-project." That's his quote. Now, there may be something in here that I don't understand, but it seems pretty clear that you can't have production of subway cars if you don't have the subway line. I don't understand why the NDP would take that position, but we'll hear more about that from the leader.

Let's assume that the member from Timmins—James Bay has a good thought in mind. I would assume that all of our objectives here in this Legislature, our goals, should be that we would promote public transit. We're all trying to create jobs, all parties. We'd all like to strengthen our economy; we'd like to support our manufacturing industry. That should be the goal. But we differ, I guess, on how this can be done.

As it stands right now, over the last few months the McGuinty government has undertaken a review of how this government can maximize local jobs. How can that be done? The idea here is that, okay, \$17.5 billion has been committed to transit—\$17.5 billion—and the review indicates how that \$17.5 billion can be used to create jobs. The good news today is that the direct effect of this \$17.5-billion commitment to transit will be 16,000 jobs from money spent on rolling stock, from money spent on transit: 16,000 new jobs, and there may be more. So the review, going through all ministries, is simply this: How can we spend \$17.5 billion and maximize jobs, throughout all ministries? That's what we are undertaking right now.

If Mr. Bisson wants to add his name and his ideas to this concept of how to create and maintain local jobs, that's great. His idea is 50%. Okay. But what about the other party members in the NDP? Well, some of them say, "It shouldn't be 50%, Mr. Bisson; it should be 75%." In fact, there is one member in your party who says, "Let's have 100%." I have the quote here. He says every penny should be paid and used in Ontario. That's 100%. So that's very good. I don't know what your position will be in the end, but I assume this is the bill, and we'll talk about that in the specific section. So I don't know how this is going to work out.

I just want to remind you of one thing, and that is Mr. Chudleigh's point about the Conservatives too. Laurie Scott made an interesting point. She supports you 100%. Then the member from Halton, Mr. Chudleigh, says, "You know what, we should be considering protectionism. This is wrong." So I don't know where the Conservatives are on this. Are you going to be in support of this bill by Mr. Bisson or are you going to be against the bill? You cannot, as Conservatives, speak out of two sides of the same mouth.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Liberals do this all the time. What are you getting at?

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: You can't do that. You need one position.

Now, not only do we catch the NDP talking about 100% versus 50%, but we've got Conservatives saying, "This is right," and another one who says, "This is wrong." In other words, it's kind of tough to find out what the position is. I understand why this is difficult. I understand why this is complicated.

1150

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I'm advised by the member for Ajax-Pickering that we are joined by students from the Bolton C. Falby school in Ajax. Welcome.

Further debate?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I want to speak in support of this bill by the member from Timmins-James Bay, but first of all I wanted to explore some of the excuses that have been offered up for not supporting this bill. No one has quite come out and said it, but some have tried to imply, either in the House or in the media, that this kind of bill would be in breach of trade obligations. Let's be clear: This is not in breach of NAFTA; it's not in breach of the World Trade Organization. The reason that the United States has such a successful "buy America" policy is because NAFTA specifically provides for this. The reason that jurisdictions in Europe follow a similar policy—in Germany, in France, in Belgium—is because world trade agreements provide for this kind of legislation. It is well accepted by trade rules in the world today that jurisdictions can leverage public expenditure to benefit manufacturing jobs within the jurisdiction. That's all that this legislation proposes.

The second thing that has been offered up, sometimes in the House and sometimes in the media, is that this would somehow compromise Ontario's capacity to sell to other markets. I simply want to point out that Quebec, through a very similar preferential system, gave Bombardier the contract to build in the range of \$386 million of subway rolling stock for the Montreal subway. If I listen to what some of the government members say, they say that this would somehow prejudice Bombardier's capacity to sell elsewhere in the world. But Bombardier is winning transit contracts in Britain, is winning transit contracts in Turkey, is winning transit contracts in Germany and is winning contracts all over western Europe and many other countries. So I would say to government members who want to offer up the excuse that somehow if you did this, it would negatively impact your capacity to sell elsewhere in the world—not so. Bombardier is a beneficiary of this kind of beneficial policy in Quebec and Bombardier has no trouble selling transit vehicles virtually everywhere else in the world.

What this is about—and let's be clear—is that we all recognize that urbanized societies, for a variety of reasons, are going to have to invest billions of dollars, not only in urban transit but in intercity transit in the coming years. Thoughtful jurisdictions, recognizing this, are putting in place buy-domestic policies so that they can use that expenditure to leverage the creation of manufacturing jobs in their own jurisdictions.

That is why you can go to the Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay today and see the shells of streetcars being built, but once the shells are built, they're shipped to a plant in the United States where all of the finishing work is done—billions of dollars of finishing work and hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs, because that's what the Buy America policy requires.

We're simply saying that this works well in many other jurisdictions, that it does not contravene any trade laws, and if we care about sustaining manufacturing jobs in Ontario, we ought to do it here—now. Ontario did have a Buy Ontario policy until 2005, until the McGuinty government did away with it. That was a mistake. That mistake needs to be rectified, and it needs to be rectified now with the passage of this legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. I am advised by the member from Mississauga-Erindale that in the visitors' west gallery, we have with us visitors from Palestine House from the riding of Mississauga-Erindale. Welcome.

Mr. Bisson, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to thank those members who took the time to participate in this debate. I'm looking forward to the support of all members of the House, from all sides, because I think we all understand the importance of making sure that dollars that are spent from the public purse are utilized in the best possible way when it comes to creating jobs.

I want to remind people that my bill is no different from a bill introduced by another member from the Legislature, Bill 216, the Buy in Canada for Mass Transit Vehicles Act, that was introduced—the same bill.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My bill says the same thing. The bill that I introduced is virtually the same bill as Mr. Mauro's, so I look forward to having the support of Mr. Mauro and the rest of the Liberal caucus. At the time they thought it was a good bill, and I look forward to them thinking that this would be equally as good a bill as well.

We need to send this into committee. I agree that we may want to take a look at some amendments to the bill, but the principle is one that has to be maintained.

The leader of the New Democratic Party, Mr. Hampton, my leader, pointed out, quite rightfully so, that all jurisdictions in North America—the United States, Mexico and Central America—and jurisdictions in Europe such as England, France, Germany, Belgium and others, have similar provisions when it comes to laws in their own countries, because they understand that if you're going to take public dollars, you should have some net benefit impact when it comes to employment within your own jurisdiction. So for the Liberal government to say, "We don't want to support this," I think that says a very simple thing: that the Liberal government doesn't support the creation of jobs in Ontario when it comes to making sure that public expenditures—if you do vote against it, you're basically saying that you don't believe in the creation of jobs as a result of expenditures in the province of Ontario on mass transit.

So I'm looking forward to the support of the members across the way and on this side of the House and to the moment that we have this bill in committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

We will first deal with ballot item 5, standing in the name of Ms. Broten.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY
REPORTING ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LE DEVOIR
DE SIGNALER LES CAS
DE PORNOGRAPHIE JUVÉNILE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Ms. Broten has moved second reading of Bill 37. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Ms. Broten.

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: I'd ask that this bill be referred to the standing committee on social policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Ms. Broten has asked that the bill be referred to the standing committee on social policy. Agreed? Agreed.

We shall now deal with ballot item 6, standing in the name of Mr. Bisson.

CANADIAN MASS TRANSIT
VEHICLES ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008
SUR LES VÉHICULES DE TRANSPORT
EN COMMUN CANADIENS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Bisson has moved second reading of Bill 31. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1159 to 1204.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): All those in favour please stand until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hampton, Howard	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Savoline, Joyce
Chudleigh, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Scott, Laurie
DiNovo, Cheri	Kormos, Peter	Tabuns, Peter
Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): All those opposed please stand until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Hoy, Pat	Qaadri, Shafiq
Albanese, Laura	Jaczek, Helena	Ramal, Khalil
Arthurs, Wayne	Jeffrey, Linda	Rinaldi, Lou
Balkissoon, Bas	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Bartolucci, Rick	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Broten, Laurel C.	Mangat, Amrit	Smith, Monique
Brown, Michael A.	Matthews, Deborah	Sousa, Charles
Brownell, Jim	McMeekin, Ted	Takhar, Harinder S.
Cansfield, Donna H.	McNeely, Phil	Van Bommel, Maria
Chan, Michael	Meilleur, Madeleine	Watson, Jim
Colle, Mike	Mitchell, Carol	Wilkinson, John
Delaney, Bob	Moridi, Reza	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dhillon, Vic	Pendergast, Leeanna	Zimmer, David
Dickson, Joe	Phillips, Gerry	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 20; the nays are 41.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): All matters relating to private members' public business having been dealt with, I do now leave the Chair. The House will resume at 1:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1208 to 1330.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would just like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Richmond Hill, to introduce the members of the Iranian community who have come from across the greater Toronto area to celebrate Nowruz with us. We welcome you to Queen's Park today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WATER MANAGEMENT

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: In the very near future, the International Joint Commission will be making a decision on a water level management plan for Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. As you know, the St. Lawrence stretches along the complete southern border of my riding, from Cardinal in the east to just past Gananoque to the west. It also includes the bulk of the Thousand Islands, a recreational paradise and tourism magnet.

This past summer and fall, we experienced the lowest water levels in memory, and the upcoming decision by the International Joint Commission, expected later this month, is critically important to the environmental and economic well-being of this treasured waterway.

This week I wrote to the Right Honourable Herb Gray, Canadian co-chair of the International Joint Commission. I joined with New York State Congressman John McHugh in calling on the commission to select Plan B+, a plan that strives to return the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence system to a more natural regime and begin to reverse the ecosystem damage that has occurred over the

past 50 years. The binational Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Study Board recommended Plan B+ following a five-year study and a scientific review. I strongly urge its selection.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Kim Craitor: This is Black History Month. Many people in this province are not aware of the role the Niagara black community played in the great civil rights movement in North America in the 1950s and 1960s. In fact, the founding meeting of the NAACP was held in Fort Erie in 1905, and its leadership was derived from the Niagara Movement.

I'd like to bring to the attention of the House and the people of Ontario an exceptional woman of accomplishment who is helping us understand the importance of the black community's legacy to our area. I speak of Wilma Morrison, who last month received the Ontario Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for her lifetime of work in educating the public on local African Canadian heritage and culture, genealogy, and Niagara's connection to the Underground Railroad that allowed American slaves the chance to escape and start a new life.

Wilma is extremely modest about the accolades that have been heaped upon her and often tells me, "I'm sort of riding on the coattails of so many people who have done so many wonderful things." Wilma says, "I always wanted to celebrate our ancestors because they went through unspeakable horrors to make sure that things were better for me." Wilma maintains, "It is my responsibility to remind our young people of the story."

In Niagara Falls, it is Wilma who has provided the coattails on which future generations will ride to ensure the story is told. And finally, Niagara, Ontario and this world are much better places thanks to Wilma Morrison.

ALLISTON HORNETS

Mr. Jim Wilson: I rise today to pay tribute to the Alliston Hornets of the Georgian Bay Mid-Ontario Hockey League, who on Sunday night, in front of a packed house at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre, displayed incredible poise and skill, defeating their rivals, the Penetang Kings, 7-2 in the fifth game of a seven-game series to win the mid-Ontario championship. Winning the title at home capped off a season that saw the Hornets lose only three out of 42 games and marked the team's first league title in 24 years.

As a native of Alliston, I know the Hornets have a proud history in Simcoe county. Founded in 1971, the Hornets have launched the careers of NHLers such as Manny Legace, John Madden and the brothers Darrin and Darryl Shannon. Over the last four years, the Hornets have won 105 games while losing just 27—an amazing accomplishment, to say the least.

The championship means that the Hornets now go to compete for the Schmalz Cup against either the Walker-

ton Hawks or the Kincardine Bulldogs. Residents of Alliston and, in fact, everyone can catch the games live on 95.5 FM or at the home of the Hornets, the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre.

I want to congratulate manager Rick Bartlett, coach Darrin Shannon, his staff and all the players for their hard work and determination this season. On behalf of the residents of Alliston and area, I want to wish them all the best as they compete for the all-Ontario junior C championship.

UNION REPRESENTATION

Mr. Paul Miller: Yesterday was a historic day in Hamilton and, in fact, all of Ontario. The United Steelworkers worked with ArcelorMittal Dofasco management to develop a unique neutrality process that allows workers to be free from any interference from Dofasco management to consider whether they want the United Steelworkers to act on their behalf and to negotiate a collective agreement on their behalf. This is a very novel approach that should be offered to all workers in this province, where they can freely exercise their democratic right to determine if they want to belong to a union.

As a member of the United Steelworkers for 32 years, I'm extremely proud of the efforts of my brothers and sisters in developing this new process. In fact, I believe that this process should be the only way that certification is done in Ontario and in Canada. Ontario's current laws do not do the job.

I want to also congratulate Jürgen Schachler, president and CEO of ArcelorMittal Dofasco, for leading his management team to this historic agreement. He said that this "first of its kind in Canada" process is geared to allow for "clarity, transparency and democratic principles to guide the decision-making of our employees."

I know that I also speak on behalf of my Hamilton NDP colleague MPP Andrea Horwath in our congratulations to our United Steelworkers brothers and sisters and to ArcelorMittal Dofasco for showing leadership on both sides of the bargaining table.

JAMES BIRRELL

Mr. Jeff Leal: In November 2007, the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto named a cancer research lab in honour of eight-year-old James Birrell, a boy who lost his battle with neuroblastoma cancer in December 2001. The James family has raised over \$2 million to fund neuroblastoma research at Sick Kids. The James Fund was established to provide dollars for the much-needed research. Neuroblastoma accounts for nearly 10% of all childhood cancers. The \$2 million is funding 10 research projects, five full-time research salaries and 17 articles published in this field.

James shared a special relationship with Tom Hanks after his role in Apollo 13, a role James took great delight in watching and discussing with Mr. Hanks. In November 2003, Tom Hanks chose the James Birrell neuro-

blastoma research fund of Peterborough, Ontario, as his charity of choice; and at Disney's 75th birthday for Mickey Mouse, a six-foot-tall "space mouse" was dedicated to James by Michael Eisner, chairman and CEO of the Walt Disney Company.

If I had the time, I could go on about the accomplishments of this young man and his family in their quest to raise research funds to help children with cancer.

I will close with a quote from Dr. Kaplan, senior scientist at the Hospital for Sick Children: "James has effectively left his tiny footprint in the vast world of research in this country, and that is an immensely powerful legacy to leave."

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Today I would like to rise in the House to talk about numbers. However, I will not be talking in verse.

Interjections.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Another one will be coming.

A lot of numbers are thrown around in this House, and they can often be misleading. For instance, the Premier likes to say the number 450,000. That's how many jobs have been created under his watch, he claims. However, a closer look at the numbers within the numbers reveals other truths. Nearly half of these jobs were created in the public sector, and while there is no such thing as a bad job, a robust, flexible and growing economy demands significant investment in the private sector. In its first four years, this Liberal government has created only 160,000 private sector jobs. Compare that with the 372,000 private sector jobs created in the first four years of the Harris government. These numbers reveal that, given a similar trajectory, the Premier and his cabinet have cost Ontario 200,000 private sector jobs.

The number 200,000 should also sound familiar. That's the number of manufacturing jobs lost since 2005. I find it hard to think that this is a coincidence. So in effect, the Premier has not made any gains in job creation at all; quite the opposite. While business and service stay at par, manufacturing has tanked.

All of these numbers illustrate the immediate need for economic action by this government. If they continue to do nothing, we will soon be looking at zeros across the board.

1340

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Charles Sousa: As we head into the Easter holiday weekend, I know I am not the only one here in the House who is looking forward to spending time with my family. This weekend provides a welcome respite for many families before the snow melts and we head into the spring.

This government can say with pride and confidence that when we make policies or develop initiatives, the needs of families are our top priority. We have been

making Ontario a better place for families. We continue to make our education system better, which means more of Ontario's children will flourish and succeed. We continue to make our health care system better so that our families can take heart in knowing that their loved ones are being well taken care of. We are making strides in our protection of the environment, ensuring that we leave our children with a cleaner and greener environment.

I think we can say that Ontario's first Family Day was a success. We saw and heard many stories from across Ontario of families having a great day out skating, going to the museum and simply just enjoying each other's company.

I wish all of my colleagues on both sides of the House and all Ontarians a safe and happy Easter weekend.

MEMBER'S FAMILY

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: This Saturday marks the 60th anniversary of the day that my parents arrived at pier 21 in Halifax in 1948. Joe and Josie Thuss were married only days before they boarded the *Kota Inten*, which was a World War II troopship that had been pressed into further service as an immigrant transport between the Netherlands and Canada. Women and children at one end and men at the other, everyone slept in hammocks as 702 passengers spent two weeks on the choppy March seas of the Atlantic.

The newlyweds traveled by train from Halifax to Wheatley, where they started their new life in Canada as farm labourers. Their involvement in agriculture continued as they went on to become farmers in their own right and finally farm equipment dealers in the Parkhill area of Middlesex county.

They were among the many postwar immigrants who made the difficult decision to leave their families in Europe as they looked to Canada and Ontario as their opportunity to start a new life for themselves. All of them contributed to their new country through their hard work and family values as their way of supporting the community that had welcomed them.

My parents raised 10 children, of which I am the oldest, 41 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren. My dad passed away in 2001, but my mother still lives in Forest and in the heart of her children.

NOWRUZ

Mr. Reza Moridi: Today is Nowruz. Happy Nowruz.

Nowruz is a celebration of the spring equinox and usually occurs on March 21 or the previous or following day, depending on where it is observed. Nowruz is commonly perceived as the most Iranian of all celebrations. It has been celebrated by all the major cultures of ancient Mesopotamia such as the Sumerians, Babylonians and Elamites. Nowruz is widely celebrated in various central Asian countries such as Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, and in part of Turkey, Pakistan,

India, China, and in the Kurdish regions of Iraq and Syria. The Baha'i and Ismaili Shia Muslims, who trace their origin to Iran, also celebrate Nowruz.

Nowruz, with its uniquely Iranian characteristics, has been celebrated for at least 3,000 years and is deeply rooted in the traditions of the Zoroastrian belief system. Nowruz is also the natural rebirth of nature and, despite its Iranian characteristics, can be celebrated by all the people in the world. About 200,000 Ontarians from various ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds celebrate Nowruz every year.

Happy Nowruz.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Once again on behalf of all members, welcome to the Ontario Legislature today.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO
AMENDMENT ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT
LA LOI FAVORISANT
UN ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE

Mrs. Savoline moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 42, An Act to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act / Projet de loi 42, Loi modifiant la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée.

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.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: The bill amends the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to extend the prohibition against smoking tobacco in any enclosed public space, any enclosed workplace or other places, such as schools, to include the prohibition against smoking any controlled substance, as set out in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (Canada), in that place or within 10 feet of that place.

The bill is intended to stop the smoking of marijuana for medicinal purposes in public places or within 10 feet of public places.

GREAT LAKES SHORELINE
RIGHT OF PASSAGE ACT, 2008
LOI DE 2008 SUR LE DROIT
DE PASSAGE SUR LE LITTORAL
DES GRANDS LACS

Mr. Craiton moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 43, An Act to create a right of passage along the shoreline of the Great Lakes / Projet de loi 43, Loi créant un droit de passage le long du littoral des Grands Lacs.

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. Kim Craiton: The Great Lakes Shoreline Right of Passage Act recognizes that it is time for the people of Ontario to reclaim their traditional rights of passage along the shores of the Great Lakes between the high-water mark and the existing shoreline, a right that exists in British common law, which still governs this country and province, a right I wish to emphasize through this legislation.

The bill does not attempt to write any new legislation or preclude any existing legal rights. The bill limits the right of passage along the shorelines of the Great Lakes to people on foot only. Adjacent landowners would still retain their right of access to the Great Lakes and their right to build docks and wharfs where permitted by law. It will preclude adjacent landowners from placing fences to bar the public's right of way.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Hon. Michael Chan: On the eve of International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, I am honoured to stand in the House today to talk about racial discrimination.

Forty years ago tomorrow, 69 demonstrators were shot and killed in the Sharpeville massacre of South Africa during a non-violent protest against apartheid. Each year, the United Nations marks this anniversary by drawing special attention to the continued fight against all forms of racial discrimination.

In Ontario, we mark the day further with a renewed commitment to equality, opportunity and respect for all the people of our province and recognition that it is many cultures that make our province one of the best places in the world to live.

1350

Ontario's diversity is renowned. Our people come from 200 countries and speak more than 130 languages. We welcome about 130,000 newcomers from around the globe every year. It is one of the great achievements of Ontario that so many individuals, in all their backgrounds, have come together and chosen to live in peace and harmony.

Our government is proud to foster this acceptance of each other. We do this in many ways. We have invested in Ontario's community builders program, to support community projects that share our rich heritage and diversity. We created the Newcomer Champion Awards

as a means to recognize individuals who exemplify excellence or achievement in establishing welcoming communities, who foster understanding and sharing of our many cultures and traditions. Last year, we invested \$1 million to mark the 200th anniversary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in the British Empire. Our government recognized this bicentenary as an opportunity to raise awareness of that little-known part of our history—the fact that slavery existed in Ontario—to recognize the struggle of African Canadians and to honour the spirit of those who fought for freedom, justice and equality.

Mr. Speaker, much as we are proud of our diversity, and rightly so, we also know that some people treat others with hatred and prejudice for no other reason than race or the colour of their skin. We know racism exists, but we must keep moving forward towards a fully just and equal society. We cannot, and must not, tolerate racism or discrimination anywhere in this province. We want to ensure that no Ontarian is victimized by racism. But keeping racism and discrimination from making our society toxic is the work of all of us.

On this day, I ask all Ontarians to stand up and speak out whenever they see discrimination, to challenge it whenever it occurs. It's up to us to do our part to ensure that the acceptance, fairness and respect that every person deserves is given to every Ontarian.

JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je voudrais souhaiter à tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes une excellente Journée internationale de la francophonie, célébrée chaque année le 20 mars par les francophones de tous les continents.

L'Ontario participe à la fête. Partout dans notre province, une foule d'activités souligne cette journée hautement symbolique. Ces célébrations font foi du dynamisme des collectivités francophones de l'Ontario.

Pour se maintenir, cette vitalité doit s'appuyer sur l'énergie et l'enthousiasme de la jeunesse. La jeunesse est présentement l'un des plus grands défis de toute la francophonie ontarienne et canadienne. L'engagement des jeunes est essentiel pour faire rimer francophonie ontarienne avec modernité.

Mais en même temps, nous ne pouvons pas demander aux jeunes d'assumer plus de leadership si le gouvernement ne fait pas lui aussi preuve de leadership.

Le 1^{er} mars dernier, j'ai annoncé que notre gouvernement allait créer une Stratégie jeunesse qui sera élaborée et mise en œuvre par l'Office des affaires francophones. Cette Stratégie jeunesse aura pour mission de mobiliser la jeunesse franco-ontarienne et d'assurer sa participation à l'épanouissement de nos collectivités francophones.

Le premier ministre McGuinty et moi-même avons d'ailleurs eu le plaisir de remettre hier soir les Prix de la francophonie de l'Ontario, édition 2008, à deux lauréats qui travaillent de très près avec la jeunesse.

Chaleureuses félicitations à M. Robert-Guy Despatie, animateur culturel au Conseil scolaire de district cathol-

ique Centre-Sud, qui a reçu le prix du francophone, et à M. Chad Gaffield, président du Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada, qui a reçu le prix du francophile. M. Despatie est parmi nous aujourd'hui dans la galerie et je suis très heureuse de le saluer.

En plus de son travail au conseil scolaire, Robert-Guy est aussi président de Réseau Ontario, un important réseau franco-ontarien de diffusion des arts de la scène, et participe activement aux activités de nombreux autres organismes francophones. Le gouvernement de l'Ontario lui a remis la Médaille du mérite civique en janvier 2008. Félicitations.

Avant sa nomination comme président du Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada, Chad Gaffield a mené pendant 20 ans une brillante carrière d'enseignant, de chercheur et d'administrateur à l'Université d'Ottawa. Parfaitement bilingue, Chad Gaffield a toujours travaillé dans les deux langues officielles et a consacré une partie importante de sa carrière universitaire à l'étude de la présence française en Ontario.

L'Ontario a une myriade de raisons de célébrer la Journée internationale de la francophonie. Si nous devons nous fixer un objectif aujourd'hui, que ce soit de trouver des façons de motiver, d'inspirer et de valoriser nos jeunes francophones pour qu'ils soient fiers de faire partie d'une communauté dynamique à laquelle ils ont envie de s'identifier, une communauté francophone qui fait partie intégrante de la grande famille ontarienne.

Je souhaite à tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes une excellente Journée de la francophonie.

WORLD WATER DAY

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'm pleased to speak to the members of this House today about an important global initiative for the environment and for human health. This Saturday, March 22, is World Water Day, an international day of action that grew out of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

Clean, safe water is essential for life. Water is a critical factor in raising people out of poverty, for preventing disease, for sustainable development and for a healthy environment. Here in Ontario, it's sometimes easy for us to forget how such a basic requirement can be out of reach of so many people worldwide. Yet in so many places around the world, the lack of drinkable water is a constant reality. Each year, millions of people, many of them children, die from water-related disease. The World Health Organization estimates that 80% of all sickness in the world is caused by unsafe water and sanitation. Every day, women around the world spend many hours collecting water from distant and often polluted sources. This lack of clean water and adequate sanitation affects so many areas of life socially and economically, and most dramatically, of course, people's health.

Protecting and sustaining our water has been a hallmark of this government since the beginning. From protecting drinking water to better protections for the Great Lakes and penalties for companies that spill, we've gone

through a historic transformation on how we protect water in this province. We have passed the Clean Water Act and implemented all of Justice O'Connor's recommendations on Walkerton, ensuring our drinking water is protected from source to tap.

Right now, 38 source protection committees around the province are meeting regularly to begin the process of water source protection planning. That's over 300 people working locally to ensure that our drinking water is protected now and in the future. This government has invested \$120 million in this process to date.

We are very serious about improving and protecting our water, but we can't do it alone. We have many partners—municipalities, conservation authorities, environmental organizations and grassroots community groups, along with different governments—helping us get this important work done. We are working with the federal government, Quebec and neighbouring US states to better manage and conserve our shared Great Lakes waters.

Now we are moving forward with better protections for Lake Simcoe. In the face of climate change, pressures on water are going to continue to grow. That's why we have an aggressive and integrated approach to tackling climate change in Ontario, including the establishment of an expert panel to advise us on how climate change adaptation will take place.

Our supply of fresh water is one of the great advantages we have in Ontario, but it's not an infinite source. We must be diligent in protecting and sustaining our water and we must never take it for granted. Practising conservation, whether it's at home or in our businesses, will be the single most important action we can take, each and every one of us, to ensure that our children and grandchildren have a clean, strong and healthy place to live and grow in the future. I encourage all Ontarians to mark World Water Day on March 22—this Saturday—with their own pledge to help conserve and preserve our water.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

1400

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm pleased to have the opportunity today to speak on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus concerning the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This day is observed annually on March 21. On that day in 1960, police opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration against the apartheid pass laws in Sharpeville, South Africa. Pass laws were designed to severely limit the movement of, and to segregate, the non-white population of South Africa.

In 1966, the United Nations declared March 21 as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination,

to commemorate the Sharpeville massacre. It's a day observed around the world to focus attention on the problems of racism and the need to promote racial harmony.

I had the opportunity to visit South Africa several years ago with my family. We travelled to Robben Island, a few kilometres off the coast of Cape Town. We toured the prison where Nelson Mandela was held captive for many years, saw the cell in which he was held, saw the conditions under which he lived and heard the stories from the guides, all of whom are former prisoners. They told us how incoming prisoners were divided into one of three groups—black, coloured or white—upon their arrival. The colour of your skin dictated the treatment you could expect to receive in descending order from white to black. Signs were posted everywhere setting out prohibitions for non-white prisoners.

Even though I had grown up hearing about the evils of apartheid, I was unprepared for the effect this place had on me, and it was even more profound for my children, who were perplexed by what they saw. They simply couldn't imagine that such a situation had ever existed, much less during my lifetime.

Thankfully, the world has changed a lot in the 30 years since Nelson Mandela was released and he and Bishop Desmond Tutu went on to establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which brought about a peaceful end to apartheid. Yet, we cannot become complacent. Racial discrimination in many countries, including Canada, is insidious. It affects our communities and workplaces, and it's estimated that a third of the cases that go before the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario are based on grounds of race and colour.

Clearly, there's much yet to do, and each one of us has a part to play. In the words of Robert F. Kennedy, "It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centres of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

WORLD WATER DAY

Mr. Toby Barrett: Welcome to the upcoming World Water Day and its focus on sanitation. Our Environmental Commissioner has concern with a number of potentially dangerous chemicals from soap, shampoo and pharmaceuticals in our water.

Two years ago, Commissioner Miller targeted runoff containing chemicals used on farms, antibiotics and medications poured down the toilet or sink, medications found in human waste, and runoff containing antibacterial soap and shampoo. The problem is that sewage treatment plants are not equipped to get rid of these products.

I mention this in the wake of concerns in a report, commissioned by the International Joint Commission, indicating that our Great Lakes communities are showing abnormally high rates of cancer mortality, elevated rates of infant mortality, premature deaths and low birth rates. This report had been withheld from public hearing and was released just last week. It looks at 25 areas of concern in the Great Lakes Basin. Ontario is home to four of the five Great Lakes, and it is incumbent on this government to get a handle on this and respond to the causes of some of these troubling findings.

In the meantime, I also draw this House's attention to a recent affront to the democratic process, in the rejection of two landowners from the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee. Both Merle Bowes and Terry Hale were voted to the positions by local OFA members. We're also told that John Vanderburgt has been rejected by Huron county's Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Committee. We ask that this government take a look at that.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LA FRANCOPHONIE

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I would also like to take this opportunity on behalf of the PC caucus to acknowledge the International Week of the francophonie. This week is celebrated annually in over 50 countries. It is a week when Canadians honour the French language and culture and the unique role played by the francophone community in our country.

Today's date commemorates the signing of the Treaty of Niamey in Nigeria in 1970. This year's Canadian theme for the week of the Francophonie celebrates the francophone culture and its strong presence in generation after generation.

JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Moi aussi, j'aimerais souligner la Journée internationale de la francophonie.

J'aimerais commencer par remercier mes collègues de l'Assemblée législative. Je sais que pour certains c'est un effort de parler en français, mais ils font l'effort, et ça, je l'apprécie parce que cela envoie un signal fort à la jeunesse, comme madame la ministre l'a mentionné, pour encourager nos jeunes et développer le leadership. Donc, c'est quelque chose que l'on apprécie beaucoup.

J'aimerais également souligner les activités du Centre de santé communautaire de Sudbury pour souligner la Journée internationale de la francophonie. Ils ont organisé un dîner typiquement francophone. Typiquement français, ça veut dire qu'il y aura du sucre à la crème et puis de la tarte au sucre, mais il y aura bien d'autres affaires également. Ils ont organisé un concours pour identifier les drapeaux francophones des différentes provinces. Chacun de vous, vous pourrez aller sur le site internet et vérifier si vous les connaissez. J'espère au

moins que vous allez reconnaître le drapeau franco-ontarien, qui lui a été fait—je suis fière de le dire—à Sudbury.

Par contre, il y a toujours des ombres au tableau, puis je ne peux pas m'empêcher de commenter que cette semaine, mardi, lorsque l'Association des centres de santé communautaires était ici, monsieur le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée nous a annoncé clairement qu'il n'y aura pas de nouveaux centres de santé. Il y a des communautés francophones en Ontario qui attendent depuis plus de 10 ans pour avoir un centre de santé francophone. On connaît l'importance d'un centre de santé francophone pour l'épanouissement de la francophonie dans ces communautés-là, et ça, c'est un manque de leadership.

En dernier lieu, j'aimerais inviter tout le monde à La Nuit sur l'étang le 24 mars à Sudbury et, comme on dit par chez nous, passons la nuit ensemble.

WORLD WATER DAY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I rise to address two of the statements that have been made today. First of all, international water day: I appreciate Minister Gerretsen speaking to the numerous elements that we have to take into consideration when we look at this issue, but in particular, I want to note his comments about the impact of climate change on water availability and water supply. The simple reality—and everyone in this chamber is aware of it; I'm certain that the minister is—is that climate change will reduce the availability of fresh water in the interior of continents all around the world. In fact, it already is having an impact in Darfur. The United Nations is referring to the war in Darfur as the first climate change war. It's a simple reality. What we do here when we don't act on climate change has an impact in other parts of the world, not just here.

Just recently, not reported widely in Canada but reported in the European press, the proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences noted that the South Asian monsoon is on the verge of being destabilized. Hundreds of millions of people depend on a regular supply of rain for the food that they eat. That is being destabilized, and longer term, the monsoons that supply west Africa are being destabilized.

The European Union this week is putting out a statement about climate change and security and the impact that it will have on the Middle East: predictions of a 60% drop in the availability of water for Israel.

Having said all that, I say to the minister sitting there: You have not brought a climate change plan forward to this Legislature for review. You have not brought legislation forward as promised by the Premier. You have not started to take the action that has to happen. So when you speak about the impact of climate change on water and you urge us to take a moral stand, when you urge us to actually take action, I come back to you and say: Where's the plan? Where's the legislation? Where's the budget?

1410

INTERNATIONAL DAY
FOR THE ELIMINATION
OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I also want to address the International Day for the Elimination of Racism. I want to speak to Minister Chan. Minister Chan, as you're well aware, in Kawartha Lakes, in the Peterborough area, there is a trustee, a Mr. Gordon Gilchrist, who has written an overtly racist letter that was published in the local papers. In your commentary, you talked about the need to stand up and speak out against racism everywhere. I ask you, as the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, to make yourself fully aware of the facts and then, Minister, condemn Mr. Gilchrist's comments, as you must, and join with many good citizens in that area who've called for the resignation of this trustee, who should not be left in a position of authority with regard to our children.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On behalf of the member from London North Centre we'd like to welcome Mr. Ed Thompson and his children Owen and Aiden to the Legislature today. Welcome today to the Thompson family.

MEMBERS' ANNIVERSARIES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On behalf of all members here in the Legislature I want to take this opportunity to recognize two members: the member from Leeds-Grenville and the member from Davenport, who have recently celebrated their anniversaries. Both were elected here on March 19, 1981, and they look as good today as they did in 1981. Congratulations.

DEFERRED VOTES

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a deferred vote on the amendment by Mr. Runciman to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

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

The division bells rang from 1412 to 1417.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On December 4, 2007, Mr. Runciman moved that the motion of an address in reply to the speech from the throne be amended by adding the following thereto:

"However, the current speech from the throne fails to adequately address the state of our economy which is the single most important issue facing Ontario today; and

"Whereas since the beginning of 2005, Ontario has lost more than 153,000 manufacturing jobs; and

"Whereas the throne speech fails to recognize that economic growth predictions for the province have shrunk by a full percentage point from predictions used by the government less than a year ago; and

"Whereas the throne speech fails to indicate any sense of urgency for dealing with the economic challenges facing Ontario; and

"Whereas the throne speech fails to provide a plan for dealing with this new economic reality by maintaining a program of unreasonable taxation and undisciplined spending; and

"Whereas the throne speech fails to set out a plan to reduce taxes and reduce regulations that are killing business in Ontario and placing such hardships on Ontario's families;

"We therefore regret to inform His Honour that the current Liberal government is ignoring the very real economic problems facing Ontario and has failed to ensure our economic fundamentals are sound and, in so failing, is failing to live up to the responsibilities placed on it by the people of Ontario."

All those in favour of Mr. Runciman's amendment to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bailey, Robert	Hudak, Tim	Runciman, Robert W.
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Savoline, Joyce
Chudleigh, Ted	MacLeod, Lisa	Scott, Laurie
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia	Yakubski, John

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those against, please rise.

Nays

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Dickson, Joe	Miller, Paul
Albanese, Laura	DiNovo, Cheri	Milloy, John
Arthurs, Wayne	Dombrowsky, Leona	Moridi, Reza
Balkissoon, Bas	Duguid, Brad	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bartolucci, Rick	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Phillips, Gerry
Bentley, Christopher	Fonseca, Peter	Prue, Michael
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gerretsen, John	Pupatello, Sandra
Best, Margaret	Gélinas, France	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Rinaldi, Lou
Brotten, Laurel C.	Jaczek, Helena	Ruprecht, Tony
Brown, Michael A.	Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz
Brownell, Jim	Kular, Kuldip	Smith, Monique
Bryant, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Smitherman, George
Cansfield, Donna H.	Leal, Jeff	Sorbara, Greg
Caplan, David	Levac, Dave	Sousa, Charles
Carroll, Aileen	Mangat, Amrit	Tabuns, Peter
Chan, Michael	Marchese, Rosario	Takhar, Harinder S.
Colle, Mike	Matthews, Deborah	Van Bommel, Maria
Craiton, Kim	McGuinty, Dalton	Watson, Jim
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Wilkinson, John
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dhillon, Vic	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 18; the nays are 69.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion lost.

On December 3, 2007, Ms. Pendergast moved, seconded by Mr. Ramsay, that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

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

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

All those in favour of Ms. Pendergast’s motion please say “aye.”

All those opposed will say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1423 to 1428.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour of Ms. Pendergast’s motion will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Dhillon, Vic	Moridi, Reza
Albanese, Laura	Dickson, Joe	Pendergast, Leeanna
Arthurs, Wayne	Dombrowsky, Leona	Phillips, Gerry
Balkissoon, Bas	Duguid, Brad	Pupatello, Sandra
Bartolucci, Rick	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bentley, Christopher	Fonseca, Peter	Ramal, Khalil
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gerretsen, John	Rinaldi, Lou
Best, Margaret	Hoy, Pat	Ruprecht, Tony
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Sandals, Liz
Broten, Laurel C.	Jeffrey, Linda	Smith, Monique
Brown, Michael A.	Kular, Kuldip	Smitherman, George
Brownell, Jim	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sorbara, Greg
Bryant, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sousa, Charles
Cansfield, Donna H.	Levac, Dave	Takhar, Harinder S.
Caplan, David	Mangat, Amrit	Van Bommel, Maria
Carroll, Aileen	Matthews, Deborah	Watson, Jim
Chan, Michael	McGuinty, Dalton	Wilkinson, John
Colle, Mike	McMeekin, Ted	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Craitor, Kim	McNeely, Phil	Zimmer, David
Crozier, Bruce	Meilleur, Madeleine	
Delaney, Bob	Milloy, John	

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those opposed to the motion will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Horwath, Andrea	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Jones, Sylvia	Runciman, Robert W.
Chudleigh, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Savoline, Joyce
DiNovo, Cheri	MacLeod, Lisa	Scott, Laurie
Elliott, Christine	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Gélinas, France	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Paul	Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 61; the nays are 27.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It is therefore resolved that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

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

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is for the Premier. You recently appointed your parliamentary assistant, Mr. Ramsay, to look into ways of addressing what many would describe as a crisis in the province’s manufacturing sector: over 194,000 jobs lost since July 2004. Can the Premier tell us if, in the lead-up to the budget, his parliamentary assistant has shared any of the feedback he has received, specifically from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce? If he has, is the Premier listening to him, and will we see the results in Tuesday’s budget?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: First of all, let me say how pleased I am with the work being done by our parliamentary assistant to help us tackle the manufacturing challenge in Ontario. He’s had over 60 meetings.

I can tell the leader of the official opposition that our budget will in fact reflect both his findings and his recommendations. One of the things we keep hearing again and again has to do with the fact that we’ve got to find a way to turn a challenge into an opportunity. The CFIB—the Canadian Federation of Independent Business—tells us that last year there were 100,000 Ontario jobs that went begging for a period of at least four months. We have people in the manufacturing sector who are losing jobs, and we have these jobs that are going begging. What we need to do, and our budget will speak to this in a very realistic way—how we’re going to create new training opportunities for folks who are losing their jobs so that they can take on these new jobs and move themselves and their families ahead.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I asked the Premier a very specific question, which he declined to respond to. If the Premier is actually listening to Mr. Ramsay and he is reporting back accurately, and I’m sure he does, he would know that the Ontario chamber surveyed its members to provide input to your PA’s review, and he would know their response to this question: “What programs can the Ontario government implement that would provide assistance within the next 24 months?” I’m sure Mr. Ramsay would have told you the top response to that question: “Reduce corporate income taxes.” We’ve heard from economists, other provincial

governments and even the leader of the federal Liberal Party that corporate tax cuts are needed to support our beleaguered manufacturing sector. Now the Ontario Chamber of Commerce is added to that list. Will the Premier heed their calls, or is Mr. Ramsay's assignment a meaningless exercise?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to quote something that Len Crispino, who is head of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, said in response to our fall economic statement. He said: "The elimination of the capital tax and other provisions are some immediate actions that will benefit companies. It will have a positive impact. Manufacturing and resource sectors will get significant relief."

That speaks to the support we've had from the business community. In addition to eliminating the capital tax entirely for the manufacturing and forestry sectors, the leader of the official opposition will also know we have been busy reducing the business education taxes; we've been busy accelerating the business writeoff for the capital cost allowance provisions; we have worked with a fellow government to harmonize a collection of corporate income taxes; and a number of other initiatives, all of which are designed specifically to help address tax burdens.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Regrettably, it sounds like Mr. Ramsay's assignment is little more than a make-work project, an attempt to placate a good member who never should have been dumped from your cabinet. His assignment is like the government's review of the health tax system: a sham; a public relations exercise.

If the Premier was listening, he would have heard the comments of the chair of the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce—and I'm going to quote her: "Sixty per cent of the manufacturers surveyed would expect to see appreciable improvements to their competitiveness within two years should the Ontario government address regulation and taxation issues." When will the Premier heed their call?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The Conservative Party is coming up once again with the wrong diagnosis. Here are the issues. In the last 12 months, the price of oil has gone up by 80%. In the last two years, I think the dollar has appreciated by some 30%. We have in fact been cutting business taxes in the province of Ontario. The Conservatives believe that the problem lies in the fact that we have corporate income taxes that are at an unacceptable level.

The fact of the matter is, the price of oil has gone up, the value of the dollar has gone up and what we have in place are provisions to help those businesses which are in fact struggling. When you eliminate the capital tax for the manufacturing and resource sector, you are helping businesses that are struggling, that are not profitable. When you reduce business education taxes, you are helping businesses that are not profitable, businesses that are, in fact, struggling. Those are the kinds of things that we have done in concert with the Ontario business community. We will continue to work with them to ensure that they prosper here in our province.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Tim Hudak: I have a question to the Premier: Under your watch, since July 2004, Ontario has lost more than 194,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs. The Premier knows that a recent Toronto-Dominion report says that ain't nothing yet, that another 250,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs could leave in the next five years. Ontario's private sector job creation is, Premier, dead last in all of Canada. It doesn't have to be that way. We are a province of tremendous talent and entrepreneurial spirit and great potential, suffering under your outdated high tax and runaway policies.

Premier, please tell us that on budget day, Tuesday, you're going to reverse this policy and finally reduce the tax and red tape burden on businesses and working families.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It may be that the honourable members opposite have forgotten what happened when they were in government, but I can tell you Ontarians have not.

When they proceeded to cut taxes in a reckless and thoughtless manner, they closed our hospitals, they fired our nurses, they made cuts to our schools, they declared war on our teachers, they fired our water inspectors and they saddled us with a \$5.6-billion deficit. That's what happens when you recklessly and thoughtlessly pursue a tax cut ideology.

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We have a balanced, thoughtful, responsible, five-point plan. We're reducing business taxes, investing in skills and education, supporting innovation, investing in infrastructure and partnering with the Ontario business sector. That's how you grow the economy. That's why we have 450,000 net new jobs in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The Premier says, "Grow the economy." Give me a break. Some 70,000 individuals have fled our province to go to other provinces to find work. You have the record of the lowest private sector job creation in all of Confederation, some 194,000 families now without work from well-paying manufacturing jobs, because of your outdated high tax and runaway policies. The Premier well knows that even his federal leader, Stéphane Dion, sees the wisdom of competitiveness when it comes to tax rates.

So I ask the Premier: After four budgets of high taxes, runaway spending and high energy rates will we finally see you admit you're on the wrong track, reverse course and give a break to working families and businesses, and create jobs in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We're just going to have to agree to disagree. I see things differently, and I think Ontarians do, too. We had a bit of consultation recently. We called it a province-wide election. We put forward our different philosophies to the people of Ontario not that long ago. We asked Ontarians to pass judgment on us.

Again, what the Conservatives are asking us to do is to cut corporate income taxes—those are taxes on profitable

corporations—by \$2.3 billion. They want us to cut the health tax as well. So we're talking about a total of \$5.1 billion. That's what they're asking us to do—remove those revenues from the Ontario government. That definitely means closing hospitals, firing nurses, cutting education. It means driving up tuition fees. It means cutting the Ministry of the Environment and the like, and it means running a deficit.

Hon. George Smitherman: That's the Tory legacy.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: That's their legacy. That's what they did. That's what they left us. We will not pursue that particular tragic path.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The Premier certainly does see things differently. He stands alone in Confederation today in advocating this outdated high tax and runaway policy. We've seen it in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec now, provinces that have leapt ahead of Ontario in economic growth and job creation. Dalton McGuinty's economic policies have taken a talented and entrepreneurial province and put us dead last in job growth and economic growth in all of Confederation. It was a while ago that Premier McGuinty himself actually said, "Tax cuts for businesses, we think that is an important thing," but obviously he has reversed course and reverted back to his high tax and runaway spending approach.

Ontario working families and small businesses cannot wait any longer. Will you admit your mistakes and announce in this upcoming budget that you will follow what the rest of the provinces are doing and make Ontario attractive again for new business investment?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Right now, Ontario provides 41.5% of federal revenues, and we receive 31% of federal spending. On a per capita basis, every Ontarian provides \$2,040 to the rest of the country, and we are proud to make that contribution to this country which we love.

For my colleague opposite, the honourable member, to bring this negativity, this sense of overwhelming pessimism, is to betray our history as a province. It is true we are into some choppy economic waters. We have encountered those kinds of waters in the past. We will encounter them today and triumph as well. It may be they want to cloak this entire issue with negativity and darkness on behalf of the people of Ontario. I see this with a great deal of optimism. We have found a way through these challenging times in the past, and we will find a way through this particular challenge once again.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Howard Hampton: To the Premier: The new double-decker GO Transit buses that were part of the Premier's photo op today, can the Premier tell us where these buses were manufactured and how much they cost?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I should, first of all, note that the station at which this was announced is a station where

there was a proposal for the extension of the subway to York University. I remember that on April 11, 2007, the member pledged in the NDP election platform to cancel the subway expansion: "We don't need another subway mega-project ... extending the subway line into a lightly populated York region." So that's the context of where the announcement took place.

The double-decker buses are made in Scotland because they're the only ones who make those double-decker buses. I will tell you, bi-level GO Transit cars are made in Thunder Bay and people buy them from all over the world.

Mr. Howard Hampton: The New Democrats believe in Buy Ontario. What we're seeing from the McGuinty Liberals is Sell Out Ontario. The McGuinty Liberals buy double-decker buses worth \$1 million apiece from Scotland at the same time that 200,000 Ontario workers have lost their manufacturing jobs, and this morning, while the Premier played with his latest British toys, McGuinty government members rejected a Buy Ontario policy.

I want to ask the Premier, how does the Premier justify this double slap in the face to manufacturing workers in Ontario who've lost their jobs?

Hon. James J. Bradley: He may not be aware of them, so let me share with the member the comments of Jayson Myers, president of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters of Canada. Here's what he thinks about Ontario policy in this regard: "Canadian manufacturers and exporters who supply infrastructure projects need a globally competitive business environment. That starts with policies that provide them with a level playing field. Ontario has taken a step in the right direction...."

I tell the member from Rainy River, I tell the member who is the leader of the third party, that Ontario exports so many of its products that we're probably, amongst any jurisdiction in the world, the one that exports the most. We do not want to place those exports and the jobs that come with them in jeopardy through the kinds of policies that the leader of the third party happens to be—

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: I say to the McGuinty government, the United States exports literally billions of dollars' worth of manufactures to the rest of the world and they have a Buy America policy when it comes to transit equipment; and Germany exports literally billions of dollars of manufactures to the rest of world and they have a "buy domestic" policy when it comes to transit equipment to sustain the industry there; and the same with France and the same with Belgium. But what do we have in Ontario? On Tuesday, the Premier celebrates transit buses, most of the manufacture of which happened in the United States, and today the Premier celebrates buses that were manufactured in Scotland at \$1 million apiece.

Tell me, when is the McGuinty government going to celebrate manufactures most of which happen here in

Ontario for transit equipment? When are we going to see that, if ever?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I can tell the member that in terms of transit contracts—and he would be aware that the largest single allocation of funding is going to go to Move Ontario 2020, some \$17.5 billion. We estimate that \$14.5 billion of this funding will be invested in engineering, design and construction of transit infrastructure; the lion's share of that is 95% of this \$14.5 billion spent in Ontario. I say to the member, on top of that, we will have those contracts which are won by very good bus-making companies and transit vehicle companies in the province of Ontario. They will do very well in that competition and they will be assisted by our policy of 25% Canadian content.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Mr. Howard Hampton: Again, to the Premier, when he wants to celebrate buses that are made everywhere else in the world: In 2005, Ontario had a Buy Ontario policy and the McGuinty government abandoned it. Shortly after that, the city of Toronto, making a major subway purchase, sat down and looked at the options and said that, as a matter of economic development for Ontario, they made the decision to purchase subway cars made in Thunder Bay.

1450

Doesn't the McGuinty government think that that's a proper sphere for the McGuinty government to ensure that we create and sustain manufacturing jobs in places like Thunder Bay and Toronto? If it's good policy for Toronto city council, why isn't it good policy for the McGuinty government?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I say to the leader of the third party, who keeps making reference to some policy that existed back in 1992 and expired in 1997, that he seems to think that this policy has been in effect over those years. That is in fact, as he knows, a policy that expired in 1997. He may make reference to a letter to the city of Ottawa, because they asked about that policy, and it was revealed to the city of Ottawa when they made an inquiry that it ended in 1997.

I noticed that the city of Toronto—which has a number of people of his political affiliation on it—the people who actually have to govern, make decisions and have to live with those decisions; they decided, as the government of Ontario has, that 25% content, after consultation with experts in the field, is what they would have in their next contract. That's what Ontario has decided, and I—

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: What is on the record is that Toronto city council has acted to sustain and maintain manufacturing jobs in Ontario, while the McGuinty government is completely missing in action.

I want to draw the Premier's attention to recommendation 14(4)(1) in the report delivered by Robert Rosehart today, who was appointed by the government to look at sustaining manufacturing jobs. He says: "It is recommended that government procurement policies be pursued in the mass transit sector that support indigenous value-added content preferences and policies that are modeled after those of Ontario's major competitors." For example, Buy America in the United States, which requires 60% American content in a transit bus or streetcar.

My question is this: The Rosehart report is recommending a Buy Ontario policy; why is the McGuinty government at the same time turning its back on a Buy Ontario policy?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I say to the leader of the third party who raises this—as he should, as a leader of one of the opposition parties, and I understand that very much, but he must know that we have come forward with such a policy.

On balance, we looked very carefully at what the consequences might be. We could have played some games and said, "This much is 75%; that much is 35%," based on the fact that we already have a virtual cinch on the market in certain things. I mentioned the bi-level GO cars from Bombardier in Thunder Bay; they said 75% Canadian. They're going to be built there anyway, the ones that GO Transit wants. We didn't do that. We looked at a very balanced approach, as the city of Toronto looked at a balanced approach with the New Democrats who were there, and said, "What would be best for Ontario's exports and for our own products is 25% Canadian content."

Mr. Howard Hampton: The McGuinty government wants to pretend that somehow having a Buy Ontario policy would harm exports. It's certainly not true in Quebec and Bombardier as a preferential treatment in terms of Quebec and exports. It's certainly not true in terms of Bombardier exporting to the United States, Germany and to many other countries around the world.

Manufacturers, labour leaders, business leaders, political leaders all say that a 50% Canadian content level is sustainable. It would have no effect on our export ability. Now the person that you have appointed, Dr. Rosehart, says essentially the same thing. Why is everyone else in Ontario saying that we should match our competitors and have a Buy Ontario policy, and it's only the McGuinty government that celebrates buses that are made in the United States and buses that are made in Scotland and says no to a Buy Ontario policy?

Hon. James J. Bradley: When I look at the contract—the member wants to steer away from this, and I understand it; I spent a lot of time in opposition, and I know how opposition people think and the kinds of questions they ask. But I can tell you that in the contract I'm talking about, Move Ontario 2020, 82% of the spending will be for the province of Ontario. The province of Ontario will benefit. I know that companies that are in the manufacturing industries in Ontario are very, very good, and they win a lot of contracts because they are

very good and because they compare well in their price and in the kind of product they produce, and will continue to do so. The city of Toronto, at 25%, understands, we understand, that overwhelmingly, the jobs created by our transit projects in this province will remain in this province.

DEVELOPMENT FEES

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs: on November 30 last year, your government met with HDI, the Six Nations Haudenosaunee Development Institute. This is the group extorting fees from not only home builders but also municipalities. After your meeting, you and your government received a letter from HDI—this is according to the National Post—demanding a \$7,000 fee or else further talks would be prevented from occurring. Minister, you now have the evidence—you have it in writing—of extortion by HDI that we've been hearing about. Will your government be laying charges?

Hon. Michael Bryant: The member is asking whether or not the government is laying charges, and I would remind the member that the government doesn't lay charges. Police lay charges. If there was any doubt about that, the Ipperwash commission reminded everybody that it's police who lay charges.

As for the correspondence that the member is referring to, if he is suggesting that correspondence was sent to me along the lines he has just said, I'd appreciate him sending more information over to me, because I would require more information. What he is talking about is not something that squares with my understanding of any meetings and correspondence that have taken place with me in the past.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Minister, letters were sent to your government—and your government is not the only government subject to the strong-arm demands of Aaron Detlor and HDI. Official plans for the city of Brantford, Brant county, Norfolk county, Haldimand county, East Luther Grand Valley and the city of Hamilton rural plan are all on hold. “All construction from roads to homes will be stopped if an Ontario ministry does not pay for [the] Haudenosaunee Development Institute review of the Haldimand county official plan.” This is in the Dunville Chronicle. And this from Aaron Detlor: “Financial institutions ... will completely back away from any development.” “If the minister refuses to pay, there will be repercussions,” Detlor said.

So there we have it, Minister: a public threat of repercussions. Will you investigate? Your government has received a letter from Aaron Detlor. When will you charge HDI with extortion?

Hon. Michael Bryant: I spoke today with the mayor of Brantford, and continue to speak with not only business people in the region, the mayor, the council and, obviously, MPP Dave Levac. He brought everybody into the same room, along with the Haudenosaunee Six Nations and band council members, to discuss ways in

which we can find a way for the Haudenosaunee Six Nations government and peoples and the local municipalities and communities to be working and living together. What the member is proposing, in my view, is going to further divide the communities.

In any event, he repeatedly calls upon the government to lay charges against individuals, and I remind him again that in fact it is for the government to engage in debate and pass policy; it is for the police of Ontario to retain their independence and lay charges as they see fit.

1500

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Yesterday in this House, the Minister of Health stated, “I'm pleased as well that we are moving toward the implementation of a regulation that will have the effect of establishing a much higher standard of care.” We were talking about long-term-care homes. Will this higher standard be guaranteed, and will it be at a minimum of 3.5 hours of care per day?

Hon. George Smitherman: I can confirm that Shirlee Sharkey, the CEO of Saint Elizabeth Health Care, has been out consulting with a variety of stakeholders and will soon offer some advice to moving forward.

No, the standard will not be 3.5 hours. I want to tell the honourable member that the standard at present, the hours of services that we're providing, is 2.95, which stands in very sharp contrast to the 2.25 standard that was in place when the New Democratic Party was the government in the province of Ontario.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to address this: 2.95 is actually 2.85 and it is what is being paid. That includes things like maternity leave, statutory holidays, sick leave. That doesn't provide for much care. The actual care is more about 2.45 hours. In 1995, long-term-care homes did not do oxygen therapy; they did not do intravenous therapy; they did not do any of this. There was not the amount of Alzheimer clients that we see now. The client mix is so different that what happened in 1995 has very little bearing as to what's happening in 2008 in long-term-care homes.

Ontarians want to know: When will this government implement a guaranteed minimum standard of care?

Hon. George Smitherman: I do want to repeat to the honourable member that this government will not be bringing in a standard which says to the long-term-care home operators and to the front-line health care employees, “Pretend that every resident of the 77,000 in long-term care requires exactly the same care.” We will not turn them into widgets, and we've been clear on that point.

I'm very privileged to have been in the position as part of this government to introduce 9.55-million annual hours of additional bedside care to date. Further, last September we increased by 36% our funding on the raw food per diem. Alongside this we've dramatically

enhanced compliance capabilities, and further, we have a piece of legislation that further enhances the expectations of the quality of care for our residents in long-term care.

Interjection.

Hon. George Smitherman: To my Conservative friend who likes to heckle, I ask him: Why are you still in favour of a \$3-billion cut to health care?

CRIME PREVENTION

Mr. Mike Colle: To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services: A most tragic event has occurred in my community that has shaken the family and shaken all of us. It's another needless loss of life by handgun violence. I know the family affected personally. They are devastated. The community is devastated by this great loss. Would the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services please tell this House what steps our government is taking to protect Ontarians from this horrendous gun violence?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I'd like to thank the honourable member for his question and for supporting the family and the community affected by this very sad and tragic event. I would also encourage anyone with any information to come forward to the Toronto Police Service or to Crimestoppers and let them know what they know.

Our government believes in being tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime, and that's why we invested \$68 million towards anti-guns-and-gang initiatives to give police and prosecutors the tools and resources they need. That's why we invested \$30 million in community programs to target at-risk youth. That's why we invested in 1,000 new police officers. That's why we believe that strategies like the Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy will pay dividends. We continue to work with our police—

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

Mr. Mike Colle: I know the community is very appreciative of the dedication of the men and women of the police services and the co-operation they are giving to the family especially and the hard work that's involved here. My question to the minister is, can he please tell the House what else we can do in continuing this fight against this horrendous gun crime that is plaguing our streets and our communities right across Ontario?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: To the Attorney General.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Again my condolences, on behalf of Ontarians, to the families, the friends, all those affected by this and other tragic events, and my thanks to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for his determined advocacy in this area.

We have moved as a government, Premier McGuinty and my predecessor Minister Bryant, to push the federal government to bring in mandatory minimums for gun crimes and reverse-onus bail for those charged with crime, for the protection of society. I'm pleased that that legislation has been passed, but we need more. We need

more in two specific areas. One of the issues is the smuggling of guns across the border. The federal government is in charge of the border. We need a federal government national plan for improved border security to stem the flow of guns across the border. The second area is a handgun ban. Join Ontarians in advocating a national ban on handguns. The federal government has to get serious and get the guns.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Premier. As you may know, Don Drummond, the chief economist at Toronto Dominion, recently said that Ontario is not so far from being an equalization province. The reason Mr. Drummond says that is because Ontario's per capita fiscal capacity has fallen from roughly \$400 above the equalization standard four years ago to merely \$84 above the average this past year.

Premier, clearly your outdated, failed economic policies are holding back our talented and resourceful province, to the point where we're on the verge of becoming a have-not province. Is that not signal enough that you need to reverse your high tax and runaway spending policies?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: You'd think that if the Conservative Party was so wedded to the notion of a cut of corporate income taxes, they might have made some passing reference to that in their platform, but there's not a single mention of it to be found there. It's apparent that they're taking their cues from elsewhere these days.

As I said a moment ago, this year Ontario provides 41.5% of federal revenues and receives 31% of federal spending. On a per capita basis, that means each and every Ontarian is providing \$2,040 to the rest of the country, which clearly distinguishes us as not being a have-not province. What we don't have is fairness from the federal government, and in the ensuing supplementary I will be delighted to address that.

Mr. Tim Hudak: It's extraordinary: Ontario is headed towards have-not status. We've seen a significant reduction in our per capita income from \$400 above that standard to barely treading water above the national standard. The Premier doesn't even respond to this notion, this danger of heading into equalization territory.

Let me tell you something else, Premier. In 2006, for the first time, Ontario's nominal GDP per capita fell below the Canadian average. Four years ago we were \$2,000 above that national average. In 2006, for the first time ever, we fell below that average. Please tell me that your goal, the lasting legacy of the Dalton McGuinty government, is not going to be taking Ontario to have-not status.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I see my honourable friends' lips moving, but I hear the federal Minister of Finance's voice speaking. All roads over there these days lead to Ottawa, apparently.

When they're taking their direct orders from Ottawa, I would ask the honourable members opposite to make a

few modest requests on behalf of Ontarians. First of all, I would ask them to speak up for Ontarians when it comes to fairness for our unemployed workers. Ontario workers who lose their jobs are getting on average \$4,000 less than had they been unemployed in other provinces. This is not a question of money for our government. All told, this would be \$2.1 billion annually that would go into the pockets of unemployed workers for things like groceries—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Premier. New question.

1510

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Premier. Earlier this week, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs told the media that he has “a good working relationship with Chief Donny Morris of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug.”

Well, let me you: Chief Morris is flabbergasted. Why? Because on January 11, when Chief Morris was in Toronto and tried to meet with the minister to talk about the Platinex situation, the minister wouldn't meet. He'd only talk for 10 minutes over the phone.

On January 17, when Chief Morris gave the minister a proposal from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug to remedy the Platinex situation, the minister failed to respond, and in fact has never responded.

On March 5, Minister Bryant showed up at Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug unannounced—no discussion, no consultation—with a unilateral government document for the community to sign. Is this what the McGuinty government calls respectful consultation with First Nations? You don't respond to their proposal and then you demand they sign a unilateral—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I am not sure there's anything to be found within the leader of the NDP's assertion with which I might agree. He is not fairly representing the activities of our Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

He is meeting with First Nations chiefs as we speak. He has been to KI every month this year, and he'll continue to meet with them in order to find new ways to work together. We understand it is a difficult situation. We understand that when it comes to these kinds of disputes, in many cases they predate Confederation. What we're trying to do is establish a new positive, progressive working relationship; hence the new ministry, hence a minister who takes complete responsibility for these kinds of things.

I cannot agree with my honourable friend opposite, in terms of his representation of the good work being done by my minister.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Well, as a result of the McGuinty government's so-called good work, the chiefs of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation have now cut off all com-

munications with the McGuinty government in regard to the northern table discussions.

Today, this is the press release from the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug:

“The Ontario emissary, Mr. Michael Bryant, came to our community and offered no formal agenda and plan for negotiations. There was no real substance for negotiations, despite what he said in a press release dated March 17, 2008, the day that our leaders were imprisoned.

“The Ontario emissary, Mr. Bryant, is indeed speaking fork-tongued. He is not formally talking to anyone at KI, as he professes.”

Let me tell you, Premier, that I know the people of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug. They are very respectful, honest, decent people. For them to issue a press release that says that, tells me they are very angry—

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Please respect the Chair, Premier.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I think we have close to 130 First Nations communities in the province of Ontario. From time to time, we will have differences. That is in keeping with human nature.

I think what we need to be able to do is work together and move forward in a measured and balanced way. That's why we've created a new ministry; that's why we have a minister with his own budget. We have managed, so far, to enter into a gaming agreement with the First Nations communities, which will translate into \$3 billion in new benefits for our First Nations communities. We have managed to put the Ipperwash issue behind us.

There are some outstanding issues, and I expect that more will appear on the landscape on a fairly regular basis. I think one of the most important things we all need to bring to the table is goodwill, and I know that goodwill is embodied in Minister Bryant.

CANCER SCREENING

Mr. Kim Craiton: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. As a thankful—in fact, a very thankful—cancer survivor, I know that early detection and proper treatment of cancer is the only answer to this malignant disease.

Colorectal cancer is one of the only few cancers that is both common and highly preventable. In fact, strong evidence exists to show that by screening high-risk populations for the disease, we can reduce the number of people who die from this illness. However, on the average, about 3,250 Ontarians die from colorectal cancer and about 7,800 are newly diagnosed with the disease. It's the second-leading cause of cancer deaths in Ontario. Sadly, it doesn't need to be so.

Could the minister inform this House what the government is doing to reduce the impact of colorectal cancer?

Hon. George Smitherman: I want to thank the honourable member for his question. I think we are all very proud to see how well he's doing. We're proud of the health care workers who support our Ontarians. Too many people in Ontario die from colorectal cancer; in fact, we have a very high rate of colorectal cancer death in our province, and we're doing something about it.

Last January, I had the privilege of announcing that Ontario would be the first jurisdiction in Canada to implement a colorectal cancer screening program. I'm very pleased to say that we're investing \$193 million over the next five years to dramatically enhance the rate of screening for Ontarians, focusing particularly on those over 50, starting in April, with a fecal occult blood test that will be widely available from primary care practitioners and indeed from pharmacists as well.

We know there is a good chance of saving lives in Ontario. We encourage people to become aware and for members in this Legislature to play a role in enhancing awareness of the necessity of screening for colorectal cancer in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Kim Craitor: My supplementary question as well is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. This is an important initiative for constituents, mine, as well as everyone in this House and all of Ontario. Could the minister explain for this House and Ontarians how the government will get the message out about the program and make sure that as many Ontarians as possible take advantage of this preventive benefit that it has to offer?

Hon. George Smitherman: I appreciate the question. The good news is that if detected early, colorectal cancer has a 90% cure rate. Our ambition is to dramatically enhance the number of Ontarians who achieve such a successful circumstance.

To that end, we've launched a new public awareness campaign called Colon Cancer Check to educate Ontarians about early screening. People will soon see this campaign in the province of Ontario. We have a website, www.coloncancercheck.ca, but, importantly, because of the necessity of communicating about this matter with people in a variety of languages, we'll be running newspaper ads in 70 ethnocultural newspapers, 45 main dailies, and every one of the 23 television stations in the province of Ontario will be participating in running our campaign.

Coloncancercheck.ca fulfills the opportunity to save lives in the province of Ontario. We encourage all people, especially those over 50, to participate in this program and for others to encourage the ones you love to do so.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. The Public Appointments Secretariat, with which you work, has a mandate to ensure that the most qualified men and women, having the highest personal and professional integrity, serve the public on the province's agencies, boards and commissions.

On January 18, the Premier and cabinet signed off on the appointment of Sivam Vinayagamoorthy to the CCAC for Mississauga-Halton. Yesterday, at the government agencies committee, I requested a deferral of this appointment after it became very clear after questioning from myself and the MPP for Nickel Belt that this person was unqualified. He did not understand the role of a CCAC. He could not distinguish between home care and nursing homes and did not understand the basic health care issues in this province. Will the minister rescind the appointment, uphold the mandate of the secretariat and ensure that only qualified people get appointments?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: With all due respect, that question properly goes to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. George Smitherman: First off, I would like to say to the honourable member, as is the law, the rules in this place do allow for other parties to call forward members, and you had an opportunity to vote on that point.

I don't know all of the circumstances associated with the allegations that the honourable member makes. I assume that some of this is in the eye of the beholder, what is qualified and not. I can tell the honourable member that community care access centres play an incredibly important role, and they provide services to a very diverse group of the people of Ontario. It's our responsibility to make sure that the diversity of the province of Ontario is reflected on such boards. I would take with some caution any recommendation from the honourable member about who's qualified and who's not.

1520

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the Minister of Health's being able to answer everybody's questions over there, because that's what he's been doing all week. It doesn't say much about them. But on April 24, 1999, a then-opposition member said appointments should be removed from the Premier's office and instead should be decided by an administrative council. Apparently, things change once you're elected Premier, since it was he who signed off on this grossly inadequate appointment.

Not only is the appointee so obviously unqualified, but it is a blatant political patronage appointment. The appointee says, "I'm just an ordinary Liberal Party member," and he sure is. He's a GTA Liberal blogger, and according to Elections Ontario he donated \$3,817 to the Liberal Party. To top it all off, his reference for the job is none other than Harinder Takhar, the Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, whose Liberal riding association this individual works on.

So my question, back to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services, is to stop the pork barrelling, put some integrity back into the political appointment process, and withdraw this appointment.

Hon. George Smitherman: Some great patronage appointment is the privilege of serving on a community care access centre, where the per diem is zero. This is unpaid work.

It's important that home care, which is about delivering services into the home, include a culturally diverse, representative group. Like I said before, the issue of

qualification is something that the committee had an opportunity to consider, as is in keeping with the rules of this place. I dare say, in this Legislature and through the appointments that I'm privileged to recommend through the order-in-council process, that we're appointing people from all political stripes and from no political stripes at all, as we should continue to do in the privileged way that we have.

NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT SUPPLEMENT

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. My question is: When will the McGuinty government finally completely and utterly end the clawback of the national child benefit supplement from Ontario's poorest children?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: This government is very serious about addressing child poverty, and we have shown it after the election when the Premier appointed my very capable colleague to chair the poverty reduction committee. This government has shown since we've been in power, and in a very sensitive manner, the importance of reducing poverty. We have done so by increasing social assistance three times, by 7%; we have done so by moving forward with the Ontario child benefit; and we have done so by increasing the minimum wage, and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Michael Prue: Perhaps the minister needs to listen to the question again. The question was: When will you end the clawback of the national child benefit? That was the question. Your own Premier has said that it was a heinous practice by the previous government. Your own party has said you will end it. My question is very simple: When are you going to end that clawback, if ever? When are you going to do it? That's the question.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'm very proud to be part of the government that has been moving forward to reduce child poverty in this province. We have done a lot more in improving children's quality of life by introducing the Ontario child benefit.

The Ontario child benefit is helping a lot more children than this party wants us to do. This party wants us to help only those on social assistance. We have done a lot more than that. We are helping children of the working poor. We're also helping children whose parents are on social assistance, and we're moving forward with a dental plan that will also help children in poverty.

INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: My question is to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. Minister, as you know, for years Ontario's municipal infrastructure was neglected, and there's been a growing need to address this huge deficit. There are a number of infrastructure priorities in my own riding of Northumberland-Quinte West and indeed in municipalities across this province. What is this government doing to address the infrastructure challenges of Ontario's municipalities?

Hon. David Caplan: I want to thank the member from Northumberland-Quinte West for the question, because I can tell you that our government takes infrastructure and infrastructure investments extremely seriously. We know that investing in our infrastructure means more jobs in the short term and greater economic vitality and viability over the long term.

That's why, in the recent fall economic statement, Minister Duncan announced the municipal infrastructure investment initiative, or what I call MIII, a \$300-million program to provide safe and reliable infrastructure for local priorities. We had an overwhelming response from municipalities, and that's why Premier McGuinty went to the OGRA/ROMA conference and announced an additional 50% enhancement to MIII, to bring our total investment to \$450 million.

The funding under MIII is just one initiative in the government's broader strategy to modernize Ontario's public infrastructure. Other programs include the successful rural infrastructure investment initiative, the OSIFA loan program, and of course COMRIF—

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

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Minister, thank you for the update. I can tell you that the eight municipalities and the counties in my riding certainly appreciate the fast turnaround of this program and the McGuinty government's track record on municipal infrastructure investments. However, my municipality has many other infrastructure needs, as do all other municipalities. Minister, tell this House what the government is doing in the long term to support Ontario's infrastructure.

Hon. David Caplan: I want to thank the member for the question. He was my parliamentary assistant when we started the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, and he was really integral in the creation of ReNew Ontario, the program which is a \$30-billion-plus investment. We are on track, in our first three years, to have invested over \$20 billion in Ontario's infrastructure.

In addition, this morning Premier McGuinty was here in Toronto announcing that our government will invest an additional \$1 billion this year to strengthen municipal infrastructure right across the province. That \$1 billion will help to create 10,000 new construction jobs. But it's more than that. That's why just the other day our colleague the Minister of Finance tabled the Investing in Ontario Act, which, if passed, would direct a portion of provincial surpluses in excess of \$800 million to municipalities for their capital needs, and that would include municipalities in the great riding of Northumberland-Quinte West.

AUTISM SERVICES

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Earlier this week, I was pleased to listen to the concerns of the Alliance for Families with Autism at a meeting in Markham. Their concerns remain the same: Waiting lists are still too long, and many children reach the top of the waiting list and

their parents find out they're not even eligible for treatment.

Parents do not understand how these waiting lists work and how long their children have to be on them. Why will you not develop an accountable and transparent plan that works for autistic children, a plan their parents can understand, know how long they will have to wait—and see results?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you very much for the question. I was very glad that you were able to attend the meeting with the parents of children with autism. Minister Wynne and I were there, and we even had representatives from the third party.

There is no question that parents of children with autism face enormous challenges, ones that we can only try to imagine. But the wait-list issue—it's very important to understand that we ended the age six cut-off that your government had imposed, which of course opens up IBI therapy to many more children. Parents are told that the wait list is a wait list. You wait. There's no prioritization. You have to wait, and when it's your turn, you are assessed for service so that children receive IBI therapy only if they can benefit from it.

1530

Mrs. Julia Munro: Along with my colleague the member for Newmarket–Aurora, I visited an excellent treatment facility for autistic children in Michigan a couple of years ago. It represents some of the best treatment options and practices. You heard at the meeting from parents themselves that there are outstanding practices in the US and other countries. At the meeting, the Minister of Education rejected the need to study best practices of other jurisdictions. Do you agree with your colleague?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Quite apart from not looking at other jurisdictions, we are moving ahead on preparing and increasing the capacity in our education system to provide opportunities for children on the autism spectrum to get a range of service. At the meeting earlier this week, it was quite clear that there are parents in the community who have seen changes within the system. The training that has gone on with thousands of individuals within the education system, so that they understand how to deliver an applied behaviour analysis approach, has provided opportunities for children actually to move off that waiting list and get into school, because the object of any parent is to have their children as part of the mainstream education system as soon as they can. That is the goal we are working towards: to provide an opportunity for kids to move into the school system in as seamless a way as possible.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of the Environment. Could the minister tell me when this government is going to enforce its own

environmental laws to protect the people of Hamilton and Ontario instead of catering to industry?

Hon. John Gerretsen: The member well knows that's the whole function of the ministry, to make sure that the environment in Ontario is the best that it can possibly be. I can tell you—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): You've just asked the question. Listen to the response, please.

Hon. John Gerretsen: That's exactly what the ministry's involved with on an ongoing basis: to make sure that we have the best possible environment when it comes to the air we breathe, the water we drink and the land that we all enjoy on a day-to-day basis.

I can tell you that the ministry, after many years of neglect by the previous government that was there during the Harris years—in effect the ministry was totally devastated and lost half of the people who worked there and many of the dollars that were attached thereto. We're building it back up again so that we can ensure to the people of Ontario and the people of Hamilton the best possible environment that all of us want to enjoy, for ourselves and for our children.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Time has ended for question period. I wish everybody a safe trip home. Enjoy the long weekend. It's time for petitions.

PETITIONS

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord's Prayer from its place at the beginning of daily proceedings in the Legislature; and

“Whereas the recitation of the Lord's Prayer has opened the Legislature every day since the 19th century; and

“Whereas the Lord's Prayer's message of forgiveness and the avoidance of evil is universal to the human condition: It is a valuable guide and lesson for a chamber that is too often an arena of conflict; and

“Whereas recognizing the diversity of the people of Ontario should be an inclusive process, not one which excludes traditions such as the Lord's Prayer;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord's Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature.”

I affix my signature and thank you for the opportunity.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Howard Hampton: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government through LHINs is forcing the Lake of the Woods District Hospital to cut services due to inadequate funding; and

“Whereas the Lake of the Woods District Hospital has been forced to look at closing its intensive care unit; and

“Whereas these cuts will increase risk of death among critical care patients and will increase waiting times in the emergency room; and

“Whereas eliminating intensive care in Kenora will not save the Ontario taxpayer any money as any savings will be eaten up by paying for critical care patient transfers to other centres;

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

“The Minister of Health stop the process of health care cuts in local community hospitals like the Lake of the Woods District Hospital in Kenora and realize that his LHINs model is another one-size-fits-all model that doesn't work in rural Ontario.”

This petition has been signed by several residents from the Kenora area, and I have affixed my signature as well.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I have a petition here regarding employment insurance. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the federal government's employment insurance surplus now stands at \$54 billion; and

“Whereas over 75% of Ontario's unemployed are not eligible for employment insurance because of Ottawa's unfair eligibility rules; and

“Whereas an Ontario worker has to work more weeks to qualify and receives fewer weeks of benefits than other Canadian unemployed workers; and

“Whereas the average Ontario unemployed worker gets \$4,000 less in EI benefits than unemployed workers in other provinces and thus not qualifying for many retraining programs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to press the federal government to reform the employment insurance program and to end the discrimination and unfairness towards Ontario's unemployed workers.”

I agree with this petition. I affix my signature to it and give it to page Adam, who's here with me today.

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord's Prayer from its place at the beginning of daily proceedings in the Legislature; and

“Whereas the recitation of the Lord's Prayer has opened the Legislature every day since the 19th century; and

“Whereas the Lord's Prayer's message is one of forgiveness, of providing for those in need of their ‘daily

bread’ and of preserving us from the evils that we may fall into; it is a valuable guide and lesson for a chamber that is too often an arena for conflict; and

“Whereas recognizing the diversity of the people of Ontario should be an inclusive process, not one which excludes traditions such as the Lord's Prayer;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord's Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature.”

I've affixed my signature.

NON-PROFIT HOUSING

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm pleased to present this petition on behalf of Save Our Structures.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas every citizen of Ontario should have a safe, healthy and decent home; and

“Whereas thousands of individuals and families are denied this basic right when the province of Ontario downloaded affordable housing to the city of Toronto but refused to pay for the hundreds of millions of dollars in deferred capital repairs; and

“Whereas poor living conditions undermine the safety and security of communities, harming children, youth and families living in affordable homes; and

“Whereas failure to invest in good repair undermines the values of the province's affordable housing as the condition of the housing stock deteriorates; and

“Whereas poor living conditions have a damaging impact on the health of communities, costing Ontarians millions in health costs; and

“Whereas investment in housing pays off in better residences and in stronger, safer, healthier communities; and

“Whereas residents of Toronto Community Housing have waited five years for the province to pay its bills and bring affordable housing to a state of good repair;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“Accept its responsibility and invest \$300 million to ensure that all residents of Toronto Community Housing have a safe, decent, healthy home.”

I'm delighted to affix my signature to this petition.

ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

Mr. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, I do wish you a happy Easter.

This is a petition dealing with “Children and Smoke-Free Cars—Support Bill 11.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas children exposed to second-hand smoke are at a higher risk for respiratory illnesses including asthma, bronchitis and pneumonia, as well as sudden infant death syndrome ... and increased incidences of cancer and heart disease in adulthood; and

“Whereas the Ontario Medical Association supports a ban on smoking in vehicles when children are present, as

they have concluded that levels of second-hand smoke can be 23 times more concentrated in a vehicle than in a house because circulation is restricted within a small space; and

“Whereas the Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Ontario Tobacco-Free Network indicates that eight in 10 (80%) of Ontarians support ‘legislation that would ban smoking in cars and other private vehicles where a child or adolescent under 16 years of age is present’; and

“Whereas Nova Scotia, California, Puerto Rico and South Australia recently joined several jurisdictions of the United States of America in banning smoking in vehicles carrying children;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to approve Bill 11 and amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to ban smoking in vehicles carrying children 16 years of age and under.”

I support this petition and will affix my signature to it.

1540

LORD’S PRAYER

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I’m pleased to support folks who have signed a petition to not eliminate the Lord’s Prayer from this place.

“Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord’s Prayer from its place at the beginning of daily proceedings in the Legislature; and

“Whereas the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer has opened the Legislature every day since the 19th century; and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer’s message is one of forgiveness, of providing for those in need of their ‘daily bread’ and of preserving us from the evils that we may fall into; it is a valuable guide and lesson for a chamber that is too often an arena for conflict; and

“Whereas recognizing the diversity of the people of Ontario should be an inclusive process, not one which excludes traditions such as the Lord’s Prayer;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord’s Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature.”

I agree with this and I will sign my name to it.

HOME CARE

Mr. Paul Miller: This is a petition I’d like to present.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has continued the practice of competitive bidding for home care services; and

“Whereas the competitive bidding process has increased the privatization of Ontario’s health care delivery, in direct violation of the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act, 2004; and

“Whereas competitive bidding for home care services has decreased both the continuity and quality of care available to home care clients; and

“Whereas home care workers do not enjoy the same employment rights, such as successor rights, as all other Ontario workers have, which deprives them of termination rights, seniority rights and the right to move with their work when their employer agency loses a contract;

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

“We call on the government of Ontario:

“(1) to immediately stop the competitive bidding for home care services so home care clients can receive the continuity and quality of care they deserve; and

“(2) to extend successor rights under the Labour Relations Act to home care workers to ensure the home care sector is able to retain a workforce that is responsive to clients’ needs.”

I support this petition and hereby affix my name to it.

ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I have a petition here.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas children exposed to second-hand smoke are at a higher risk for respiratory illnesses including asthma, bronchitis and pneumonia, as well as sudden infant death syndrome ... and increased incidences of cancer and heart disease in adulthood; and

“Whereas the Ontario Medical Association supports a ban on smoking in vehicles when children are present, as they have concluded that levels of second-hand smoke can be 23 times more concentrated in a vehicle than in a house because circulation is restricted within a small space; and

“Whereas the Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Ontario Tobacco-Free Network indicates that eight in 10 (80%) of Ontarians support ‘legislation that would ban smoking in cars and other private vehicles where a child or adolescent under 16 years of age is present’; and

“Whereas Nova Scotia, California, Puerto Rico and South Australia recently joined several jurisdictions of the United States of America in banning smoking in vehicles carrying children;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to approve Bill 11 and amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to ban smoking in vehicles carrying children 16 years of age and under.”

I’m going to sign my signature and send it to the desk by page Alex.

LORD’S PRAYER

Ms. Laurie Scott: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord’s Prayer from its place at the beginning of all daily proceedings in the Legislature; and

“Whereas the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer has opened the Legislature every day since the 19th century; and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer’s message is one of forgiveness, of providing for those in need of their ‘daily bread’ and of preserving us from the evils we may fall into; it is a valuable guide and lesson for a chamber that is too often an arena for conflict; and

“Whereas recognizing the diversity of the people of Ontario should be an inclusive process, not one which excludes traditions such as the Lord’s Prayer;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord’s Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature.”

This was signed by many, many people in my riding, and I affix my signature to it.

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I’m pleased to read this petition on behalf of tenants of Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas landlords may currently enter into contracts of utilities (hydro, gas and water) without securing a tenant’s prior written permission and submit tenants’ SIN numbers and other identification to third parties without their consent;

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

“To prohibit landlords from initiating financially binding contracts with third parties on a tenant’s behalf without securing his or her prior written consent.”

I agree with this and am pleased to affix my signature to it.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: I am pleased to support my colleagues with this petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA area served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the vigorous capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

“Whereas ‘day surgery’ procedures could be performed in an off-site facility, thus greatly increasing the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, alleviating wait times for patients, and freeing up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

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

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2008-09 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to ‘day surgery’ procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed.”

And I add my signature.

LORD’S PRAYER

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I’m pleased to read a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord’s Prayer from its place at the beginning of daily proceedings in the Legislature; and

“Whereas the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer has opened the Legislature every day since the 19th century”—1873, I believe—“and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer’s message is one of forgiveness, and the avoidance of evil is universal to the human condition, it is a valuable guide and lesson for the chamber that is too often an arena of conflict; and

“Whereas recognizing the diversity of the people of Ontario should be an inclusive process, not one which excludes traditions such as the Lord’s Prayer;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord’s Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature.

DAVID DUNLAP OBSERVATORY

Mr. Reza Moridi: It’s a great pleasure for me to deliver a petition signed by over 100 residents of my riding, Richmond Hill.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the David Dunlap Observatory in Richmond Hill is of historical and heritage significance;

“Whereas the land was donated in trust by the Dunlap family to the University of Toronto in 1935, and the pre-Confederation farmhouse is still standing;

“Whereas the observatory, featuring the largest optical telescope in Canada, has been the site of scientific discoveries; it has been a place of learning not only for students of the University of Toronto, but for the general public as well;

“Whereas the observatory has been recently declared by the University of Toronto as ‘surplus’ to its academic needs, and subject to sale for development;

“Whereas the observatory sits in an incredibly unique and beautiful 180 acres of green space, the largest such space in the town of Richmond Hill, with trees, birds, animals, plants, insects and butterflies in”—the middle of—“a rapidly urbanized area;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the protection of this property of such historical, scientific and natural significance.”

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. This concludes the time for petitions.

The member for Wellington–Halton Hills.

1550

BUDGET SECURITY

Mr. Ted Arnott: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege and seek your ruling on a very important matter.

On Monday of this week, the Toronto Star led its front page, right below the masthead, with a huge headline: "Budget to Offer Hotline Aid," it read. Clearly, the Toronto Star considered this to be big news, and it was, because they had apparently been informed of a provision that will be included, most likely, in next week's 2008-09 budget.

Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware, budget secrecy is a long-standing parliamentary convention. In defence of this convention, I would want to quote two esteemed former members of this House who were subsequently elected Premier of Ontario: David Peterson and Bob Rae. They both spoke to this issue in May 1983, when it was raised as a point of privilege.

Mr. Peterson, the then-Leader of the Opposition, said this:

"We have to ask ourselves why we have secrecy surrounding a budget. It started with a king who wanted to preserve fairness, the lack of advantage to any of his commoners as a result of proposed changes in taxation. The purpose of secrecy was to tell all citizens at the same time what policies were to be changed so no one individual could take advantage.

"Budget secrecy symbolizes that fairness, justice and the principle of respect for the Legislature and the privileges of the members therein."

Mr. Rae, who at that time was the leader of the NDP, said this:

"The tradition with respect to the secrecy of the budget is crystal-clear.... The importance of that should not be lost to you....

"I want to make just one other point, Mr. Speaker. When you are considering this as a question of privilege, when you consider the basic test, which I suggest is, 'Has the work of any member of this Legislature been impeded, been prevented?' I say that it has. In the normal course of events there would be a budget lock-up, critics would be informed of the contents of the budget and we would be able to deal with those contents in an informed and reasoned way and to respond accordingly.

"Each and every member would be able, on the basis of equal information, to communicate with his constituents on the contents of the budget. Members would be able to make whatever arguments, from different sides of the fence and from different points of view, they would wish with respect to the information that had been made available" to them.

I would submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that both of these former members were correct in the arguments they were making on the issue of budget secrecy being a matter of privilege. While I would have to acknowledge that the Speaker of the day did not find, *prima facie*, breach of privilege in his 1983 ruling, he did state that he was "making a procedural decision the effect of which will not prevent the further discussion by the House of the matter. The effect is to refuse precedence to this matter as a question of privilege but not to prevent the presentation of this matter under different circumstances on another occasion."

Today, Mr. Speaker, there are different circumstances, and today is another occasion. It would appear to me that in an attempt to gain favourable publicity for the government, someone within the minister's office deliberately leaked a provision of the budget to the Toronto Star, most likely on Sunday, March 16. The Toronto Star recognized it for what it was—big news—because of the tradition and the parliamentary convention of budget secrecy. They had a scoop, and they put it on the front page. Surely this constitutes a violation of the privileges that we enjoy collectively as members of this House. Surely, as representatives of our constituents, members of provincial Parliament should be first to hear all of the contents of the provincial budget. And surely, and perhaps most importantly, the government should not selectively leak contents of the budget to the press in advance of its presentation in the House without being challenged.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to consider these thoughts and the important principle of budget secrecy and of the historic and traditional reasons behind it, and rule on this important matter of privilege at your earliest convenience.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): On the point of privilege?

Hon. David Caplan: Speaker, I certainly appreciate my friend opposite bringing this matter to your attention. Perhaps I could shed some light on it and give you a different perspective.

I want you to know that the government does take budget secrecy very seriously, but certainly the information that was presented was not a budget leak. In fact, I'm reminded that Speaker Sauvé in 1981 commented about the very principle of budget secrecy. She indicated that a breach of budget secrecy "might have a very negative impact on business or on the stock market [and] might cause some people to receive revenues which they would not otherwise have been able to obtain ... [it has] no impact on the privileges of a member.... It has to do with the conduct of a Minister in the exercise of his administrative responsibility." That comes from Marleau and Montpetit, page 754, for your reference.

The common practice in Ontario, in fact, in other jurisdictions in Canada, is to inform the public about the government's intentions for its budget prior to the budget presentation. Today, this House approved the throne speech, which very much talked about the issue that the member raised—the government's intent to deal very seriously with matters related to poverty and to alleviate the sufferings of people in Ontario.

The particular information in question did not disrupt financial markets, give any person confidential information that he or she could profit from; therefore, it was not a budget leak. The announcement is not, in my view, a contempt of the Legislature, and no part of the announcement on poverty holds the Legislature in contempt. It does not assume the passage of legislation by this Legislature. But it's not uncommon. I'll give you a couple of instances. As the member has done his research

and shared some remarks of members past, I too have some for your consideration.

Back on May 7, 2001, the Canadian Press article reported in the Sault Star—then-finance minister Jim Flaherty is quoted as indicating that there would be more tax cuts, reliance on public-private partnerships and the sale of publicly owned assets in the May 8, 2001, budget. I would dare say that these are material and perhaps could have affected financial markets.

In the May 8, 2001, budget Mr. Flaherty announced personal and corporate tax cuts, a reliance on public-private partnerships, in particular in relation to the completion of Highway 407 east and the sale of publicly owned assets, in particular the Province of Ontario Savings Office. I believe the member opposite was a one-time depositor of that organization.

The Southam newspaper story on May 8, before the budget was presented, attributed to then-Premier Mr. Michael Harris a statement that indicated the budget to be delivered that day would curb spending and sell government assets, one of which is named in the article as the Province of Ontario Savings Office. That article too, prior to the release of the budget in this House, quoted Mr. Flaherty as advocating, once again, personal tax cuts over retail sales tax rebates. In his budget speech, in fact, delivered here in this House later that day, Mr. Flaherty indeed announced personal tax rates, in particular cuts to surtax rates.

It didn't end there, of course, and there are other precedents. In a June 16, 2002, article in the Toronto Star, the same publication that the member speaks of, government sources are quoted, indicating that the following would be included in the 2002 budget: an increase in tobacco taxes to raise cigarette prices from \$5 to \$15 a carton. Interestingly enough, in her budget speech on June 17, then-Finance Minister Janet Ecker announced an increase in tobacco taxes of \$5 per carton of cigarettes.

In addition, there was in that newspaper article of the day information regarding increased spending in health care and education. The Ministry of the Environment, in response to the Walkerton controversy—and all members of this House will recall the great attention placed upon that community as a result of that tragedy of the day. Later, in the presentation of the budget, the speech announced increases to health spending, education and other spending for clean water initiatives in response to the O'Connor report on the Walkerton tragedy, including increased funding for the Ministry of the Environment.

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I think this indicates that there are ample precedents for Ontario governments to provide their intentions for what will be appearing in future budgets. I certainly appreciate the comments of my friend opposite, but Speaker, as you consider these matters, you should find that in fact there's no contempt or any violation of personal privileges. I do look forward to and can provide you with additional information if you require it in your deliberations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I thank the honourable member for his input, and I thank the honourable member from Wellington-Halton Hills for providing me with notice of his point of privilege, as required by the standing orders. I will reserve my ruling on the matter and render a decision next week.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HEALTHY FOOD FOR HEALTHY SCHOOLS ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 PORTANT SUR UNE ALIMENTATION SAINE POUR DES ÉCOLES SAINES

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 13, 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.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Any speakers?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure and a privilege to speak about this bill. I want to say in advance that I plan on supporting it, but I'd also like to say that it's pretty thin gruel. Voting for this bill is like voting for somebody saying, "We agree that healthy food should take precedence over unhealthy food in schools." That's essentially the substance of this bill, and I think taxpayers might be a little alarmed to know that we're spending as much time as we have been on discussing a bill that has such little substance to it.

I think it was summarized best by Dr. Freedhoff, who appeared on CTV discussing this very bill. He said:

"Is it helpful to ban trans fat in school but still have it sold in the variety stores and fast food outfits right across the street? Is it helpful to ban trans fat in schools but still have it dripping in the products that parents pack in their kids' lunches?....

"Trans fats were referred to by the government's trans fat task force as a toxin in our food supply that was unsafe at any level. If it's not safe in schools, why is it safe to have in our hospitals, day cares, nursing homes, government offices, supermarkets and restaurants?"

Dr. Freedhoff concludes by saying: "Bottom line—if it's not safe in the schools, it's not safe in the province. Get off the trans-fat fence and sit either on the side that feels our worry on trans fats is overblown or on the side that thinks we should ban them outright. Impaling yourself on a fencepost doesn't help anyone.

"Shame on you," he says, "Mr. McGuinty, for such a blatant and useless attempt at manipulating the public into thinking you care."

Interestingly, when you look at the bill and actually read it—it's a pretty thin document; only a couple of pages—you actually don't see that this bill is about a ban on trans fats at all anyway. What does this bill in fact

purport? What it says is simply, and I quote, “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.” It never says what that prescribed amount is anywhere in this document.

But what’s even more important than the reality of this document, which says little, if nothing, is how retrogressive this move is in contrast to other jurisdictions around North America. I’ve pulled this off the Net, and it’s really quite instructive as to how many jurisdictions have already banned trans fats outright, as our federal party, the New Democrat Party, has proposed to do. If this government actually wanted to protect the health of its citizens and its children, it would ban trans fats outright across the province.

Here’s who has done it, by the way, across North America. Tiburon, California, was America’s first trans-fat-free city; then New York. We all know New York has almost as many people in it as Ontario. New York is trans-fat-free—not just the schools; trans-fat-free. Westchester county did it; so did Boston; then Philadelphia; then it was banned in Albany; the town of Brookline, Massachusetts; Montgomery county; Puerto Rico; and King county. Jurisdictions that are considering banning it outright: California, Los Angeles, Connecticut, Boca Raton, Miami-Dade, Tamarac, Broward school district, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisville, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, New Hampshire, Albany, Pennsylvania, Cleveland, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, King county, Madison county; I could go on. This is across North America. It’s a sad state of affairs, I would think, when Mississippi is more progressive than Ontario on banning trans fats.

Again, if you’re going to do something, do it. If the health of our children is really a concern and the health of our children in schools in particular is our concern, there are other things that this government should be doing and could be doing right now.

First and foremost, if we’re concerned about our children’s health in this province, where one in five children are living in poverty, we might consider the reality that some children don’t have enough to eat at all, period, trans fats or not, and that it’s very difficult if you are one of the minimum wage earners in this province—of which two thirds are women, many with children—to feed a child enough fruits and vegetables on a salary of around \$1,600 a month.

One of the women in my community said, “You know, I get \$1,600 a month from my minimum wage job. After \$1,000 has gone on rent, the \$600 left has to cover everything else: transportation, clothes and food.”

We’re talking about 250,000 people and 1.2 million Ontarians, almost one in 12, who actually earn less than \$10 an hour, again, the poverty line cut-off. If this government really cared about the children’s health in this province, then it would make sure that the poorest children among us actually get enough to eat and make sure that their parents get enough to feed them, in terms of monetary returns.

I work at a couple of places, Bonar-Parkdale Presbyterian Church—I’d like to mention them—and Masaryk-Cowan, in my riding, serving breakfast to children who don’t have enough to eat at home, children who come in every day. Again, the concern for them is not trans fat versus non-trans fat; it’s food versus no food.

What else should we note? The school pools right across the city are about to close because our Toronto District School Board is going to be running a deficit, according to their numbers, of just over \$40 million this year. How much would it cost this government to keep those school pools open? About \$12 million to \$13 million a year—not much in terms of this government’s budget. Again, if this government actually cared about the health of the children in schools, perhaps they’d look at ways of getting these children some exercise, and the school pools are one of those. They are a valuable resource that is currently being threatened. So there’s something they could do.

What else could they do? They could make sure that the children have enough education assistance. We know that this is a valuable asset to our schools and that the Falconer report, in one of its recommendations, mentioned that there are just not enough adults in schools. There are simply not enough adults helping children, in terms of guidance counsellors, in terms of education assistants, etc.

Of course, all of this comes under the heading of fixing the funding formula, which, again, this government promised to do way back in 2003 but still has not done. In fact, Murray Campbell, in the *Globe and Mail*, pointed out that their much-ballyhooed effort to extend kindergarten is completely and absolutely underfunded—again, a promise that has no backbone to it.

What else would they do? Of course, they’d also make sure that the poorest children in this province have child care. Our neighbours next door in Quebec actually offer parents quality child care for \$7 a day. Janet Davis, a councillor, just wrote a wonderful letter to the editor, and if I had more time I would read it to you, in which she says the Quebec government is actually going to increase the number of child care spaces at \$7 a day to 20,000. Again, if this government cared about the health of children among us, they would actually have child care provided for children among us—and they don’t. Only one in 12 children has a child care space and the average cost is over \$1,000 a month. When you talk to parents at the door about this, they’re horrified, and if they have relatives in Montreal, they know what the difference is.

Just to conclude, as I said at the outset, this is pretty thin gruel. This piece of legislation, if you can even credit it by calling it legislation, purports to do very little and has taken a very long time, at taxpayers’ expense, to do it. That’s what we’re looking at here, when in fact—and I know my colleague Mr. Michael Prue today mentioned it quite succinctly—if they really cared about children’s health in this province, the first thing they’d do is end the clawback of the national child supplement;

\$1,500 a year to the poorest children clawed back by this government. Instead, of course, what they got was the then finance minister, Mr. Sorbara, standing up, wearing \$250-something shoes, announcing a \$250 credit to the poorest children, meanwhile clawing back \$1,250.

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I'll try to sort of sum it up. What is this legislation, really? This is like Dalton McGuinty doing an impression of Marie Antoinette. What he's saying is, "Let them eat non-trans fat food." That's what this legislation, if you can call it that, is about.

I thank you for this opportunity to speak to it. I said I'm going to support it. You'd be hard pressed not to. Again, is healthy food healthy? Yes. Should healthy food be in our schools? Yes. Now, we charge the government to do something about it, and do something about the state of poverty of our poorest children in this province. Really look after children's health.

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I just want to congratulate the member from Parkdale–High Park, because I agree with most of it, you see.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Not all of it?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's hard to agree 100%. Still, even 99% is pretty good. What she says is very, very true.

I have to remind those who are watching that this is the fifth day on this bill. As the member from Parkdale–High Park said, "Five days on this bill?" You'll remember that the government says, "This is an activist government; we have an activist agenda." You get the impression that they have a lot of things coming, right? So you say, "Why are we still dealing with a bill that, really, we shouldn't be dealing with?" The government has nothing else to introduce, so we've got the same bill being debated for five long days.

What does the bill contain? Two things. It says, "The bill amends the Education Act to add provisions regulating the trans fat content of all food and beverages sold in a school cafeteria." It simply says, "regulating the trans fat content." We don't know what you're going to be regulating. I understand that regulations will be coming. We'll get a sense of what those regulations are.

On the issue of junk food, here's what you say.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Please, please. "The bill also adds a requirement for boards to ensure that food and beverages sold in vending machines comply with the nutritional standards set out in regulations." That's all it does: two tiny little things. I thought you got rid of junk food three years ago, and you come back saying you're going to be consulting again on junk food. What gives?

What kind of substantive bills are you putting forth and what kind of activist agenda is this all about? Bring forth something that is meaningful so we can really debate it. I look forward to some Liberal member speaking so I can speak to that as well.

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

The honourable member from Parkdale–High Park has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I note there wasn't much response, other than from my colleague here, to what I had to say, except, of course, for the heckling that continues in this House, which is sad, you must admit.

I echo my colleague in saying that we, in the New Democratic Party, really do care about the health of our children and what they eat in schools, and we would welcome a bill that does something about that. We would welcome legislation that actually bans trans fats outright, not just in our schools but right across Ontario, because if it's toxic, it's toxic for everyone. We all know that banning it in schools, sort of, even though this bill doesn't do that—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It just regulates it.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It just regulates it. Even if they did that much, which they haven't, the children, as this good doctor I quoted in my 10 minutes said, just go across the street and buy it anyway. Unless you ban it across the province, you don't ban it. Unless you regulate it across the province, you don't regulate it. This is a do-nothing, accomplish-nothing bill except, of course—and people at home watching will know this—to waste their valuable money debating a do-nothing, accomplish-nothing bill for five days. If the government wants to do something dramatic, if they want to do something real, ban trans fats outright.

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

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I'm pleased to rise to speak to this legislation. I will tell you right off that I will be supporting this bill because how can you not support a bill that begins to make some corrections in how we deal with teaching life skills to our kids in our schools.

I agree with the members from Parkdale–High Park and Trinity–Spadina that we have spent far, far too long debating a bill that is purely motherhood. How much time do we need to say that trans fats are a bad thing to do?

Interjections.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: And the heckling only prolongs it longer.

It goes without saying that it's important to ensure that when we send our kids to school every morning we know they're going to be in the safest of environments.

Schools are a place for learning, not just for learning reading, math and writing but also learning life skills. We no longer have home ec, we don't teach kids about balanced meals and the practicality of how to put them together. I think this is the first step in teaching them that kind of thing.

So I commend Minister Wynne for finally bringing forward this legislation, which has been talked about for many years by some of her predecessor ministries in her government. As I say, I will be supporting the bill.

For the most part we live in a fast and convenient society that has opted for very quick and very tasty foods.

The statistics, however, have proven that this way of eating has landed us a generation of a less healthy population—both youngsters and adults; this isn't confined to young people alone. Statistics have proven that this way of eating has not been a healthy way of eating. This legislation is an attempt and an opportunity to eliminate foods and beverages sold in our schools that contain trans fat. It is my hope that this is only step one. In subsequent steps, I hope to see the guidelines and also the regulations that are the real substance of this legislation.

Progress, in my opinion, can only be achieved if the teachers are appropriately resourced, schools have the appropriate funding to ensure that these programs are implemented and also that there is a component of physical activity that goes with this.

In addition, there should be an opportunity to partner with parents and attempt to ensure that the message at school is the same message at home. Healthy living and a healthy lifestyle choice are important in our daily lives. The life skills we reinforce in our children will assist in the development of a healthy and more productive set of Ontarians.

Once again, on behalf of the official opposition and our PC caucus, I commend the minister for bringing this forward. The devil, though, is in the details and I look forward to seeing this process unfold and the details which accompany this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I thank the honourable member from Burlington for her contribution to the debate.

Questions and/or comments by the member for Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The problem I have with the comments being made by some of my friends on the other side is that they introduce this bill today, and it's a sessional day; we cannot debate anything else. My point is, bring forth another bill that is important to you, that is really, really part of your activist agenda, part of your revolutionary agenda. That's what I want you to do. Now that you've ruined this as a sessional day, you want me to sit down and not comment? Please. How and why would I waste an opportunity to talk to you—not to beat you up, but to talk to you?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: And there's the bottom line.

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Mr. Rosario Marchese: And that's really the bottom line, isn't it?

The point that my colleague from Parkdale–High Park made is that if we really believe that trans fats are deleterious to your health, we ban them. That's revolutionary. That's activist. But these little things, these tiny, picayune steps, they're not revolutionary, they're not tough. They're very timid expressions of where we want to go, and it doesn't do it. That's what my colleague was saying. The doctor she quoted earlier gave people the impression that you banned trans fats. You did not do that. You are regulating trans fats, which suggests that it's a good thing, and I'm going to suggest or assume that it is.

So I'm going to support you, Minister, in that regard. All I want to say to my Liberal friends is that it's such a timid, little thing. It's almost embarrassing to have five days on this bill. Please. Do something stronger. Make me feel better so that I can really say—because I won't do this too often, you understand—“Thank you, Liberals, for doing something really substantive.”

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: No questions or comments from the Liberals. The people at home will not know—because they can't hear the heckling—that members don't debate this bill, they don't stand up during questions and comments. But I can tell you that throughout debate the government never shuts up. They're a heckling government. They're not a debating government, they're not a questioning government; they're simply heckling: Yack, yack, yack all the time.

Speaker, I bring this to your attention and I'd ask you to put some control in.

One thing I would like to say is to give some kudos to the food industry. We are blessed in this country to have a responsible, large and very good food industry that produces some of the safest foods in the world. When this trans fat issue came to the fore, most of the credible food companies in this country eliminated trans fats from their formulas in very short order. I give kudos to those companies for making that effort and eliminating trans fats long before this government had any thoughts of eliminating trans fats from our diet. I would agree with the member from downtown Toronto—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Trinity–Spadina; that's pretty close to downtown Toronto. I'd agree with him that this bill does not deserve five days of debate. It has all-party support. This is a government that is devoid of ideas, devoid of new thoughts, devoid of any courage to take this bill and make it mandatory. This government is devoid of any of those opportunities. I would encourage you to come forward with some new legislation, something with some courage in it.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I thought I would continue my comments by suggesting to this government some things they could do to improve the health of children in our schools and in our province. One of the things they could do is to fulfill the promise they made back in 2003, which was to build 20,000 new units of affordable housing, so the 125,000 families that are waiting for it would have a place to live. They could raise the minimum wage to the poverty level. That's all we're asking. That's all we've ever asked in the New Democratic Party: just raise the minimum wage to the poverty level, which is \$10.25 an hour right now. They're not willing to do that. Hence, they're endangering the health of the poorest children—one in five.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: So they could buy better food.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: So they could actually buy food. Absolutely.

Another thing they could do is actually provide child care. You know that 40% of Quebec children have a

government space in a child care centre. In Ontario, 17% of our children have such a space, and it's not nearly as inexpensive as it is in Quebec. So again, in Quebec, where they actually care more about the health of their children, they provide child care. What does this do? It frees up money to be spent on fruits, vegetables and healthy food in the poorest children's homes.

These are all aspects of what this government could do if it did have an activist agenda, if it did truly care about the health of the poorest children in our communities and in our schools.

Of course, again, we need to remember that it promised to fix the funding formula, which is still not fixed. Hence, our schools are still running deficits. Again, this is something this government could do to provide for healthier children.

Finally, just because I know it's so important, keep the pools open. It's such an inexpensive thing to do, and this government won't even do that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I thank the honourable member and ask for any further questions or comments. Seeing none, the honourable member from Burlington has two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've been here for hours debating something that is plain common sense and something that should have been acted on many years ago.

I say that as we move forward on this—again, the devil is in the details—what we need to understand is that there needs to be a plan for how we address this, to make sure that our youngsters don't go on to develop diabetes, to have cholesterol problems, to have obesity problems. These are all issues that are very real, and statistics have proven that. I think that without a fulsome plan of how we approach this, we are not going to be effective, we are not going to be productive and we're certainly not going to be successful.

It is my hope, when the details of this legislation come forward and we see the regulations, that we have a plan that really has some teeth and allows our educators, our youngsters and our parents to move forward together in eliminating these issues in our society today that have to do with chronic illnesses and with obesity, and provide for a healthier society that doesn't dwell on our health care.

Again, I will be supporting this bill when it comes forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate? Seeing none, on December 11, 2007, Ms. Wynne moved second reading of Bill 8. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd ask that the bill be referred to the standing committee on social policy.

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

Orders of the day.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. David Caplan: I'd like to rise, pursuant to standing order 55, to give the business of the House for next week.

The House will be resuming on Tuesday; it will be the presentation of the 2008-09 budget here in the Legislature. Wednesday and Thursday will both be budget debate.

With that, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 25, at 1:30 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1628.

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Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
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Brown, Michael A. (L)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (L)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)	St. Paul's	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, government House leader / ministre des Affaires autochtones, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (L)	Barrie	Minister of Culture, minister responsible for seniors / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
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Colle, Mike (L)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (L)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (L)	Essex	Deputy Speaker, Chair of the committee of the whole House / Vice- Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Delaney, Bob (L)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (L)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (L)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (ND)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (L)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (L)	Mississauga East–Cookville / Mississauga-Est–Cookville	Minister of Tourism / ministre du Tourisme
Gélinas, France (ND)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (ND)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (ND)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Third Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hoy, Pat (L)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (L)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (ND)	Welland	New Democratic Party House leader / leader parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kular, Kuldip (L)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (L)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (L)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (L)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
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	
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	
Moridi, Reza (L)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (L)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (L)	Sault Ste. Marie	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (L)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie
Prue, Michael (ND)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (L)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (L)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Leader of the Official Opposition, Opposition House leader / Chef de l'opposition officielle, leader parlementaire de l'opposition
Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (L)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (L)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
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	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (ND)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Van Bommel, Maria (L)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (L)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (L)	Willowdale	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Chair / Président: Tim Hudak
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Kim Craiton, Bob Delaney,
Garfield Dunlop, Tim Hudak, Amrit Mangat,
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole, Lou Rinaldi,
Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Finance and economic affairs /
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jean-Marc Lalonde
Sophia Aggelonitis, Ted Arnott, Wayne Arthurs,
Toby Barrett, Pat Hoy, Jean-Marc Lalonde,
Leeanna Pendergast, Michael Prue, Charles Sousa
Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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Chair / Présidente: Linda Jeffrey
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: David Oraziotti
Robert Bailey, Jim Brownell, Linda Jeffrey,
Kuldip Kular, Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro,
Carol Mitchell, David Oraziotti, Joyce Savoline
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Présidente: Julia Munro
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Michael Brown, Kevin Flynn, France Gélinas,
Randy Hillier, Lisa MacLeod, Julia Munro,
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals, Maria Van Bommel
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Justice Policy / Justice

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jeff Leal
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos,
Jeff Leal, Reza Moridi, Yasir Naqvi,
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski, David Zimmer
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Kevin Flynn
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon, Bob Delaney,
Joe Dickson, Kevin Flynn, Sylvia Jones,
Norm Miller, Mario Sergio, Peter Tabuns
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Public accounts / Comptes publics

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jerry Ouellette
Laura Albanese, Ernie Hardeman, Andrea Horwath,
Phil McNeely, Jerry Ouellette, Liz Sandals,
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel, David Zimmer
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Paul Miller
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle, Kim Craiton,
Gerry Martiniuk, Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch,
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht, Mario Sergio
Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Social Policy / Politique sociale

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vic Dhillon
Laurel C. Broten, Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo,
Helena Jaczek, Dave Levac, Shafiq Qadri,
Khalil Ramal, Laurie Scott, Peter Shurman
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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