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**Jeudi 1<sup>er</sup> mai 2008**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

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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**

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION  
AND HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT  
AMENDMENT ACT (ASSISTANCE  
TO MUNICIPALITIES), 2008  
LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT  
LA LOI SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT  
DES VOIES PUBLIQUES  
ET DES TRANSPORTS EN COMMUN  
(AIDE AUX MUNICIPALITÉS)

Mr. Yakabuski moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 38, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to the assistance that the Minister provides to municipalities / *Projet de loi 38, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun à l'égard de l'aide apportée aux municipalités par le ministre.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The member has up to 10 minutes for debate.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's a pleasure to introduce—I should say reintroduce—Bill 38, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act, for the third time to this Legislature. This act, if passed, would essentially compel the Ministry of Transportation to share the provincial gas tax rebate with all municipalities, not simply those that have a public transportation system.

I believe, and people in rural Ontario believe, that this is a fundamental issue of fairness. They ask, "How can gas tax be collected from everyone but only given to those who have a public transportation system?" It has even become more discriminatory recently with the price of gas here in Ontario.

If you look at the logic, someone who lives in rural Ontario has little choice on most occasions, even to go out for a quart of milk, but to get into a vehicle and drive to that store to pick up that product. They don't have the option of getting on a bus or on the TTC, even if it isn't on strike. They don't have that option. In fact, in rural Ontario—and I say this with all the deepest respect to

those who live in the cities, and recognizing the importance of public transportation and the importance of government to fund those systems in the urban areas—the importance of your own vehicle is just as paramount for them being able to get around.

In fact, in most cases, in families where both spouses work, it's necessary to own two vehicles in rural Ontario, because the odds of them working in the same place on the same shift are quite small. So the fact is that they have to drive these vehicles and they have to pay those gas taxes. On a proportional basis, on a per capita basis, they pay much more, a much higher share of gas taxes because of the fact that they're not driving around the corner to go to work. In fact, if they were around the corner they'd walk, but they sometimes drive many, many kilometres.

In my case, just for the sake of argument, I live over 85 kilometres away from my constituency office. That's the reality of rural Ontario. I don't single myself out as being hard done by in that regard; that's just the reality of rural Ontario. The member from Algoma-Manitoulin would certainly recognize that. This is why I say it's a fundamental issue of fairness.

The reason that sharing the gas tax is something that would address this fairness is that the municipalities want it. One thing they've always asked for is sustainable, predictable funding from the government, not this hodgepodge of lottery systems that goes out and there are winners and losers every year. They want sustainable, predictable funding. That's in fact what the federal government has done. The predictability is what municipalities have asked for. The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus, at the ROMA conference in the wintertime, addressed that as one of their highest priorities: gas tax funding from the provincial government.

I have here a plethora of support letters from municipalities in my riding. I can go through them all but I don't want to use up the clock. For example, the mayor of Petawawa, Bob Sweet, who used to be a warden of Renfrew county and also chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus, sent me a letter. One sentence of it: "We unconditionally support your bill for gas tax sharing." A letter from Raye-Anne Briscoe, the mayor of Admaston-Bromley; a letter from Sandy Heins, the mayor of Renfrew; a story in today's Daily Observer: County council "unanimously passed a resolution of support" for this bill.

People in rural Ontario want fairness. The Premier is going on about saying that he wants a new deal for Ontario. Well, people within Ontario want a fair deal

from this provincial government. This is one way that they could address it.

They don't have to reinvent the wheel here. We already have a federal government that gives a share of the gas tax to all municipalities, not just those that have a public transportation system. I want to give you an example here. The county of Renfrew, in year five, year 2009-10, will receive from the federal government \$2,688,605 in gas tax rebates. The city of Pembroke: \$876,664. I can go down every municipality here. In Renfrew county, the five-year total is over \$15 million in gas tax revenue from the federal government. Why can one level of government understand and recognize the importance of fairness to all municipalities so that they can repair their public transportation system, which, as we all know, is their roads and bridges?

In my county of Renfrew, we have over 250 bridges. This kind of support would go a long way to allow them to devise a plan that would have an annual maintenance budget to ensure that those bridges were not only kept up but refurbished when necessary, not the idea that they have to go cap in hand to the provincial government, hoping that there might be some money; they might win the lottery.

Of course, what happens in those situations—and it is rather unfair in that regard—is that the government always plays politics with those things. They go out as the saviour of the day, getting all kinds of press releases, and the ministers go all around the province making announcements and telling the people in rural Ontario how wonderful they are—meaning them, the ministers—and how lucky you are—meaning the people—that we came here and left you a cheque, because we're going to look after that bridge.

**1010**

All of that is appreciated; don't get me wrong. But what is needed is sustainable, predictable, annual funding so that these people can take care of those issues on their own, and so that they can determine where the priorities are and determine which bridge or road gets fixed in year 1, year 2, year 3, year 4 and so on. Not that a minister who is doing this—and I'm not going to impugn on motives, because I know that's not the thing to do here, but there's political motives as well as the intent to try to support municipal infrastructure. We need to remove that political motive and give the communities the tools that they are asking for, that they are begging for, so that they can look after their infrastructure on their own and not rely on the political whim of the government, or throwing their ticket into the drum and hoping it gets drawn.

It was so apparent this year with the MIII how there were winners and losers. Every year with COMRIF, there's winners and losers. So I'm saying that some of that money that you're making winners and losers of, we need to ensure that there's sustainable funding. The fiscal review that's going on right now needs to address some of those things.

One other thing I also want to touch on, because the minister talked about a conference of small urban

mayors. With respect to all municipalities, there has to be some consideration for small urban areas in this province as well: those—and I use the city of Pembroke as an example—that don't have the ability to grow their assessment because they're landlocked. What they're getting from the provincial government is very little relative to what they're getting from the federal government. The city of Pembroke got \$118,000 this year from the province; from the feds, they're getting \$350,000. We have to look at situations like small cities that don't have the ability to grow their assessment because they're landlocked, and there has to be sustainable funding for them that addresses their needs, not just a one-size-fits-all formula across this province.

We have to start being a government and a province that looks at the problems and finds ways to solve them, not ways to generate political goodwill. We have to find ways to solve them. We can start here today by supporting, for the third time—and bringing forward to committee—this bill to support rural municipalities in the province of Ontario.

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

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** First of all, I want to say as a New Democratic transportation critic that we will be supporting this particular bill, Bill 38—I was going to say Bill 35, but we didn't support that one at all.

I want to just say a couple of things that need to be said, and that is what this is really going to mean to small, rural municipalities. In a lot of situations, as you well know, the population base in a lot of the small municipalities is fairly small. For example, I represent communities that are small, just 300 or 400 people. Let's be real: If you did give them the gas tax that they deserve, it may not be enough to fix some of the municipal roads, culverts and bridges that have to be fixed in our municipalities—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** But it will help.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** —but it will help. That's the spirit in which we're going to support this as New Democrats, that we see this as a step forward.

The problem, however, is that it doesn't deal with the core issue. I'm glad the member from Renfrew—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** —Nipissing–Pembroke, thank you. I'd never be the Speaker of this House, because after 20 years I can't remember what the heck all the names of the ridings are. I remember the members by name.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You're from Timmins–James Bay, by the way.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I remember mine; Timmins–James Bay I do remember.

He spoke about the need to have real, predictable annual funding. That's the issue. In the end, I really bemoan the fact that we've moved way from that. I remember when I was first elected in 1990, municipalities had a number of ministries that they could go to to apply for funding, everything from fixing the water mains under the streets to rebuilding roads that were under connect-

ing-link funding, if they were a connecting link with the province; fixing municipal roads; if you wanted to fix an arena; if a municipality wanted to change a roof on a municipal building. There were all kinds of different programs that municipalities could apply to in order to get funding to build.

For example, where I live, in the city of Timmins, or any other municipality, they would probably make four or five applications a year on different funding applications, and they always got something. So every year there was some form of capital investment made in the municipality. You may apply for five projects and get two or three of them approved. Municipalities didn't generally complain too much because they knew that if two were not approved, they had a chance the following year and the third year to get them approved. So you were able to do planning in some form to make sure that our infrastructure was maintained.

Unfortunately, I just want to remind the member that under the term of the Mike Harris government, we got rid of that. I really bemoan that. I think that was a huge mistake. We basically collapsed all of the funding of the various ministries and we put it into SuperBuild. Then we said, "Look at that. We've got more money to give to infrastructure than at any time before." It was less money. We had more money when it was spread across more ministries. One of the ways that the government decided to balance its budget was to take money away from capital and call this thing SuperBuild, which is overall less money on capital now than we use to spend. About a month ago, I looked at the estimates binders from 1990—the year I was elected—to where it is now, and we actually spend less money on capital now than we did back then. People need to recognize that that is the fact.

Why are municipal infrastructures collapsing? Why is it that we have bridges in Chatham and different places across the province falling and collapsing; roads having huge frost heaves, especially in northern Ontario and other places, that are falling apart? It's because municipalities don't have the money to do the work they need to do.

I agree with the member that we need to have predictable funding. We need to have something that has a formula of some type that says, "If you're a municipality of 300 people or 300,000 or three million, there is a mechanism and a formula by which you're going to get some predictable funding every year. Then you can go out and plan."

For example, if I'm the community of Mattice and I have a formula that says I'm going to get X amount of dollars, and I know I'm going to get that every year for the next five years or whatever it might be, I can go out and do some planning with my council. Mayor and council can sit around the table and say, "Okay, let's prioritize. That road over there has got to be fixed. That's the biggest complaint we've got in our municipality. But, by the way, we've got to retrofit the windows in our municipal hall because our hydro bills are going through the roof." They can make some informed decisions about what needs to be done in their municipalities.

The problem we now have is that there's only one way to get money—two, actually, but really only one way to get money—and that's through this COMRIF thing that we've got. I call it COMRIF—I know there's another name for it—but this whole process of having all municipalities apply at the same time for the same pot of money. And there will always be people who are disappointed.

For example, in my riding, in this last MIII round, we actually got more money than most other ridings in Ontario. We got somewhere around \$17 million, which was pretty good. The problem is, for some of the municipalities in our riding—Timmins and Kapuskasing had huge infrastructure projects that I think took up about \$13 million of that, or almost \$14 million. So the community of Hearst, which has some real needs when it comes to infrastructure, got frozen out again. Why? Because the province had to make a choice.

I don't blame or fault the province for this; I fault the policy. Do you fix a road or do you fix a crumbling waterline in Kapuskasing? Do you fix the road or do you make sure that the water system in Timmons meets the standard? That's the dilemma that municipalities find themselves in and the province finds itself in. So I say we need to go back to what we used to do before, where each ministry had a capital budget—the Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, etc.—so that they're able to do their own capital funding. For example, with the police, the Solicitor General's office used to have capital funding so that they could provide money to the OPP to fix their detachments and to do the capital work that needed to be done.

It used to be that way. I know Mr. Brown would remember that. Back in the 1990s and 1980s, when you got here, that's the way it worked. Again, it gave everybody an opportunity to at least plan, over a period of time, maintaining their infrastructure. Since getting rid of all that and moving to what was SuperBuild—now we call it COMRIF or MIII or whatever—it's become much more competitive for municipalities to go out and get dollars.

I just want to say to the member that we will support this legislation because we think it's a form of incrementalism. It will certainly assist; it's not going to hurt. Will it mean a lot of money for the town of Mattice? No, probably not, because they're a smaller municipality, but as the member says, every dollar you can put into their budget is a dollar they don't have. It's going to be welcome for sure.

The one thing that has driven absolutely everybody else crazy is the first program, which was the gas tax for the people who have transit in their municipalities. A lot of other municipalities have argued exactly what the member says, which is, "Hey, we may not have transit, but we have an infrastructure to maintain. Why are we being penalized?" On the basis of that, I'll support it. But I really think this Legislature has to go back and look at stable, predictable funding that municipalities can plan with; otherwise, we're always going to be chasing the tail.

1020

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I want to thank the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for bringing this bill before us today. I think it's important, because what it speaks to is providing the capital we need in small communities to do those projects on our roads and bridges. That's an important concept. My own view is that this does not help small communities very much, and I'll tell you why—I represent 37 of them, just so you know.

The largest municipality I represent, the city of Elliot Lake, has 11,000 people. It does have mass transit, so it does get the provincial money. I also have Chapleau, Blind River, Espanola and Wawa, which use the two cents they get. Although they don't have mass transit, they do offer service to people with disabilities, and that also qualifies for this money, even if you are a relatively small municipality. So those folks do it.

But the real reason the government provided gas tax money to mass transit systems was to take vehicles off the road, reduce our emissions and make sure the infrastructure of mass transit systems served all the people of Ontario, because my constituents come to places with mass transit, and we also care about pollution, we care about our environment and we care about greenhouse gases. Whether you're in Elliot Lake or Gore Bay or Chapleau, it makes a difference to all of us—to everyone in Ontario.

Do you know what? I was looking at some comments the Leader of the Opposition made here on Sunday, when we talked about the TTC. My friend Mr. Runciman said, "One subway line in Toronto takes 53,000 automobiles per hour off the road during rush hour. The TTC carries the equivalent of 365 million automotive trips annually, helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than eight megatonnes..." That affects not only everybody in Ontario; it affects everybody in the world. That is a useful thing, and that's why the two-cent gas tax goes to mass transit; it's fairly simple. That's why it's there.

That does not, however, deal with the fact that small municipalities and roads boards need funds to look after their own infrastructure. This year, the province of Ontario has provided \$400 million for roads and bridges, and he can tell us how much his county received for roads and bridges. Every one of his municipalities would have received some of that money, and my guess is that it is more than the gas tax would have generated. My guess is that his municipalities also did fairly well under the MIII program, which provided significant help in my constituency, and I expect in his, for roads and bridges. About \$22 million or so flowed into the constituency of Algoma–Manitoulin through those programs—not all for roads and bridges, mind you, but most of it was for roads and bridges, and it helped those municipalities deal with projects that have been on the books, often for quite a while.

You know, it's passing strange for any of us who have been here for a bit to see a Conservative, who downloaded every road on municipalities in the province—he has roads in Renfrew that once were highways and now

belong to the county. They did not used to be; they were paid for by the Ministry of Transportation. So I find it a bit disingenuous to see a member of a party that downloaded every road they could find, eliminated operational funding for roads, downloaded all capital funding from roads to the municipalities—

**Interjection:** And bridges.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** The bridges—which are usually expensive. That's what happened. So this is kind of a "Mike Harris repeal" vision of Ontario.

I think we do need to do something to provide smaller municipalities—and larger ones, for that matter—with capital funding for their roads and bridges. I think every member of this House recognizes that places like Thessalon or Massey are not going to be able to provide that kind of capital money out of the resources of their relatively small tax base.

But the federal tax money is based per capita. I was at a meeting of the Algoma District Municipal Association on Saturday last. When we were talking about that, they said, "Whatever formula the government provides per capita doesn't really work for us." Many of our municipalities—say, Wawa; population 3,500 people—does not receive the kind of assistance that they would receive through a per capita amount of money. What they're looking for is a mixture of assessment versus the cost of maintaining the infrastructure. That was done through the roads and bridges program. I think that is something that benefits rural Ontario far more than any kind of gas tax. And by the way, Wawa actually gets the gas tax because they provide disability transportation.

The other thing that I find problematic with the bill is that it takes away money from mass transportation systems. The two cents of gas tax applies to all of Ontario. So if you take some of that money out to do things for other than mass transit, you're going to reduce the funding to mass transit in the larger cities and the larger communities that provide it. I'm not surprised that his party is in favour of reducing funding to mass transit. So on that level, I also have a great deal of difficulty.

What I hear when I am here in Toronto or in London, Sudbury or Sault Ste. Marie are appeals for more money for mass transit so that we can reduce emissions, we can reduce wear and tear on our roads and we can get our people moving around. This bill would have the effect of reducing it. I don't think that's what the member intends, but I think that would be the effect on support for mass transit through this particular bill.

I cannot believe that he would be in favour of putting 53,000 more cars per hour on the streets of Toronto. I don't think that's what he wants to do. I don't think he wants to create a situation where Ontario produces more greenhouse gases. I don't think he wants to produce more NO<sub>x</sub> and SO<sub>x</sub> and all those other things that we're about to hear about because we're coming into that season of the year where it's warmer and we have problems with smog days. We don't need anything that would aggravate that anymore.

From my perspective, this bill has merit in that it attempts to provide some stable funding to municipi-

palities. I look forward to that funding for municipalities to come out of the provincial–municipal review that’s going on. We’re soon to hear about how they want to deal with that. I think that’s the solution. I don’t think this does it because, as I’ve expressed, it’s a problematic issue.

I commend the member for bringing forward this resolution. I will not be able to support it myself. This is private members’ hour; members can do as they will. I cannot support it because I believe that it’s important to deal with greenhouse gases. I believe it’s important to move against NO<sub>x</sub> and SO<sub>x</sub> and all of those pollution issues. I believe that it’s important that we have stable funding for municipalities, which I don’t think this does.

1030

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I’m pleased to speak this morning in support of my Progressive Conservative colleague the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and the legislation he has proposed, Bill 38. This is not a new issue for my colleague. In fact, today is his third try because he believes so strongly in the issue of fairness for all of us, and fairness is important for all of us in the PC Party.

During my inaugural speech in this House, I spoke of the need for immediate relief required by municipalities for transportation infrastructure in their ridings and, quite frankly, ridings all across Ontario.

This government prides itself on the fact that it spent \$400 million on roads and bridges in March of this year. There’s no doubt that this money was desperately needed by municipalities throughout the province.

Mayor Morrison, of the town of Caledon, cited the government’s announcement as good news. However—there’s always a “however”—she also made a very important point: “The only downfall I see is that if Ontario went into a recession, this money wouldn’t be there.” And what did we learn this week? We learned that Ontario is slipping into a recession and furthermore risks have-not status within Canada for the first time since Confederation.

Predictable funding is what our municipal partners are looking for. This is the issue that the Progressive Conservative member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is trying to address. Right now, Mayor Morrison in Caledon and all of Dufferin–Caledon, with the exception of one—that being Orangeville—did not receive a portion of the gas tax revenue because they do not have a public transportation system. So if you’re a commuter in Caledon or Dufferin, you are not being treated fairly by this government. This government has to realize that the only source of funding for many municipalities is general property taxes and user fees.

Yet ultimately, this is about fairness. How can you justify using gas tax on certain transit infrastructure but not on roads and bridges? Every time a resident of this province goes to the gas station, we all know that a large proportion of what they’re paying goes to taxes. What many voters are surprised about is that gas taxes are not used equally across the province on roads, bridges and yes, transit. But be fair: Roads and bridges need to be in-

cluded. Why, then, should we be funding the municipalities to receive transportation and infrastructure changes depending on whether you’re lucky enough to have a transit system?

This Liberal government talks about treating municipalities as partners, but in fact they treat them quite differently. In past elections, the Ontario Liberals made a campaign promise that every municipality would get a share of the gasoline tax. Then again, they also said, “No new taxes,” but they gave us the health tax.

Bill 38, the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Amendment Act, needs to be supported by all members of this House, not because they’re rural or because they’re urban but because it is an issue of fairness. It addresses the issue that the current system is not fair across Ontario and certainly is not fair for the rural municipalities of this province because of how they have unevenly distributed gas tax.

I will proudly support this bill, and I’m confident that my constituents will agree with me.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It’s a pleasure to speak on this bill. It’s a bill that I’m going to support. It’s sad that the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke had to bring it back for the third time, but that’s not unusual in this place. I know that on the benches of the government, the member for Niagara Falls brought in a very worthy bill three times, and he’s a member of the governing party. It still hasn’t seen the light of day in terms of committee time and being passed into law.

I wanted to make a general point about private members’ business and the fact that this is a government that doesn’t take any private members’ public business seriously. And with the standing order changes, that’s even going to be diminished. As little as it is in terms of import to this government, it’s going to lose even that because, instead of Thursday morning that we discuss these bills, it’s going to be Thursday afternoon. As you look around the chamber, you see that there are probably a quarter of the members here today. Well, imagine, if this was Thursday afternoon, how many members would be here and how many would even be listening to public business here and private members’ bills—certainly fewer than are here now. So we’re moving in a dangerous direction. We’re going to be moving in that direction as of Monday because of closure on behalf of this government.

But to the point at hand here: dealing with this transportation bill. I was listening to the comments from the member for Algoma–Manitoulin that it’s either/or. Isn’t it sad that we have to choose now in the province of Ontario between public transportation, validly funded, and an infrastructure in our municipalities, no matter how small or large they are? Isn’t it sad that we have to choose between buses running and roads working? This is a sad and sorry state of affairs. I know in the city of Toronto, where we’re shortchanged about \$700 million a year by this government in terms of demanding an upload of the downloads, we feel it, and we can only imagine what it’s like to live in a small town and feel it there as well—potholes in the roads.

There used to be a time when you would drive down to the States from the province of Ontario and you would immediately notice a difference as you passed over the border from our wonderful road system to their not-so-wonderful road system, from a beautiful driving surface, for example, to potholes on the other side of the border. Now, I really challenge any member here to do that same drive, and they'll find the opposite. They'll find that the roads are better on the other side of the border than they are here, that the infrastructure, by and large, is better kept up in New York state than it is in Ontario.

Why is that? How has it come to that in the province of Ontario? It's because we don't have stable funding for our municipalities. It's because we are constantly underfunding the city of Toronto and constantly underfunding every small municipality. This is the situation. As the member said, you have mayors going hat in hand every year, hoping for crumbs from the master's table, hoping for just a dollar or two.

Let me tell you, they're not going to get it from Bill 35. Bill 35, that's just been passed, is a government bill. The only way, by the way, you get bills passed is if they come from the Premier's office, a Premier-generated bill. Bill 35, the slush fund bill, as we call it on this side of the House, doesn't mention municipalities or infrastructure, that supposedly gives the crumbs from the master's table, what's left over when all the other provincial bills have been paid to cities like Toronto and other smaller municipalities. It doesn't mention municipalities or infrastructure at all in that bill. What it does say is that the government can give money wherever it sees fit to any non-profit. Well, we've seen what that looks like. We saw what that looked like last year: It looks like \$32 million to friends of the Liberal Party. That's what it looks like, and that's what we're going to get again this year. If there's money left over whatsoever, it'll go to friends of the Liberal Party and whatever causes they support.

We already see that the problem here opens itself up to pork-barrelling of the worst kind, where some municipalities get more funding than others. I know in the case of housing, we looked at a map of where affordable housing is going, and guess what? Eighty per cent of those lucky enough to get the crumbs—and they are crumbs that go to affordable housing—are in Liberal ridings.

So without stable funding, without an uploading of the downloads across the province, what you get is this egregious situation, where it's "Be nice to us, and we'll be nice to you." Depending on who you are, where you are and whom you elect, maybe you'll get some money. I see the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke nodding. Maybe you'll get some money, maybe you won't, right, John? Maybe you will, maybe you won't, depending on how close you are. We're talking about proximity—probably mileage here—between the Premier's office and the heart of Queen's Park and where you live. So it's very, very sad.

Public transport or small municipalities infrastructure funding: It's no wonder that it's crumbling. It's no wonder that bridges are in jeopardy. It's no wonder mayors

are feeling increasingly like that child in *Oliver Twist*: "Please, sir, a little bit more." It's no wonder that across the province things are looking increasingly bad in terms of the upkeep of what we need to function, because there simply isn't the funding there. It's simply not there, and Bill 35 isn't going to help that.

It's sad that members have to come to private members' business with bills to support their own bailiwicks. They shouldn't have to use private members' business to do that, to beg for a maternity ward here, beg for a bridge there, beg for a road here or there, which is essentially what this bill does. It simply says, "We're not getting what we need. Please, sir, a little bit more. Please give us just what we need."

**1040**

So it's with sadness that I stand and support this bill. I shouldn't have to. It shouldn't have to be brought forward, and certainly, as you can see from the numbers in the House, there's no great interest in supporting our municipalities, our small towns and villages. There's not a lot of interest in supporting the city of Toronto, not a lot of interest in supporting that.

But it's always a pleasure to stand, even in an empty House. It's going to get emptier, Mr. Speaker, it's going to get emptier. It's even a pleasure standing in an empty House supporting a member who supports the people that he represents—his own constituents—against a government that doesn't care.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Although the honourable member wasn't referring to any particular member's attendance, I would caution members to refrain from that line of debate. Further debate?

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** I am certainly pleased to rise and speak to the bill, which I do want to state up front I will not be supporting. Now I want to put forward why.

As many of you know, I represent the most rural riding in the province. It encompasses 18 municipalities. The largest urban area I have is just around the 7,000 mark. But one of the things that I wanted to talk about today was my smallest municipality, that being the municipality of South Bruce. Just for those who know my riding, it includes Teeswater, Mildmay and Formosa. They're all villages and hamlets.

I will remind everyone who is watching the TV today that we are hosting the plowing match in Bruce county, in Teeswater, in 2008, so I encourage everyone to come in.

One of the things I wanted to talk about was the federal gas tax that South Bruce receives today. In 2007, they received just \$78,000; in 2008, \$98,000; and in 2009, \$197,000. For their allocation of roads and bridges this year, from this budget, they received \$1.2 million. I know that across the way you know this, but what you have failed to understand is how what you have proposed will hurt my municipalities. When I look at how long it will take if we move forward in the same formula as gas tax, how long will it take my municipality to pay for a bridge?

We know today that there are a number of bridges in this municipality that need to be fixed. I hear from my



farmers that they can't get their produce out. Because the bridges are in such a poor state, they can't go across them safely with the weight of the trailers that they are hauling. So I say to the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke across the House: \$650,000 roughly, we'll say that's the cost of a bridge, roughly. So, by your calculations, if I use the same formula, it would take my municipality four years to do one bridge.

Now, when I look at what was allocated of the \$400 million from roads and bridges, when we move forward with a formula that was weighted—had a weighted factor for northern and rural communities—my municipality: \$1.2 million. What does this represent for my smallest municipality, South Bruce? This represents two new bridges that they can work within. They also understand that there will be other funding coming. This gives them the ability to work and to forecast where they need to go, whereas your formula does not do that. Not only does it withdraw funding from public transit, it also inadvertently—I think it's inadvertently; I'm going to give you the benefit of the doubt because, quite frankly, your track record leaves a lot to be desired.

You sit there and you laugh about this, but in my riding what you did was—there are only three provincial roads left—you downloaded every bridge. You downloaded every road. There was so much done. I tell you, when you were downloading, we had to pour water on our fax machines to keep them cool. You were downloading. There wasn't even any consultation that was done.

So, you talk about the relationship with the municipalities today. I can tell you, my municipality of South Bruce—they get it, and they understand.

We've talked about the \$400 million; we've laid that out. Now, let's talk about the \$450 million. This funding, if you will recall, was \$140 million in the first announcement. It was dedicated to rural communities. It was \$70 million, and at the plowing match, it was increased another \$70 million, with a total capacity of \$140 million.

What the municipalities wanted was a shortened application. That's what they asked for. They did not want to go into such an intensive application process, especially for rural communities. It places them at a disadvantage, because quite frankly, they don't have the staff who can apply themselves to do such extensive applications. So we did that: \$140 million for that.

Then we came forward with \$450 million—\$300 million at ROMA, another \$150 million announced; \$450 million was the scope—that that was going directly to infrastructure. Not only a shortened application, but the municipalities wanted it to include arenas, libraries and much more. That was done, too. We heard, we listened and we acted. So that funding in Huron–Bruce represents over \$10 million. The total asked was \$14 million. What they received was over \$10 million. My riding received \$28 million from one budget.

In contrast to how the previous government treated my rural communities—and in rural communities we don't forget how people treat us—I say to you, I'm going to

assume that you did not do this intentionally to once again put the boots to the municipalities.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I'm very pleased to speak on behalf of the bill in the name of my colleague, Mr. Yakabuski. I strongly support Bill 38, as I did its previous incarnation. Mr. Yakabuski has brought a substantial, sensible and far-looking piece of legislation to the House, and I'm pleased to strongly support it.

Listening to my colleagues opposite on the Liberal side—not to name particular names or ridings—you wonder how many are so keen to curry favour with the staffers that gather around the Premier, rather than fight for funding for their individual ridings. It's absolutely mind-boggling; we saw some cases just a few minutes ago. This is a no-brainer. Mr. Yakabuski's project would bring forward more funding for the ridings of the Liberal members who have spoken than the current funding formula, which spends almost half the money going to the city of Toronto.

Secondly, what I heard my colleagues opposite say is that municipal politicians in Blind River, South Bruce, Exeter or Espanola can't make responsible decisions. Mr. Yakabuski's bill would do the following: It would say to the mayor of South Bruce or the mayor of Espanola, "Do you want to spend the gas tax money on roads, bridges or transit; or a combination of both?" Mr. Yakabuski's bill would give them that choice.

The Dalton McGuinty Liberals and the sycophants opposite say, "They're not capable of making that decision. It can only go into transit, instead of roads and bridges." Huron–Bruce has a preposterous proposal—and I question her math—saying that Mr. Yakabuski's bill would mean that a bridge would be funded over four years. But, under the current funding formula, which dedicates every penny to transit, most of it going to the TTC, that bridge would take how long to build? Forever; an eternity, because not one dime flows to that bridge under the McGuinty funding formula, which is heavily, heavily weighted to the city of Toronto and transit municipalities. I believe that municipal leaders in Niagara West–Glanbrook will make the responsible decision.

We see the federal gas tax bill, which allows them to decide whether they want to put it into roads, bridges or transit. Here's the comparison: Under the federal gas tax, Grimsby receives \$1.7 million; Lincoln, \$1.67 million; Pelham, \$1.2 million; and West Lincoln, \$997,000—almost a million over its mandate.

Do you know what those municipalities get under Dalton McGuinty's gas tax funding formula? Butkis, zero, zippo, goose egg, nada, nothing, because Dalton McGuinty does not trust municipal politicians to invest the money according to the priorities of those local municipalities.

Mr. Yakabuski's approach is the right one, it's a superior choice, and it would mean more funds for local transportation infrastructure in the riding of Niagara West–Glanbrook. I strongly support Bill 38.

**1050**

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'm pleased to join this debate today and support my colleague from Renfrew–Nipis-

sing—Pembroke on Bill 38, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to the assistance that the Minister provides to municipalities.

We are addressing this issue for the third time in this Legislature. Third time lucky, maybe, or third time, is the Liberal government going to listen to this? He's been very determined in representing his riding and the needs of his constituents, bringing much-needed assistance to rural municipalities, not only in his riding, but the whole province. So when the Liberal members opposite think they are treating their rural municipalities fairly, they've got it all wrong. The Kool-Aid that is being served over there—

*Laughter.*

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I hear the member for Northumberland laughing. This type of system where you put in applications—the municipalities spend thousands of dollars filling out these forms and hoping their name is drawn out of the hat. What kind of responsible, predictable, sustainable planning is that for municipalities? You are not being fair to municipalities.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Some municipalities have been fortunate. They've been able to succeed in their application forms, but every year they sit there with their fingers crossed, thinking, "Okay, if I don't get it, what am I going to do? Let's hope we get it," and shifting monies. It's unfair to them. The federal government produced a program that gave them more money—

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** What program?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** The gas tax program—we'll answer the questions. They can share that with municipalities, and they get a lot more money and it is sustainable and predictable every year.

Last week, the member for Nepean—Carleton brought forward a resolution about the importance of a bridge construction in one of her communities in her riding. One of the things she said was that bridges are about connecting communities; so are roads, so are highways. Rural Ontario roads, highways and bridges are our infrastructure, they are our public transit.

In my riding of Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, I've talked many times about the need for the four-laning expansion of Highway 35, which would benefit the whole area. It comes through Kawartha Lakes, but it would benefit all of my riding. This is what we need to advance the economic lifelines to our communities. County Road 24 in the Bobcaygeon area needs a bridge repair. It's an occurrence that came up suddenly. The price to replace that bridge—and the member for Huron—Bruce mentioned a price to replace a bridge and I've never heard of a bridge being replaced for such a low value as she mentioned. These are high-value items of \$1 million or \$2 million. The price to replace that bridge on County Road 24 in Bobcaygeon is nearly equal to the municipality's whole annual transportation portion of their budget.

I have Algonquin Highlands in Haliburton county that has a bridge that needs to be replaced. They applied for

MIII, but guess what? They weren't one of the lottery winners. What can I say? They're devastated. They've applied several times. It's just not fair what you're doing to municipalities. It's not fair to rural Ontario.

The gas tax money goes to the urban communities; nothing wrong with public transportation in urban communities. We're asking for rural Ontario to be treated fairly. This government laughs and says that they're not going to support it. I just wonder, are the rural municipalities in the Liberal ridings really going to be happy that you voted this down? I don't think so. Maybe we should do some press releases in your ridings and see how excited they are that you denied them their fairness in gas tax money in the province of Ontario. I support this bill and I encourage the Liberal members to.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I'm very pleased to have the opportunity this morning to speak in support of Bill 38, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to the assistance that the Minister provides to municipalities. I want to congratulate the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke for bringing this issue forward yet again. He's been persistent on this issue. He's spoken out on it repeatedly and the House should listen to him and support this bill today.

I'm very surprised and somewhat disappointed—well, quite disappointed, actually—that some of the Liberal members have indicated they are not going to support this bill. I would remind them that this bill has already received second reading support in this House and has gone to committee in the past. If some of them change their votes, I'm not sure how they're going to explain that to their constituents, because I understand this is the same bill, if not the identical bill—is it the identical bill?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** It's the very same bill that was passed by this House at second reading some time ago in the previous Parliament.

The member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke is absolutely right: Provincial gas tax money should be shared with all municipalities, not just the cities. Actually, one of the most topical issues of discussion in the coffee shops today in Wellington—Halton Hills, and I dare say around the province, is the high price of gasoline, hovering at around \$1.20 a litre. We see projections by experts who tell us that it may hit as high as \$1.40 or even \$1.50 this summer. We see the price of crude oil hovering just over \$100 a barrel. We see supply bottlenecks because of lack of refining capacity, and a world-wide surge in demand for oil. The price of gasoline is going to continue to stay high, it appears, for some time. It's a serious concern for people in my riding; it's a concern that I share.

But what's worse is the fact that the provincial government takes 14.7 cents a litre out of everybody's pocket in terms of their purchase of gasoline and refuses to share that with our small and rural municipalities, unlike the federal government, that takes some gas tax but that some time ago took a policy decision to share that money with all municipalities. Of course, the com-

munities in my riding benefit from that. I can't understand why Liberal members from rural ridings are unwilling to stand up for their municipalities today with respect to this issue. I cannot understand it. I think they're going to have a very difficult time explaining this to their communities when they go home.

Of course, in their defence, what they have said is that the government has other programs to assist small and rural municipalities with their infrastructure needs. They point to the roads and bridges funding that was announced in the budget, and the municipal infrastructure investment initiative that was announced initially in the fall economic statement, and more details came forward. Some of the municipalities in my riding received support from the municipal infrastructure investment initiative. Two were shut out, unfortunately: the town of Erin and the township of Puslinch. I'm still trying to get explanations and answers as to why those communities were shut out. There was no appeal process, unfortunately. There seems to be no debriefing process whereby municipalities can be informed as to why they were unsuccessful with their applications. I supported all the applications coming forward from my constituents, as I think all of us would have wanted to. The town of Erin, in particular, made good points. Their roads superintendent, Larry Van Wyck, brought forward very important points about the cost of maintenance of gravel roads that I don't think the government has considered, and I hope they will in future rounds. Certainly, the roads and bridges funding, while it was appreciated—we cannot count on that money for next year, because we know that the province appears to be going into an economic downturn. It appears we're in recession right now. It's likely that we're going to have a deficit, so there isn't going to be any money, apparently, at the end of the fiscal year for municipalities.

That is why this Bill 38 is needed, to ensure that our municipalities do receive fairness and a sustainable and predictable stream of funding for their infrastructure needs. I have huge infrastructure needs in Wellington–Halton Hills that I will continue to bring to the attention of this government, insisting that more support be brought forward by the provincial government for those needs. I have a private member's resolution of my own that I hope to bring forward on roads and bridges funding. I would hope that all members of this House will support this bill, and I again congratulate the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Yakabuski has up to two minutes to reply.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I want to thank all of the members from all parties for standing and speaking on my bill here this morning.

I want to address a couple things that were raised by the members of the governing party, the member from Algoma–Manitoulin and the member for Huron–Bruce. They talk about an either/or. They talk about how this is going to cost municipalities that are currently getting gas tax. They use the example of the \$400 million that all

municipalities got earlier this year for infrastructure projects. But there are other ways of ensuring that public transportation in this province gets funding. In fact, there was \$1 billion handed out at the end of the year. Toronto got \$497 million of that—\$497 million. So they don't tell you the whole story. I'm really flabbergasted by these rural members who want to take that message back to their constituents, saying that they voted against a bill that would be sustainable. The MIII and the municipal funding that we got this year—I have already said we appreciate that. But what is on the table for next year? No one really knows. This is not sustainable. Rural municipalities have been asking for fairness. It's a fundamental issue of fairness.

The Premier says he wants fairness in taxation. What are you doing to rural people, those people who work hard in rural communities but have to drive to work each and every day? They pay gas taxes, but you don't give it back. You don't give any of it back.

You're talking about funding? The city of Toronto still got an additional \$497 million. They still got all their gas tax. I'm not picking on the city of Toronto; I'm talking about fairness for rural municipalities. There's only one way to do it: Each and every municipality has to get a share of the gas tax that they pay. I encourage these rural members to stand up for their people.

1100

LABOUR RELATIONS AMENDMENT  
ACT (CERTIFICATION), 2008  
LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL  
(ACCREDITATION)

Mr. Hampton moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to amend the Labour Relations Act, 1995 with respect to certification of trade unions / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail en ce qui a trait à l'accréditation des syndicats.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Hampton, pursuant to standing order 96, you have up to 10 minutes for your presentation.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Let me begin by welcoming a number of people who work out there, in workplace after workplace, helping workers to organize. Let me also thank the three young workers who came to the Legislature yesterday to participate in a press conference with me. These three young workers—two of them young women, one a young man—know what it's like to work in a workplace where you're harassed, where you are often subject to verbal abuse, to threats of, "If you don't do this or you don't do that, you're going to be fired"; workers who had the courage to talk to other workers and say, "We deserve to be treated with dignity and respect," and who talked to other workers and persuaded them to sign a union card; workers who suffered further harassment, further abuse, because they dared to suggest that

those workers should enjoy the democratic and constitutionally protected right of freedom of association. I especially want to thank Jennifer Law, Denise Cachia and Sherwin Flight.

Let me briefly explain what this bill is about. For almost 50 years in the province of Ontario, if workers wanted to join a union, all they really had to do was to sign a card. They would sign a card and the law was that if 55% or more of the workers in that workplace signed a card, then they could have a union. The union could represent them and bargain for wages, benefits, pensions and job security, the things that I think most of us want to believe we should all enjoy in a country like Canada, one of the wealthiest countries in the world. But implemented in 1996 was a change in labour law which said that workers could no longer, by signing a card, be recognized as part of a trade union. They would not only have to sign a card, but they would have to wait, in some cases a week, in some cases much longer, to hold a vote. What would happen in that time is the employer could resort to all kinds of tactics of intimidation, threats of firing, threats of, "We're going to get you."

I think most of us, if we think about it, would feel that there's something wrong with that. We're talking about a constitutionally protected right here, the right to freedom of association. All these young workers—in many cases they are young workers; in many cases they're women; in many cases they're new Canadians, vulnerable workers. All they're trying to do is exercise a constitutionally protected right of freedom of association. Why, in a country that prides itself, in a province that prides itself, as democratic, should they be subjected to abuse? Why should they be subjected to threats of, "We're going to get you, we're going to fire you"? If most people thought about it for a minute, they'd say, "There's something wrong with that." But that is the state of things in Ontario today. Young workers, women, and especially new Canadian workers who seek to exercise the freedom of association in workplaces in Ontario today are frequently subjected to abuse, intimidation, threats of, "We're going to get you. We're going to fire you. We're going to push you out the door." So this bill is intended to help address that.

I'm not pretending that this bill will fix every one of those issues, but this bill will bring some balance back into Ontario's labour law situation and it will bring some balance in terms of recognizing what is supposed to be a constitutionally protected right in Canada: the freedom of association.

Before I go further, I just want to say—I know this might shock some members on the government side—that card-based certification is the law in the province to the east of us, Quebec; it's the law in the next province after that, to the east of us, New Brunswick; it's the law in the province to the west of us, Manitoba; and it's the law in the next westerly province, Saskatchewan. They believe in ensuring that workers should be able to exercise the constitutionally protected right of freedom of association.

I'm given to ask, what's wrong with Ontario? Why is Ontario the province where we are reticent to ensure that the most vulnerable workers—women, young workers and new Canadians—why are we so reticent in Ontario to recognize and to help implement this constitutionally protected right? If it works in Quebec—and I notice that Quebec's economy is doing rather better than Ontario's; if it works in Manitoba—and I notice that Manitoba's economy is doing rather better than Ontario's in terms of sustaining jobs; if it works in Saskatchewan and New Brunswick, then why the reticence on the part of government members, Liberal members, to help sustain and implement this constitutionally protected right in Ontario?

I also want to point out this: As I said earlier, this was the law in Ontario, until that law was effectively changed in 1996. From 1950 until 1996, Ontario enjoyed annual economic growth of almost 4% a year. Our economic growth was actually better than in the United States, where there is no card-based certification. So for those who say, "Well, if you have card-based certification, it's going to harm your economy," you couldn't prove it by looking at what happened in Ontario and what happened in the United States from 1950 until 1996.

The other point I would make is that since Ontario did away with card-based certification in 1996, economic growth has averaged only 3%. So for those who say, "Oh, if you act to allow workers to better exercise their freedom of association, it's somehow going to hurt the economy and hurt jobs," you couldn't prove it by looking at the United States and Ontario, and you couldn't prove it by looking at Ontario when Ontario had card-based certification and now when Ontario doesn't have card-based certification.

In fact, the economic evidence indicates that it's the other way, and there are reasons for that. The people who benefit most from card-based certification are not your highest-paid workers. The people who benefit most are the lowest-paid workers: women, who often work in part-time jobs or who are often on call; students; younger workers; new Canadians; people who often work at minimum wage or just a little bit above. What the evidence shows is that those are the workers who benefit from being able to exercise their freedom of association through card-based certification.

#### 1110

Does it mean that overnight they get huge, whopping pay increases? No. What it means is that they can get, through collective bargaining, a decent wage. In many cases, they might be able to get a benefit package at work, so they can afford glasses for their children or maybe dental coverage for their children. It might even mean that they have a chance at a pension and won't have to worry about living in poverty as they grow older—all things that I think most of us would want most Canadians to have; all things that we would want to see most workers in Ontario enjoy.

This is about some social and economic justice. This is about ensuring that people who work very hard but often work for very low wages have an opportunity to imple-

ment more fully the constitutionally protected right of freedom of association and then effectively translate that freedom of association into a better life, not only for themselves and their families but for their community, because they'll be able to make a bigger economic contribution to their community.

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

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** I would like to speak to Bill 65. Our government supports fair and balanced labour relations. Ontario's prosperity has historically relied on a fair and balanced approach to labour relations. Fairness and balance promote confidence in the law, which encourages productive relationships. We brought forward the Labour Relations Statute Law Amendment Act in 2004 to restore Ontario's fair and balanced labour relations regime.

Over the years, Ontario saw a departure from those principles. Long-term stability was sacrificed for short-term advantage. The so-called advantage in labour relations swung back and forth—at one time in favour of the worker, at another in favour of the employer. This lack of stability caused confusion and had a negative impact on productivity in our province.

We restored balance. We got rid of irritants brought in by the previous government, such as the decertification poster and the requirement for unions to publicly declare salaries over \$100,000. We strengthened the Ontario Labour Relations Board's historical, long-standing power to address the worst labour relations violations with effective remedies. We restored the board's power to certify a union where an employer had breached the province's labour relations laws during a union organizing campaign. We balanced that by giving the board the power to dismiss an application for certification where the union violates the act during an organizing campaign in circumstances where no other remedy is sufficient.

We also restored the OLRB's power to reinstate workers on an interim basis who were fired or disciplined during a union organizing campaign because they were exercising their rights under the act. We recognized that dismissal during an organizing campaign can have an immediate negative effect on workers trying to make a decision about whether to seek representation. Restoring the power to order interim reinstatement enables the OLRB to respond to any potential harm caused by a dismissal in a timely way, pending a final ruling in the matter.

We believe that the government's role during a certification or decertification campaign is not to favour one side or the other but to ensure that the choice made is an effective and informed choice to the extent possible, free of undue pressure. Employees must be free to choose without fear of reprisals. They must be free to choose whether or not they want to be represented by a union.

In the Labour Relations Statute Law Amendment Act, we did add an additional means by which a union could be certified in the construction sector. In addition to a vote-based system, the act added a card-based system to this unique sector. From 1950 to 1995, a union certifi-

cation system based on membership cards was the norm. Automatic certification would take place if a union signed up more than 55% of the bargaining unit.

We did not propose a return to that system for all sectors. Construction, however, is unique. The construction sector is characterized by workplaces that change constantly, and a workplace that is both very mobile and that can change size constantly. Attempting to accurately ascertain the wishes of the employees in such circumstances can be very, very difficult. For this reason, we added an additional means of certification. In doing so, we recognized that the law has long recognized the unique nature of construction.

We believe that our reforms have been effective in restoring and maintaining fairness and balance in our labour relations. We have restored confidence in Ontario's labour relation system.

I do not support Bill 65, because any changes to the current labour relations regime would only tilt the scales to favour one side over the other. This is neither fair nor balanced. Fairness and balance have been the historical guarantors of prosperity in this great province, the foundation on which the province's prosperity has been built. Fairness and balance promote confidence in the labour relation system, and confidence is essential to stability and success. Confidence in our labour relations system also encourages productivity, and that can only benefit both workers and employers.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'm glad to have the opportunity to participate in today's debate on Bill 65, An Act to amend the Labour Relations Act, 1995 with respect to the certification of trade unions.

As the member of provincial Parliament for Sarnia-Lambton, I'm proud to say that in the past, I have been a member of two bargaining units and have sat on the other side of the table as well. I've helped organize those unions in the past, and I am a strong believer in the unions.

In Sarnia, we are very lucky that we have a high level of co-operation between our unions and management, particularly when it comes to health and safety issues. In fact, they talk about that as the Sarnia model as far as health and safety. I've met with the chairman of the WSIB and the Minister of Labour as well, and it's a model they would like to take across Ontario to improve workers' health and safety.

I will start off by saying that I can't support this bill for a number of reasons. First, I don't believe in an automatic card-based certification of trade unions in general. Second, I think that taking away a worker's democratic right to have a secret ballot is wrong. Third, why would we as legislators want to radically change labour relations laws, given the current problems in our economy?

It is important that we understand what this bill would do. The bill amends the Labour Relations Act to allow the Ontario Labour Relations Board to certify a trade union as the bargaining agent of the employees in a bargaining unit without directing a representation vote by

secret ballot if it is satisfied that more than 55% of the employees are in the union.

Also, the board may hold a hearing when considering an application for certification, whereas under the present act the board is not allowed to hold a hearing under those circumstances.

As I said, I don't believe card-based certification alone is the way to go for such an important decision as forming a union. As has been pointed out, card-based certification is now allowed in the construction industry, and I believe that should be continued and maintained. It has led to some issues, I understand. I had some people in to see me the other day in my office. I understand that the city of Hamilton at this time is involved in a dispute with one of the unions that has effectively, in their opinion, put on hold a number of upgrades that they would like to do to their municipal infrastructure. This dispute means the projects that the city of Hamilton is considering moving forward are going to cost a lot more, and in the end it will be the municipal ratepayers who will have to make up the difference.

I understand why the government allowed automatic card-based certification in the construction industry. No one on this side of the House, myself in particular, is advocating that we take that away at all. Our party just doesn't see a need to expand it to other sectors.

The second reason why I can't support this bill is that in 1995, when my party amended the Labour Relations Act and brought in the secret ballot for union certification votes, we introduced an element of democracy that we, as members of this Legislative Assembly, all take for granted. Each and every one of us, when we first ran, probably ran in a nomination process to become a candidate, and then, a few weeks or months later, also faced the voters in each of our respective ridings, where all of those voters cast their ballots to pick and choose each one of us.

#### 1120

In 1995, the current member for Kitchener–Waterloo introduced Bill 7, which was one of our key campaign commitments in the election campaign. When she introduced that bill, she stated: “Secret ballot votes will be made mandatory for union certifications, contract ratifications and strike votes. Each individual will now have the democratic right to vote on whether or not they want to be represented by a trade union.”

The member, at that time, also stated: “What could make more sense than to allow the individual worker more democratic options in making one of the most important decisions of their working life, whether or not to be represented by a trade union?”

It was right to do then, and it's still right today.

What we found in a card-based certification process is that once you sign the card, you have no ability to change your mind later. We believe it is only fair to give workers that chance to express their opinion via secret ballot. When we offered ourselves for election in this place, we all trusted the secret ballot. To not allow our workers that same treatment just seems wrong to me. Forming a trade

union is an important decision, and in our party, we believe that workers have a right to a secret ballot.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Standing up for democracy—those are the Tories I know.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** That's right.

The third reason I can't support this bill is that if it were to pass, it would introduce more uncertainty into this economy at this time. That's the last thing we need to happen right now. We are bleeding manufacturing jobs in the province of Ontario. The member for Wellington–Halton Hills reminded us just yesterday that Campbell Soup is closing their plant in Listowel, and that will mean the end of 500 jobs in a community of 6,000 people. The government is doing nothing to stop this hemorrhaging. As the member for Niagara West–Glanbrook pointed out yesterday, the government is doing nothing to help save the CanGro jobs in Niagara.

We also saw a report yesterday from the TD Bank saying that Ontario is moving very fast into becoming a have-not province and will soon be eligible to receive equalization payments. To introduce an element of uncertainty at this time wouldn't make any sense. I agree with the government on this, and frankly, I was glad to hear the Minister of Labour admit, that the last thing the government would want to do is radically change any of our labour laws, given the current challenges in the Ontario economy.

Now that we finally have the government admitting that there is a challenge in the economy, maybe we will see some action.

For all these reasons, I will not be supporting this bill.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I'm pleased and proud to stand here with other New Democrats, speaking in support of Howard Hampton's Bill 65.

When we speak in this chamber, we don't just speak to our colleagues, we speak to the people of Ontario. So, I say now to sisters and brothers, working women and men across this province, this bill is designed to ensure that the right of people in a democratic nation, in a fair-minded society, to belong to a trade union is effected.

Look, I tell you this—I've had occasion to say it to people across this province over the course of many years, and I say it once again with as much passion and commitment as I've ever been able to muster—I truly believe that the trade union movement is more relevant today than it ever has been in the history of this world.

And I say this to you: The trade union movement, the trade unions—its membership and its leadership—have done and continue to do more to create social and economic justice than any other institution in our society.

We should be grateful for the courage, the tenacity, the sacrifice of working women and men in this province, in this country and throughout the world, who have built the trade union movement. It was a bloody fight; it was a deadly fight. People were battered and beaten, people went to jail, people died, people were ostracized and people lost families in their struggle to build the union movement.

My father was a steel worker, he was a trade unionist. He was an immigrant with a grade 8 education. All of his

kids got to go to college and university, not because any of us were particularly brighter than anybody else, but because our father worked in a trade union workshop. He could afford to provide us with a lifestyle—we weren't rich by any stretch of the imagination, but as the children of a trade unionist who fought for better and fairer wages, for a fair share of the wealth that he creates—as every worker has the right to fight for a fair share of the wealth that working people create.

It's the work of people that creates wealth, make no mistake about it. It ain't the Bill Gates of the world. Lord knows it ain't the Conrad Blacks of the world. Conrad Black doesn't create wealth, he steals it. But working women and men create it, and they surely have a right to the fair share of the wealth that they create.

You know, I tell you, I grew up in Welland, born in Crowland. Welland was a UE town. I was inside the labour temple down on Ontario Road before I was ever inside any church. I tell you that without any hesitation. I was mentored by people like Mike Bosnich and John Trufal and, yes, Gordie Lambert from Local 199, one of Canada's great trade unionists; all of them.

I learned then what I strongly believe now, and that is that workers have never had anything given to them. Everything workers have ever acquired, be it a fairer wage, a little safer workplace, a little bit of a pension plan or some health benefits, they've had to fight for. I say it's time for workers to join with the NDP in fighting for the right for card-based certification here and now in the province of Ontario.

As a democratic socialist, I find myself unequivocally committed to worker's struggles and to their interests. New Democrats have never been afraid of standing together with working women and men, shoulder to shoulder, arm in arm, when they've been engaged in their struggles. Oh, it's easy for a politician to show up for the photo op with a trade union local president who wants to give a check to United Way, show up with those UFCW workers down in Port Colborne, who've been locked out of Horizon Milling—Robin Hood Mills—now for a year plus a day; denied their right to work and contribute their labour to the productive process.

The right to belong to a union can't be the right of some, it has to be the right of all. Agricultural workers in this province, working in some of the most dangerous, toxic and dirtiest of workplaces, have to have the right to organize, belong to a trade union and freely, collectively bargain as well. So do part-time workers in this province, whether they're in the public or private sector.

In a few minutes, my colleagues Andrea Horwath, the member for Hamilton Centre, and Cheri DiNovo, the member for Parkdale—High Park, are going to be speaking to this bill, too. I tell you, this modest caucus of 10 had to divide the scarce amount of time available to us, to the regret of a whole lot of other members, all of whom wanted to address this bill.

For the life of me, I can't understand why there would be those who would bemoan the loss of jobs in this province, yet not want to see the trade union movement

prosper, because the trade union movement has been at the forefront of the fight to keep good jobs in their communities, in this province and in this country. It's never, ever wrong to fight to keep good jobs in your community. It's never, ever wrong to fight for a safer workplace. It's never, ever wrong to fight for a fair pension. And it's never, ever wrong to join sisters and brothers who are fighting for their workplace rights in their workplace, notwithstanding that you don't happen to work there.

#### 1130

The most prosperous countries in this world are countries that have strong trade union movements and countries that have Legislatures and governments that sustain trade unionists and trade unions as a result of a legislative framework. We prospered in an environment when card-based certification was available to every worker.

Let's understand who most needs card-based certification: the most vulnerable workers. I've been proud to stand in the streets of Niagara Falls with leadership and membership, hotel workers in the city of Niagara Falls, women and men, many of them new Canadians, many of them still more functional in their homeland language than in the English language, working for the lowest of wages and doing the hardest and most dangerous of work, who have, oh, the audacity, according to some here, to want to be able to collectively bargain. How arrogant of these workers, they would say, to want to exercise a charter right of freedom of assembly. How arrogant and audacious of these workers to want to be able to go home, maybe more tired, but at least as healthy as they were when they left in the morning with limbs intact, their eyesight still working.

This is a fundamental issue of basic decency, of very basic human rights. I, for one, will never abandon my passion for the right of workers to have some control over their workplaces. So understand, to deny workers the right to card-based certification is to deny them the right to unionization; to deny them the right to unionization is to deny them the right of free and fair collective bargaining.

Let's make no mistake about it. Yes, there's a broad range of what constitutes free and fair collective bargaining, it also constitutes the right to strike. I say that people who turn down workers' rights to freedom of assembly are turning down one of the very basic cornerstones of a democratic society.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** I'm delighted to be able to take part in this debate today. I've done a lot of research since 1996 on the construction industry, especially when I introduced Bill 60 way back in 1996. Bill 60 was called Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act, which referred at the time to the Ontario-Quebec labour mobility agreement. But I remember afterwards, in early 2000, that the previous government came up with Bill 17, again because they could see there was a major problem in the construction industry.

We all know that the construction industry is the backbone of our economy. The McGuinty government has

always promoted stable labour relations and economic prosperity by implementing legislation that ensures fairness and choice in Ontario's workplaces. We have restored the principles of balance, fairness and choice in Ontario's labour relations, giving all players confidence in the system that creates the stability necessary to ensure the ongoing prosperity of the province. We know that productive labour relations are key to economic growth, productivity and prosperity and give Ontario a competitive advantage.

Bill 144, the Labour Relations Statute Law Amendment Act, 2005, restored power to the Ontario Labour Relations Board to let it effectively handle situations where an employer or a union violates labour law during an organizing campaign. The Ontario Labour Relations Board now has the power to order automatic certification where it determines an employer's violation of the Labour Relations Act has made it unlikely that the employees' true wishes will be reflected in the certification vote. The board also has the power to dismiss a union certification application where it determines the union's violation of the Labour Relations Act has made it unlikely that the employees' true wishes will be reflected.

Bill 7, introduced by the Conservatives in 1995, provides that unions could be certified only where a majority of employees in the proposed bargaining unit had voted in favour of the union in a representation vote. A union could no longer be certified solely on the basis of union membership cards. Union membership cards were still relevant; however, in establishing a union's entitlement to a representation vote, the board ordered a vote where at least 40% of employees signed cards at the time the application was made.

Bill 144, introduced in 2004, reintroduced card-based certification, but only for the construction sector. As I mentioned earlier, construction is the backbone of the Ontario economy. It is my firm belief that to insist on the certification of all of our construction workers would inevitably result in the collapse of the industry. Why am I saying this? I've done all the research in Ontario, in Canada and in the United States. We would not like to see our construction industry going through a crucial period of time like the United States is doing.

Let me mention some of the information received during my research. The Ontario Home Builders' Association employs over 300,000 people; 4,200 member companies are organized into a network of the 29 local provincial associations. Ontario's largest industry's contribution is over \$33 billion to the economy. That represents 5.1% of Ontario's GDP; the automotive industry represents 4%. I just want to give you an example. It generates over \$6 billion in provincial and federal taxes, premiums and charges; \$1 billion goes to development charges in municipalities. In addition, the Ontario Home Builders' Association built over 80% of new housing in Ontario. According to the Ottawa Carleton Home Builders Association, of over 25,000 construction workers in eastern Ontario from Kingston to the Quebec border, 95% are not certified; only 5% are certified construction

workers. Most of them learn their trade on the job and they produce quality work. At the present time, there are 10 compulsory trades, 22 voluntary trades, and 104 non-restricted trades. To me, the system works as it is. There is no need to change it.

The Ottawa Carleton Home Builders Association has sent me this document. According to information received from the organized labour force, to defend their position that certified workers are better for the construction industry. They say it provides better quality of work. But, to me, the quality of work is no better, whether the workers are certified or not, according to the data from other provinces.

**1140**

Reductions in the number of accidents: Well, I have all the data here. According to the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada, Ontario has 669,000 more workers than Quebec, for example. In Quebec, we all know that all construction trades have to be certified, so how come they have 669,000 fewer construction workers than we have and they have 1,287 more accidents?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** You haven't read the bill.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** Yes, I have.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Jean-Marc, you don't understand the debate. You've read the wrong bill. You're reading the wrong notes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Order, the member from Welland.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** At the moment, the issue is not the lack of post-secondary training but certified construction workers in Ontario. Yet, 44% of the construction workforce is over 65 years of age. There is already a shortage of skilled labour in Ontario.

The problem at the present time in Ontario is the ratios. When I look at all the other provinces in Ontario, why is it—and even though organized labour is saying that there's no shortage of labour, anybody who is graduating from the colleges at the present time cannot find a job, even though I received just this week a publication saying they are congratulating the students who have become apprentices under the apprenticeship programs. When I look at the other provinces, most of them are 1 to 1. Even in Alberta, which has a shortage of labour at the present time, it's 1 to 2. And here, for a carpenter, it's 4 to 1. You've got to have four tradesmen for one apprentice in Ontario. That has to be changed. There is no use, at the present time, in expanding our training colleges because the unions are not recognizing those apprentices.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Stop the clock for a moment.

The Chair is pleased to introduce Mr. Bob Huget, who is in the east gallery. He was the member for Sarnia in the 35th Parliament.

Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I'm pleased to take this opportunity to rise here today and to speak to the member from Kenora—Rainy River's bill, An Act to amend the Labour Relations Act, 1995 with respect to certification of trade



unions. I want to speak to this bill as someone who has owned a company, but also as someone who has been and currently is a member of a trade union. As a matter of fact, I've held a card in the union of which I'm a member for 35 years and am happy to hold it again today. I even have strike experience under my belt.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** They might pull it after today.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** They might.

This is certainly an opportunity to tell you that my experiences are varied. We bring our experiences to this House and hopefully use them to contribute to the debate. It's not an issue, for me, of being against trade unions or the ideals that they bring to society, but other experiences temper my views.

What I'd like to discuss, because it has a great bearing on the member's bill, is experience that I had in my own company, which speaks directly to this bill and goes back approximately 10 years, maybe a little bit less. We had, in a company that I owned with one other person, a certification attempt at that time. The union was well aware that it was operating outside of its sphere of influence. The typical members of the union were skilled trades who worked manually with their hands in industry, particularly in construction. My employees, meanwhile, were white-collar employees who worked as service workers. The union wanted to expand its base, which is its right. One or two—at most—disgruntled employees in my company got caught up in the union's drive. It began as a drive to elicit signatures, as this bill describes. My couple of disgruntled employees, along with paid union workers, lay in wait for my employees to come and go to the buses, subways and cars that transported them to and from their jobs on a daily basis. The employees were continually pressured and they were coerced to sign. They did sign; 45% to 50% of them signed cards. I, as owner of the company, paid out tens of thousands of dollars to ensure—and this is in legal fees—that I was acting legally and to ensure that the other side did likewise.

I used absolutely no coercion of any sort to influence my employees in terms of which way to vote. So I continued to act legally, not using any coercion, and guess what? On secret ballot—and I emphasize that: on secret ballot—the employee group voted 90 to 10 against unionization. Why did they do that? Because they got a fair wage, well above the minimum wage, because they worked in good white-collar jobs, they got good benefits, they got good pensions and they liked where they were. Many are still employed by that company today.

A secret ballot, no coercion; the two equate. I learned again that democratic principles always apply and always come to the fore. One person, one vote; secret ballot. Why? Because this is the only guarantee that we're all operating in a pressure-free environment and that we're all able to vote our conscience. If you implement a threshold system, that goes out the window.

My friend the member from Welland—and I'm paraphrasing—said, "It's never, ever wrong to make a fair wage. It's never, ever wrong to get a fair pension. It's

never, ever wrong to get good benefits." But he presupposes that only unions can secure those things. How arrogant to make those assumptions.

The proposed amendment has many potential flaws, and I'm especially concerned with clause 8(4)(b), which states:

"Upon receiving an application for certification, the board shall,...

"(b) direct that a representation vote be taken or certify the trade union as the bargaining agent of the employees in the bargaining unit, if it is satisfied that more than 55 per cent of the employees in the bargaining unit are members of the trade union on the date on which the application is made."

When I take that into consideration and I project backwards to that incident that I described in my own experience, in my own company, we came dangerously close to that level, and yet when the vote went secret, it was 90 to 10 against a union. What does that say? It says that this clause opens the door to threats and coercion and it slams the door on democracy. It slams the door on a private, secret ballot.

The "D" in NDP stands for "democratic," and I know that you all believe it in the third party. This sort of clause could encourage some unscrupulous labour organizers—and they do exist—to exert undue pressure on potential members of the bargaining unit. I saw this with my own eyes. The clause designed to protect against this is toothless, and that's why, even if 100% of people signed cards, it should still be a secret vote.

Subsection 8(7) states in part, "If the trade union or person acting on behalf of the trade union contravenes this act ... the board may, on the application of an interested person, dismiss the application if no other remedy, including a representation vote, would be sufficient to counter the effects of the contravention."

That means that if one lone person fights the good fight, opens up the door, he becomes what is commonly referred to as the goat, the guy who has the guts but gets the snot kicked out of him for having the guts. This provides little relief; it requires an employee to come forward. It requires an employee to publicly file a complaint against the union, and I ask the question: Realistically, who's going to do that?

If the job status of the employee filing the complaint changes, it could also affect the status of disciplinary action against the union. So you just redefine the bargaining unit or you torment the complainant—it's easy, but it's undemocratic, and at worst, it's even illegal. I cannot foresee an instance where someone would step forward and possibly have to face a year's worth of harassment just for coming forward against a union, and this aspect begs for any and all manner of illegal action.

#### 1150

Subsection (8) bars unions from reapplying for a period of one year as a potential penalty for violations of the aforementioned subsections. The clauses I'm talking about here are basically escape hatches. If you harass someone enough, he'll go away, and that changes the

composition of the bargaining unit. He'll get other employment, presto. Now the union can go ahead and re-apply, and that's not what we are looking for.

I can't possibly foresee an instance where someone would step forward under these circumstances. I believe workers should have the right to bargain collectively, and I also believe that workers have a right to reasonable wages and benefits. I also believe that a vast majority of the businesses across this province do value and respect their employees, as did I. I can tell you that if my employees were here to speak today and make deputations, they would say the same thing, because they recognize that their employer was a good employer and the vast majority of employees in good businesses, which are the majority of businesses in our province, recognize that they are responsible for the success and failure of companies and that it's a two-way street. They deserve this mutuality.

Today, we're talking about a piece of legislation that will force any potential investors to reconsider Ontario for fear of being unionized without even the benefit of a certification vote. We've been listening in this House for the past number of weeks to talk of the economy, and no doubt we'll be talking about it as debate continues today, as we look at job losses in Oshawa at General Motors of 1,000, Campbell Soup, 500, Chatham, 130, and the hits just keep on coming. We don't need any more of it. This is not the time to consider looking at unionization without the ability of the democratic process to be followed.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's certainly my pleasure to rise today on May Day, the international day of solidarity with workers, to speak in favour of this private member's bill that would guarantee card-based certification for all workers in the province of Ontario—not a radical change, in fact something that workers had a right to in this province for many, many years, except it was the government of the day back in 1995-96, I believe, that got rid of that right, and that was a horrible day for workers in Ontario.

Today, we have with us in this chamber—and I think it's important to note—many, many trade union activists. We have many labour leaders I wanted to mention. We have Wayne Samuelson, president of the Ontario Federation of Labour; Dave Ritchie from IAMAW, Wayne Fraser, United Steelworkers of America, Wayne Hanley, UFCW—all of our important labour leaders here and all of the people who are active in the labour movement who could get here today to show solidarity, not only with workers in Toronto and here in Ontario but with workers around the world, because international labour movement activists around this world, some 122 years ago, fought for the eight-hour day.

The struggles of workers, as was mentioned earlier in the speech by my colleague from Welland, Mr. Kormos, were difficult struggles, and those struggles were based on a fundamental difference between the interests, the attitudes—the deeply polarized attitudes in fact back in those days. I would submit that, today, those polarized attitudes still exist. They exist, unfortunately, in some

workplaces, but they exist right here in this chamber, I would submit: those polarized attitudes between the rights of workers, the dignity of workers, the assurances that workers should have in a democratic society to enable them to gain a decent wage for their labour, to ensure that their workplaces are safe and healthy, to ensure that at the end of their working life they might have a little bit of a pension to be able to rely on so that they're not living in poverty, versus those who would not see those things as rights or obligations of a civil society at all.

Back then, those struggles were very difficult and people, yes, were killed back in 1886 in the Haymarket riots. But in this chamber today we have the same division. We have the same polarization: the Liberals and Conservatives on one side who don't want to see those rights of workers reinstated in the province of Ontario, and New Democrats who on May Day, the international day of solidarity with workers, are here to say we absolutely want to see this law in place in Ontario.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Again, this is a very clarified moment in this chamber. In case there's any doubt out there in the province of Ontario about the party that stands up for workers' rights and for workers' justice, there is only one party that does: the New Democratic Party of Ontario. It's not the Liberal Party, although some may think that it does, but clearly they don't. They don't support this private member's bill. They do not stand up for workers. We knew the Tories didn't, but we are shocked to see that the people across the hall—the government, the Premier and the Premier's office—do not stand up for workers' rights. This has been made clear this morning.

Let us make no mistake about this: Whatever facilitates unionization, facilitates human dignity; whatever facilitates the rights of workers, facilitates all humans to a more dignified life.

My husband and I had a wonderful opportunity to go to Sweden, a community of nine million—85% unionization rate. They have free tuition for post-secondary, they have child care free to all who need it, they have free dental care up to the age of 18, and they have a vibrant economy. They have Sony Ericsson, Volvo, Ikea and others. You can have both—and a de facto minimum wage of \$12 an hour. That's what human dignity looks like. That's what this province could look like if this private member's bill was passed. That's what this province would look like if the Liberals didn't stand in the way, if the Tories didn't stand in the way, if we stood up for workers' rights and elected more New Democratic Party members to this House.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Je veux seulement applaudir ce projet de loi et dire que c'est à peu près temps qu'on vote pour les travailleurs de cette province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Hampton, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** In the time that I have left, I would like to respond, in particular to some of the arguments that were raised by government members. I

find the government's position bizarre. Members of the government say that you have to have card certification in the construction sector because the construction sector is dynamic, because some people may be working some days and, a week later, the workforce may change. I invite government members to go into the hospitality sector, the retail sector or the food sector and look at the young workers and overwhelmingly visible minority women who work in those sectors and tell them that their workplace is any less dynamic. Tell them that their workplace is any more steady or regular. It's not. It's bizarre that government members would say that young workers, new Canadians, and women who work in some of the most dynamic parts of our economy—where they're on call, where they're working different shifts, where they're working some days 10 hours, then two days not working, then called in on the weekend—that somehow their workplace is any less dynamic, any more regular than a construction work site. Baloney.

The second point I'd like to make: There's been some talk about democracy. In our society, if I sign a cheque, no one comes around to conduct an inquiry. My signature on the cheque is okay. I have a driver's licence and my signature is on it. I don't have to go through an inquiry. My signature is okay. But yet when it comes to workers who want to join a trade union, they seem to have to exercise democracy twice: Sign the union card and then go vote. If it's good enough on my cheque and on my credit card—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

We will first deal with ballot item number 17, standing in the name of Mr. Yakabuski.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION  
AND HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT  
AMENDMENT ACT (ASSISTANCE  
TO MUNICIPALITIES), 2008

LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT  
LA LOI SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT  
DES VOIES PUBLIQUES  
ET DES TRANSPORTS EN COMMUN  
(AIDE AUX MUNICIPALITÉS)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Yakabuski has moved second reading of Bill 38, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to the assistance that the Minister provides to municipalities. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We will defer the vote until we deal with the second ballot item.

LABOUR RELATIONS AMENDMENT  
ACT (CERTIFICATION), 2008

LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL  
(ACCREDITATION)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Hampton has moved second reading of Bill 65, An Act to amend the Labour Relations Act, 1995 with respect to certification of trade unions. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

*The division bells rang from 1201 to 1206.*

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION  
AND HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT  
AMENDMENT ACT (ASSISTANCE  
TO MUNICIPALITIES), 2008

LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT  
LA LOI SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT  
DES VOIES PUBLIQUES  
ET DES TRANSPORTS EN COMMUN  
(AIDE AUX MUNICIPALITÉS)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** All those in favour of the motion will please rise.

**Ayes**

|                    |                     |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Arnott, Ted        | Jones, Sylvia       | Savoline, Joyce     |
| Bailey, Robert     | Klees, Frank        | Scott, Laurie       |
| Barrett, Toby      | Kormos, Peter       | Shurman, Peter      |
| Bisson, Gilles     | MacLeod, Lisa       | Sterling, Norman W. |
| Elliott, Christine | Miller, Norm        | Witmer, Elizabeth   |
| Hardeman, Ernie    | Miller, Paul        | Yakabuski, John     |
| Horwath, Andrea    | Munro, Julia        |                     |
| Hudak, Tim         | Runciman, Robert W. |                     |

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** All those opposed to the motion will please rise.

**Nays**

|                     |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Aggelonitis, Sophia | Duguid, Brad        | Moridi, Reza        |
| Albanese, Laura     | Flynn, Kevin Daniel | Naqvi, Yasir        |
| Arthurs, Wayne      | Gerretsen, John     | Pendergast, Leeanna |
| Balkissoon, Bas     | Jaczek, Helena      | Prue, Michael       |
| Brotten, Laurel C.  | Jeffrey, Linda      | Rinaldi, Lou        |
| Brown, Michael A.   | Kwinter, Monte      | Ruprecht, Tony      |
| Carroll, Aileen     | Lalonde, Jean-Marc  | Sandals, Liz        |
| Chan, Michael       | Levac, Dave         | Sergio, Mario       |
| Colle, Mike         | Mangat, Amrit       | Smith, Monique      |
| Craitor, Kim        | Marchese, Rosario   | Sousa, Charles      |
| Delaney, Bob        | Matthews, Deborah   | Takhar, Harinder S. |
| Dhillon, Vic        | Milloy, John        | Van Bommel, Maria   |
| Dickson, Joe        | Mitchell, Carol     | Wilkinson, John     |

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 22; the nays are 39.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I declare the motion lost.

*Second reading negated.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The doors will be opened for 30 seconds.

LABOUR RELATIONS AMENDMENT  
ACT (CERTIFICATION), 2008

LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL  
(ACCREDITATION)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing.

**Ayes**

|                 |                   |               |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Bisson, Gilles  | Hampton, Howard   | Miller, Paul  |
| Craitor, Kim    | Horwath, Andrea   | Prue, Michael |
| DiNovo, Cheri   | Kormos, Peter     | Tabuns, Peter |
| Gélinas, France | Marchese, Rosario |               |

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing.

**Nays**

|                     |                    |                     |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Aggelonitis, Sophia | Hardeman, Ernie    | Pendergast, Leeanna |
| Albanese, Laura     | Hoy, Pat           | Rinaldi, Lou        |
| Arnott, Ted         | Hudak, Tim         | Runciman, Robert W. |
| Arthurs, Wayne      | Jaczek, Helena     | Ruprecht, Tony      |
| Bailey, Robert      | Jeffrey, Linda     | Sandals, Liz        |
| Balkissoon, Bas     | Jones, Sylvia      | Savoline, Joyce     |
| Barrett, Toby       | Klees, Frank       | Scott, Laurie       |
| Broten, Laurel C.   | Kwinter, Monte     | Sergio, Mario       |
| Brown, Michael A.   | Lalonde, Jean-Marc | Shurman, Peter      |
| Carroll, Aileen     | Leal, Jeff         | Smith, Monique      |
| Chan, Michael       | MacLeod, Lisa      | Sousa, Charles      |
| Colle, Mike         | Mangat, Amrit      | Sterling, Norman W. |
| Delaney, Bob        | Matthews, Deborah  | Takhar, Harinder S. |
| Dhillon, Vic        | Miller, Norm       | Van Bommel, Maria   |
| Dickson, Joe        | Milloy, John       | Wilkinson, John     |
| Duguid, Brad        | Mitchell, Carol    | Witmer, Elizabeth   |
| Elliott, Christine  | Moridi, Reza       | Yakabuski, John     |
| Flynn, Kevin Daniel | Munro, Julia       |                     |
| Gerretsen, John     | Naqvi, Yasir       |                     |

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 11; the nays are 55.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I declare the motion lost.

*Second reading negatived.*

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

*The House recessed from 1213 to 1330.*

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**WORLD CATHOLIC EDUCATION DAY**

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I rise in the House today to recognize World Catholic Education Day. In Canada alone, Catholic schools educate almost one million students. The theme for Ontario's Catholic Education Week is "We are called," and today's special theme is "To serve generously."

As the member for Burlington, I would like to recognize the tremendous accomplishments of two students in

our community: Jasmine Berlingieri from St. Patrick School, and Jordana Baumgartner from Holy Rosary School, who received top honours in a recent Halton Catholic District School Board public speaking contest.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the recipients of the 2008 Sharing the Spirit Award of Excellence: Emma Harper, Robert Babic, Marisa Norris, Sarah Bourque, Nadia Mendola, Stephanie Kovacs, Sean Madden, Rachel Gubbels, Olivia Brown, Andrew van Kooten, Rachael Plume, Helen Kosterman, Kailey Meehan, Emily O'Keefe and Nicole Veloce. All of these young students have distinguished themselves amongst their peers as leaders and dedicated ambassadors of Catholic education.

I wish each one of them all the best as they pursue their dreams, challenge their minds and open their hearts to new and exciting opportunities.

**OIL SPRINGS**

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** A century and a half ago, James Miller Williams, in search of a better quality of drinking water, dug a well in the village of Oil Springs, just south of Petrolia. Mr. Williams was not able to find any water, but what he did discover was to become the first commercial oil well in North America. Four years later, in 1862, there were more than 2,000 barrels of oil a day shooting above the treetops from about 100 gushers in Lambton county.

I rise in the House today to tell all members of the Legislature that Canada Post will be unveiling a commemorative stamp in Oil Springs tomorrow afternoon at 4 o'clock to recognize the 150th anniversary of this first discovery of oil. Prior to 2007's riding redistribution, Oil Springs was in my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

Along with the former Minister of Culture, Caroline Di Cocco, the McGuinty government supported Oil Springs as they prepared to ready the village for the year-long celebration. Among those grants was the announcement last spring of \$225,000 for retrofits and improvements to the Oil Museum of Canada as part of our government's economic stimulus package. I had the pleasure of working with Mayor Gordon Perry and his community as they started their planning and continued to watch with interest as this small community rallied around to ensure that the spit and polish is on this showcase of commercial oil history.

I encourage everyone today to partake in this appropriately named village's celebration and make sure that you enjoy the down-home hospitality.

**ETHEL GARDINER**

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** In June 2007, students, teachers and the Halton District School Board lost a dear friend and champion of public education. Ethel Gardiner, a long-serving trustee and former school board chair, brought her passion, kindness, commitment and outstanding

leadership to her every task. Ethel fostered excellence in our schools by recognizing publicly the achievements of others, including students, educators and support staff. Her focus on student achievement was surely instrumental in her being awarded the prestigious provincial Dr. Harry Paikin Award of Merit.

I was honoured to meet Ethel towards the end of her tenure as a school board trustee. After making my decision to seek re-election in Wellington–Halton Hills after the riding boundary changes were established, I made a point of meeting some of the community leaders in Halton Hills to get to know them and to listen to their advice. As the past school board chair, Ethel was someone I wanted to meet. I called her and we arranged to meet at what she called her office, the Tim Hortons on Mountainview Road in Georgetown. After all, that was where she met most of her constituents.

I was immediately impressed with her down-to-earth sincerity, her passion for public education, and the way she saw everyone, students and staff alike, as part of her extended family.

That's why I'm so pleased to congratulate the Halton District School Board for its decision to name the new school under construction in south Georgetown after Ethel Gardiner. There is no more appropriate name and no more fitting person in Halton Hills to be honoured in this way.

#### POVERTY

**Mr. Michael Prue:** For the last several weeks, I have stood in this Legislature and asked questions of various ministers and the Premier about poverty consultation—when all of that is going to begin, who's going to be invited and what's going to be said. I've been stonewalled at every single instance. No one has been willing to answer this.

You can imagine my surprise and chagrin this morning when I opened up the clippings and saw in the Peterborough Examiner that the member from Peterborough, Mr. Leal, has announced that the long-awaited consultations will begin on Monday in Peterborough. Of course, I instantly wanted to go. So I phoned up the local council and said, "How can I attend? Where is it?" We got a very curt reply that they couldn't invite us because only the minister could invite people to attend.

So we phoned the minister's office and said, "Please, Madam Minister, how can we get an invitation to go to Peterborough and hear these consultations?" Of course, the minister's office has not called us back.

I have to say that people have been asking—the 25 in 5 coalition, all of the groups, this side of the House—when it's going to begin, who's going to be listened to, what's going to be said, and now we find out: by invitation of the minister only, in a secret location that can't be revealed, with people invited who are going to tell the minister what I assume she wants to hear. This is hardly consultation.

#### SQUARE ONE FARMERS' MARKET

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** All across Ontario, shoppers are choosing farmers' markets for nature's best produce, where the food is fresh, high in quality and the next best thing to harvesting it yourself.

The Square One Farmers' Market in Mississauga was started in 1975 by the Mississauga Central Lions Club, whose members volunteer to help raise funds for the less fortunate in Mississauga.

Farmers' markets support local farmers by promoting locally produced goods in a healthy and eco-friendly manner. To date, the farmers' market at Square One has generated approximately \$5 million for the Mississauga Central Lions Club, which in turn funds local community projects.

I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Manuel Castellino, chairman and general manager, and Edward Bujold, assistant manager of the Square One Farmers' Market, on their success. Both of them are in the east members' gallery today. I would also like to thank the management of Square One Shopping Centre for their continuing support of this great farmers' market.

#### CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF SIMCOE COUNTY

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Last week, my colleague from Simcoe North and I had a very informative meeting with representatives from the Simcoe county children's aid society. I wanted to bring to the attention of this House a very exciting project that the society is undertaking this weekend.

On Saturday, the society will plant a tree for every child in its care with its "tree for a child" greening initiative. In an effort to raise a bit of money for the foundation, the society is asking for community members to sponsor a tree for \$5, which will be planted by staff, family members, foster families and community volunteers. These seedlings will be planted around the children's aid society building in Barrie, with each seedling representing one of the children in their care.

This tree-planting initiative is intended to symbolize the vision that the children's aid society has for our children, including healthy growth and development, and the support and nurturing that each child requires to achieve their full potential. It's also an important fundraiser for the society as it struggles to deal with a \$400,000 funding shortfall from the last fiscal year.

I think this is a fantastic initiative, and I want to thank all of the staff and volunteers with the Simcoe county children's aid society for doing their part for the environment and for being the compassionate and thoughtful community advocates they are.

The planting begins at noon on Saturday at the society's Bell Farm Road office in Barrie, and it will be followed by a barbecue and children's games.

I just say to all members, if you want to support children in care and children's aid in Barrie, please give me \$5.

1340

### ANNIVERSARY OF POLISH CONSTITUTION

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** A very momentous occasion took place in Poland in 1791, and that was the establishment of the Polish Constitution, which for the first time in the history of Europe, at least, separated the judiciary branch from legislative and executive branches of government. In addition to that, it gave a lot of power to the people.

Little did the writers know in 1791 what the impact of this very important constitution would be on the rest of Europe—on the French Revolution, in Germany, in Italy. Basically, all the constitutions in Europe and even the Constitution of the United States were affected by this.

In 1791, the Polish people did not know what awaited them. When we raise the flag on May 3, which is this Saturday, I would like to invite all members to come and join us. When we raise the flag, we are reminded of the history of the Polish nation being oppressed, and being sacrificed and divided over 200 or 300 years. Today it's a free nation. The people of Poland, from one generation to the next, have passed the flame of freedom on to the children today.

Finally, let me say that as we raise the flag on Saturday, we are reminded of three items: one, the constitution; two, the tremendous contribution of the Polish people in Canada; and three, the 150th anniversary of Polish immigration to Canada.

### GUELPH DAY

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** As you know, today is Guelph Day in the provincial Legislature. I would like to welcome Mayor Karen Farbridge, various councillors, representatives from the University of Guelph and Conestoga College, and business leaders to the Legislature today, and to congratulate them for organizing such a successful day. I hope that all the members were able to join these individuals for a delicious Guelph-style lunch today.

The city of Guelph is the agrifood capital of Ontario and a true environmental leader. The city of Guelph shares a unique relationship with the agriculture sector. This was demonstrated earlier this week, when Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Minister Leona Dombrowsky visited my riding to announce a new 10-year research and education partnership with the University of Guelph. This announcement allocates \$300 million over the next five years to continue the type of top-notch agrifood research that resulted in the omega-3 egg.

This funding adds to the \$56 million in one-time funding that was announced in the 2008 provincial budget. In addition to the traditional areas, the new agreement will focus on commercialization of research and new uses for agricultural products.

U of G's BioCar project, to which the province contributed \$17.9 million, and the city's innovative com-

munity energy plan will surely cement Guelph's future as a leader in biotechnology and environmental sustainability.

### HAMILTON ECONOMIC SUMMIT

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** This morning, I had the honour of attending the first-ever Hamilton economic summit, which was held at the Ancaster Old Mill. Over 120 community leaders have gathered to work together on the economic vision and future prosperity of Hamilton. I am so proud to be part of a community that takes such a proactive approach to its economic goals and works together to achieve those goals.

Hamilton is a major transportation hub, with the third-busiest port on the Great Lakes, the number one cargo airport in Canada, and a road and rail infrastructure that reaches 120 million customers within one day's truck travel. We are also a world leader in health care, with top-quality research and innovation, as well as having first-class educational institutions like Mohawk College and McMaster University.

I would like to congratulate the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, and I would like to applaud all the attendees at today's summit for their dedication to achieve their vision of making Hamilton the best city in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities. It is innovative and resourceful initiatives such as this that will keep this province strong and successful.

### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 35, An Act to authorize the Minister of Finance to make payments to eligible recipients out of money appropriated by the Legislature and to amend the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, 2004, the Ministry of Treasury and Economics Act and the Treasury Board Act, 1991 / *Projet de loi 35, Loi autorisant le ministre des Finances à faire des versements aux bénéficiaires admissibles sur les crédits affectés par la Législature et modifiant la Loi de 2004 sur la transparence et la responsabilité financières, la Loi sur le ministère du Trésor et de l'Économie et la Loi de 1991 sur le Conseil du Trésor.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Shall the report be received and adopted?

All those in favour will 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 1346 to 1351.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

|                      |                     |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Aggelonitis, Sophia  | Dombrowsky, Leona   | Naqvi, Yasir        |
| Albanese, Laura      | Duguid, Brad        | Pendergast, Leeanna |
| Balkissoon, Bas      | Flynn, Kevin Daniel | Phillips, Gerry     |
| Bartolucci, Rick     | Fonseca, Peter      | Qaadri, Shafiq      |
| Bentley, Christopher | Gerretsen, John     | Rinaldi, Lou        |
| Broten, Laurel C.    | Gravelle, Michael   | Ruprecht, Tony      |
| Bryant, Michael      | Jaczek, Helena      | Sandals, Liz        |
| Cansfield, Donna H.  | Kular, Kuldip       | Smith, Monique      |
| Caplan, David        | Kwinter, Monte      | Sousa, Charles      |
| Chan, Michael        | Levac, Dave         | Takhar, Harinder S. |
| Colle, Mike          | Mangat, Amrit       | Van Bommel, Maria   |
| Craitor, Kim         | Matthews, Deborah   | Watson, Jim         |
| Delaney, Bob         | Meilleur, Madeleine | Wilkinson, John     |
| Dhillon, Vic         | Milloy, John        | Wynne, Kathleen O.  |
| Dickson, Joe         | Moridi, Reza        | Zimmer, David       |

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** All those opposed?

#### Nays

|                    |                   |                     |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Arnott, Ted        | Hudak, Tim        | Prue, Michael       |
| Bailey, Robert     | Jones, Sylvia     | Savoline, Joyce     |
| Barrett, Toby      | Klees, Frank      | Scott, Laurie       |
| DiNovo, Cheri      | Kormos, Peter     | Shurman, Peter      |
| Elliott, Christine | MacLeod, Lisa     | Sterling, Norman W. |
| Gélinas, France    | Marchese, Rosario | Tabuns, Peter       |
| Hardeman, Ernie    | Miller, Norm      | Wilson, Jim         |
| Horwath, Andrea    | Munro, Julia      |                     |

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 45; the nays are 23.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I declare the report adopted.

*Report adopted.*

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to welcome a number of guests to the Legislature today.

On behalf of the member from Nickel Belt: Patrick Imbeau, Eric Blondin, Daniel Mayer, and Patrick Roome, in the west members' gallery. These are students with the francophone student association.

On behalf of the member from Northumberland–Quinte West, we'd like to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Aziz, in the west members' gallery.

On behalf of the member from Guelph, a number of guests today in the west members' gallery: Her Worship Karen Farbridge; June Hofland, Ian Findlay, Kathleen Farrelly, Vicki Beard, and Lise Burcher, councillors from the city of Guelph; Hans Loewig, Janet Laird, Peter Cartwright, and Barb Maly, senior staff from the city of Guelph; Lloyd Longfield, president of the Guelph Chamber of Commerce; Jasmine Urisk, president, JTU Consulting Inc.; Ken Hammill, Friends of Guelph; and Brenda Boisvert, Kate Sullivan, Tara Sprigg and Caroline Pinto from the city of Guelph.

We'll be having a class visiting in a few moments: the grade 5 students from the Scott Street school in my community of St. Thomas. I certainly want to recognize two friends of mine who are in that classroom, Brian Mason and Amy Nickson.

On behalf of pages who have guests visiting us today: in the east members' gallery, page Dario Toman—his sister Maya and his mother Alexandra Gilisic. On behalf of page Cali Van Bommel, in the Speaker's gallery, her mother Suzanne and her sister Maria. On behalf of page Thomas Parker, in the east public gallery, his father, Al Parker.

As well, visiting the Legislature today is former member Don Cousens, member from York Centre in the 32nd and 33rd Parliaments and from Markham in the 34th and 35th Parliaments.

I have some housekeeping to do on the previous report that we just passed.

Pursuant to the standing order of the House dated April 22, 2008, Bill 35 is now ordered for third reading.

## MOTIONS

### COMMITTEE SITTINGS

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** Mr. Speaker, I'm seeking unanimous consent for debate on government notice of motion number 81 to be limited to one hour, with 20 minutes being allotted to each of the recognized parties. At the end of the debate, the Speaker shall put the question without any further debate or amendment.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The government House leader seeks unanimous consent. Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I move that the December 11, 2007, order of the House establishing the committee schedule for the 39th Parliament be rescinded and substituted by the following:

The Standing Committee on Justice Policy may meet on Thursday mornings to 10:45 a.m. and Thursday afternoons following routine proceedings.

The Standing Committee on Social Policy may meet on Monday and Tuesday afternoons following routine proceedings.

The Standing Committee on General Government may meet on Monday and Wednesday afternoons following routine proceedings.

The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs may meet on Thursday mornings to 10:45 a.m. and Thursday afternoons following routine proceedings.

The Standing Committee on Estimates may meet on Tuesday mornings to 10:45 a.m. and Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons following routine proceedings.

The Standing Committee on Government Agencies may meet on Tuesday mornings to 10:45 a.m.

The Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly may meet on Wednesday afternoons to routine proceedings.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts may meet on Wednesday mornings to 10:45 a.m. and Wednesday afternoons to routine proceedings.

The Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills may meet on Wednesday mornings to 10:45 a.m.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Bryant has moved government notice of motion number 81. Mr. Bryant.

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I'm not going to take the full 20 minutes. I'm just going to say that this is a debate about the schedule for committee meetings, which ordinarily is a matter of fine-tuning adjustments. This is not. This follows from the reforms that are being proposed and will be tested and reviewed over the course of the summer by a standing committee. As I know members know, right now, standing committees meet during debates, for example, between after question period through to the end—5:45, 6 o'clock.

Because the House will also be debating matters in the mornings, this means that committees will be able to meet in the mornings during those times as well. Obviously, committees won't be meeting during question—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** The member will have an opportunity to speak for 20 minutes on this if he wishes.

The committees, obviously, will not be taking place during question period or during routine proceedings.

If there be co-operation with these committee meeting hearings or the testing of these parliamentary reforms, it is a great credit to all members of this Legislature.

**1400**

I do thank the House leaders for our being able to accommodate some discussion around this particular matter. I know it was very important to the opposition and the third party, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this matter.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** We intend to be brief in our response, but I'm going to be joined by Mr. Hudak and Mrs. Munro, who are also Chairs of standing committees of this Legislature.

I am the Chair of the public accounts committee—

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** And a good one.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** "And a good one," my colleague from across says.

Part of the problem with placing question period at the time of day that has been chosen is that it splits up the day into unmanageable time frames. There's too little at the front—in other words, from 9 o'clock to 10:45—and the rest of the days are sort of chopped up into little pieces. Those committees, like the public accounts committee, which have hearings with people who are very, very busy—the public accounts committee traditionally asks the deputy minister of a ministry to come forward to our committee and they normally comply, because of the importance of the auditor's report and the response to that report and the questioning of the committee.

The practice of my committee now is to meet on Thursday mornings, from 9 a.m. to as late as 1 p.m., before our proceedings here start under the present struc-

ture of this place. Under the calendar that is in this motion for my committee, we have the option of sitting from 9 in the morning to 10:45, which is an hour and 45 minutes. That is not long enough to carry on our deliberations, from front to back. Then we are given the option of sitting from 12 noon to 3 p.m., before routine proceedings start on Wednesday afternoon. The problem with that time frame is that it may be too short to deal with the witnesses that we deal with on a normal matter that we are concerned with.

We also did not have the opportunity to meet with the other committee chairs, nor did the subcommittees have an opportunity to have their say, let alone the committee members, in terms of the flexibility of where our time slot was going to be in this calendar. Our committee did discuss this this morning and we have come to an interim arrangement on this, but we don't know yet how it's going to work, because we don't know whether we're going to have enough time in the afternoon to deal with witnesses. The problem with it is, if we bumped up to 3 o'clock in the afternoon when routine proceedings start on Wednesday afternoons, we would then have to ask the witnesses to sit idly by for another hour, hour and a half while routine proceedings went on in the House. The people that we're asking to come in are not only deputy ministers; they often show up with 20 staff. We feel we shouldn't be taking up their time and having them sit idly by while we're back in the Legislature. So the real crux of the problem is having question period where it is—and that.

Having accepted that, we're going to try with this particular schedule. But I do note that the government House leader has said that he will be open to changes. I hope he will also be open to changes with regard to the placing of question period in the future.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I will just take a few moments to add a few comments on this change that is being contemplated here today.

As the Chair of government agencies, I find myself and the committee in a rather strange situation, in the fact that what's been proposed here is one hour and 45 minutes. As members will know, one of the major functions of the committee is of course to have an opportunity to meet intended appointees. Each of those people is provided with up to 30 minutes to be able to make a presentation to the committee, as well as to have members of the committee provide questions and comments. So when I saw this, I looked at the fact that this obviously presents some significant logistical problems for people. We find it's often difficult for people in terms of their own scheduling to be able to be here precisely at 9 o'clock, because we are empowered to meet as early as 9 should the number of intended appointees demand that. So I, like the previous speaker, have not had the opportunity to either have a subcommittee meeting on how the committee wishes to proceed or, obviously, to speak to members of the committee on this issue.

The haste with which this process has come upon us has left committee members, and committee Chairs, ob-



viously, with some unanswered questions. Certainly, just the issue of scheduling is one that I think is most important for us to be able to do the job that we are empowered to do and which we have an obligation to this House to do in a responsible and accountable way.

Having said that, I would say that it's important to revisit some of the logistics that we have to deal with in this proposed regime.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I have the honour of serving the Legislature as the Chair of estimates. The Speaker well knows that estimates is a very detailed, thoughtful and thorough review of a given ministry's spending for the upcoming year. As such, typically and appropriately, the committee not only has the minister before it, but also the deputy minister, assistant deputy ministers and directors—and appropriately so. We're talking about hundreds of millions or even billions of dollars to be allocated for various programs. Obviously, they deserve due scrutiny by members of all three parties.

Under the standing order changes before the House today in this motion, the estimates committee would move from its usual block of approximately 3:30 till 6 p.m. every Tuesday and Wednesday, predictably, to a new session that would see us from 9 to 10:45 and then, after routine proceedings that day, to resume until 5:45, and then I think similarly on Wednesday, an uncertain start till 5:45.

This means the deputy minister, assistant deputy ministers, directors, let alone the minister and his or her entourage, would troop over to Queen's Park, answer questions for about an hour and 45 minutes, troop back, and then troop back to here for the afternoon session, which is a tremendous waste of the considerable resources the committee has available to them. Certainly, I know that the civil servants who appear before committee, which we appreciate, and answer questions would not like to be going back and forth, nor does it serve members who are trying to organize the rest of their day around meetings, interactions with stakeholders and debates.

The reality here is that if we had a fixed question period at 1 p.m., as the official opposition has called for, you could do a solid block of estimates in the morning and get it done with for the day, or a solid block after question period in the afternoon, and save the chaos that's going to ensue.

I think, sadly, the House leader's goal with this was to put question period and private members' public business at a time of day to reduce their relevance in the Legislature, and then he started to try to chockablock fit in committees wherever he could. The problem is that the resulting chaos would make Salvador Dali look positively structured.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Let's put this into some context. We know now that, as a result of the time allocation motion, the motion that will significantly alter the standing orders is entirely within the control of the government. It will decide when it's called again, and that means that it will decide when it becomes implemented.

We know that that motion requires the House to adopt the new schedule on the Monday following the passage of that motion. That means that if the motion is called today, Monday will become the effective date for the new daily and weekly schedule.

**1410**

Look, we see the majority here, and we've heard their resistance to our proposition around a 1 o'clock question period. Quite frankly, the disagreement around the standing order motion has been narrowed down to that very specific issue about the timing of question period. However, we understand that the government can and will pass that motion.

We received a draft of this motion that we're dealing with now, late on Tuesday. It was a draft and, quite frankly, it hadn't become an order on the order paper yet. I appreciate the advance notice, if you will. It was identified as option number 12 on the copy that I got. That implies that there were at least 11 others and maybe more, if there indeed were options 13, 14, 15 and 16. New Democrats took this position, and that is that we understand that the standing orders are going to change about the daily schedule. We understand that—9 o'clock, you bet your boots we'll be here with bells on. Count on that.

I tell you, we put to the government that it might want to delay calling the motion to revamp the standing orders for a week, so that we could spend this coming week talking about ways of accommodating committees. Committees aren't about us; they're about the public. They are about people from across Ontario and beyond, who give of their time and expertise and come to Queen's Park to try to make the process and the end result a little better.

It's not just the committees. There is a whole staff here at Queen's Park whose workday is going to be significantly altered. They know that it's coming, but my concern is that it doesn't appear that the backroom people who have been proposing these changes have thought very much about those folks. We have a library staff who show up very early in the morning—at what time, 5:30?—to cull newspaper items that are of relevance to members, their staff and others here at Queen's Park. They already start at 5:30 in the morning, and even at that, have a hard time getting this material out by 9.

Now, ministers have got staff coming out of their proverbial yingyangs that cull newspapers—Mr. Kwinter is smiling because he knows this is the case—that develop these same clippings for cabinet ministers. Again, I don't begrudge a cabinet minister that material. It's important that a cabinet minister be abreast of things that are in the news.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Well, it is. It's a very responsible job. It's important that they be abreast of things that have occurred not just provincially but nationally and internationally, and aware of how they're impacting on people. That's why they get these materials.

I'm concerned about the pressure that this puts on the library staff. I'm concerned about what kind of pressure

this puts on the Legislative Assembly broadcast people. We are effectively extending their day, too. I've got no quarrel with that, but then you'd better count on adding staffing to the legislative broadcast staff.

I don't know what concern there has been about the pages and their days, and how their days are going to be structured to accommodate. These young people are the jewels of this Parliament, I tell you. Well, they are. But I'm concerned that there's been little thought about how they're going to be accommodated, in terms of their classroom obligations and their duties in the House that are going to start at 9 o'clock and go through to 6.

We were eager—both the Conservatives and New Democrats—to sit down and try to hammer out a committee schedule that would accommodate folks who come to Queen's Park as residents of Ontario, as concerned citizens, as engaged citizens to participate in, I put to you, the most important part of the parliamentary process in the broadest sense.

I regret that the government hasn't wanted to sit down and talk about the at least 11 other options, or even provide us with them. And I regret that there is an apparent inability on the part of the government, perhaps a pathological inability, to work with the opposition parties, when the opposition parties have made it clear that, having read the writing on the wall, they know what the reality is going to be and now want to address and assist in accommodating as many people as possible. The government hasn't seen itself able to engage in those kinds of discussions.

There was, I tell you, a paucity of discussion around the standing orders motion itself. If that is considered by some on the government side as negotiation, then I empathize with any number of bodies across the province with whom this government purports to be negotiating. It also reveals very clearly why the government has been so distinctly unsuccessful at resolving any number of disputes that they purport to address by way of negotiation.

The Leader of the Opposition was going to refer to this as a dog's breakfast. I said, "Nuts, Bob, I was going to use that line." But then I realized that in fact this is a far different product of a dog's alimentary canal.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** We are not supporting this proposal. This is knee-jerk. It's not just not well thought out; it's thoughtless. It fails to address the issue. One wonders: Could this government organize a drunk-up in a brewery? They seem to have failed to put together even some of the most simple pieces, and we're talking about a preschooler's puzzle. We're not talking about one of those great, big things that fill the kitchen table; we're talking about the one with five blocks that you've got to fit together, maybe a four-piece puzzle with Snoopy on it. But the government fails to put together even some of the most basic pieces.

This is a government that is not serving the public well. They're serving themselves well, or they think they are. Let's make no mistake about this: Governments don't do these sorts of things to benefit the opposition; governments do these things to benefit themselves. I

understand that, Mr. Hudak understands that, Mr. Prue understands that and Ms. Gélinas understands it. I suspect that Angelo Kontos, sitting up in the gallery with his students from Rick Hansen Secondary School, understands it too, because he has been a Queen's Park observer since he was a journalist as a student at York University.

We reject this proposal, because you could have done better, friends. You could have done much better, and you simply chose not to. I find that truly regrettable. You could have deferred implementation of the rules by not calling the motion, now time allocated for a week, so that we could spend a week talking about these things and trying to work out the wrinkles—and there are profound wrinkles in this proposal.

One becomes cynical, I suppose, and even suspicious about whether this government is not only trying to marginalize and diminish the chamber, but whether it's also trying to marginalize and diminish public hearings. That is something about which this government should have no pride whatsoever.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Bryant has moved government notice of motion number 81. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will 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 1420 to 1425.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** All those in favour will rise one at a time to be recorded by the Clerk.

#### **Ayes**

|                      |                     |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Aggelonitis, Sophia  | Dickson, Joe        | Naqvi, Yasir        |
| Albanese, Laura      | Dombrowsky, Leona   | Pendergast, Leeanna |
| Arthurs, Wayne       | Duguid, Brad        | Phillips, Gerry     |
| Balkissoon, Bas      | Flynn, Kevin Daniel | Qaadri, Shafiq      |
| Bartolucci, Rick     | Fonseca, Peter      | Rinaldi, Lou        |
| Bentley, Christopher | Gerretsen, John     | Ruprecht, Tony      |
| Best, Margaret       | Gravelle, Michael   | Sandals, Liz        |
| Bradley, James J.    | Jaczek, Helena      | Sergio, Mario       |
| Brotten, Laurel C.   | Kular, Kuldeep      | Smith, Monique      |
| Bryant, Michael      | Kwinter, Monte      | Sousa, Charles      |
| Cansfield, Donna H.  | Leal, Jeff          | Takhar, Harinder S. |
| Caplan, David        | Levac, Dave         | Van Bommel, Maria   |
| Carroll, Aileen      | Mangat, Amrit       | Watson, Jim         |
| Chan, Michael        | Matthews, Deborah   | Wilkinson, John     |
| Colle, Mike          | McGuinty, Dalton    | Wynne, Kathleen O.  |
| Craitor, Kim         | Meilleur, Madeleine | Zimmer, David       |
| Delaney, Bob         | Milloy, John        |                     |
| Dhillon, Vic         | Moridi, Reza        |                     |

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** All those opposed?

#### **Nays**

|                    |                   |                     |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Arnott, Ted        | Horwath, Andrea   | Munro, Julia        |
| Bailey, Robert     | Hudak, Tim        | Prue, Michael       |
| Barrett, Toby      | Jones, Sylvia     | Runciman, Robert W. |
| DiNovo, Cheri      | Klees, Frank      | Savoline, Joyce     |
| Elliott, Christine | Kormos, Peter     | Scott, Laurie       |
| Gélinas, France    | MacLeod, Lisa     | Shurman, Peter      |
| Hampton, Howard    | Marchese, Rosario | Tabuns, Peter       |
| Hardeman, Ernie    | Miller, Norm      | Wilson, Jim         |

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 52; the nays are 24.

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

*Agreed to.*

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On behalf of the member for Mississauga–Streetsville, I just want to take this opportunity to introduce a class that has arrived, the grades 11 and 12 from Rick Hansen Secondary School in Mississauga, and now my class has arrived, the grade 5 students from Scott Street Public School in the great community of St. Thomas. Welcome, guys.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** My question is for the Premier. Once again today, it has to do with the impending attainment of have-not status for the province, an embarrassing moment in this great province's history. Yesterday, when the Premier of Newfoundland, Danny Williams, was asked about Ontario's economic plight, he said Newfoundland is prepared "to help our weaker sisters." That's where you and your taxing, spending and regulatory policies have brought this great province. We now have the Newfoundland Premier describing Ontario as a weaker sister. What's next, Ontario jokes? Are you proud of this legacy?

1430

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I know Danny Williams. Danny Williams is a friend of mine—at least I thought he was. He's got a wonderful sense of humour, but the leader of the official opposition raises an important matter.

He's going to work as hard as he can now to lay squarely at my feet responsibility for everything that is happening to our economy. To a certain extent, that's his job, but I just don't think Ontarians see our world that way. I think they understand the impact of the price of oil. I think they understand the impact of the high loonie. I think they understand the impact of a sluggish US economy on our economy; they are our single largest trading partner by far.

I think, as well, they understand that we've got a great plan in place, that we will continue to work as hard as we can with Ontarians to deliver on that plan and turn this economy around so it grows even stronger.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** The official opposition recognizes that there are external factors impacting the North American economy, but we'd like to see the Premier accept any degree of responsibility for the state of the economy in this province.

When you compare it with other jurisdictions within this country and North America, it's a pretty sad situation. The Premier continuously blames others for the

state of the economy and washes his hands of any responsibility. He does this even in the face of advice from Dr. Roger Martin, the Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity. He has advised you that this province lags behind the US states most similar to Ontario. We rank 14th out of 16 in peer jurisdictions in per capita growth.

They've told you that high business taxes hurt competitiveness, yet you apparently think you're right, Dr. Martin is wrong, and you ignore his critically important advice. Why are you continuing to do that?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** There is no shortage of good advice when it comes to these kinds of issues, and all of it is well received. At the end of the day, we've got to make a call, though, on this side of the House to put forward a plan that we think is in keeping with both our heritage, values and our aspirations on behalf of Ontarians.

That's what our five-point plan is all about. It does include cuts to business taxes. We have eliminated capital taxes for manufacturers and others in the resource-based sectors. We've reduced it by 21% for everybody else. We're cutting business education taxes. We've matched the special capital cost allowance treatment that was put in place by the federal government. But we can't just have a one-point plan. Our economy is more complex than just that at the beginning of the 21st century.

That's why we are also investing heavily in the skills and education of our people. That's why we're investing heavily in innovation and infrastructure and in strategic partnerships with people in the business community. That makes a comprehensive, intelligent plan.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** I don't think Dr. Martin would consider his critically important advice as being well received when it's continuously ignored by the government.

I think the Premier is living in a state of denial. He can't or won't see what is happening to the economy around him: 200,000 manufacturing jobs lost since 2004, 5,000 more just last month, and there are more to come. Many economists believe the province is currently in recession. We're on the verge of becoming a have-not province, a welfare province, a weak sister in Confederation.

Premier, do you honestly believe that your high taxing, high spending and excessive regulation have nothing to do with the state of our economy, that it's only external factors, someone else's fault? Is that the state of the denial you're living in, or do you accept any degree of responsibility whatsoever?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** If there's any denial going on around here, it's a denial on the part of the Conservative Party that there is a direct relationship between the \$5 billion they would have us cut by way of tax cuts and the resulting deterioration in public services, whether it's health care or education, or supports for our most vulnerable.

Part of our five-point plan is to invest heavily in infrastructure. One of the things we announced earlier today, together with the federal government, is very important

when it comes to enhancing our competitiveness. We have just announced that we're going to invest, together with the federal government, in a new roadway leading to the Windsor border crossing. It's a \$1.6-billion investment by 2011. It's the busiest border crossing in North America. One in four trucks travel between Canada and the US. It carries \$120 billion annually. That's just one part of an extensive plan to make the kinds of investments that will enhance our productivity.

#### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier, around Ontario's descent into have-not status. Premier, under your leadership, Ontario has gone from the economic powerhouse of Confederation to the poor cousin of Canada. And how did we earn this dubious distinction? Well, you increased taxes to now the highest on business investment in all of North America. You chased some 200,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs out of our province. You have brought us to be dead last in private sector job growth in all of Canada. Premier, like sad bookends at either side of TD's report, 900 jobs lost at Oshawa earlier in the week, and today we learned 320 families at Quebecor in Etobicoke have now lost their jobs. What did you do to try to save the jobs at Quebecor in Etobicoke?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** It is true that we have lost some jobs, particularly in the manufacturing sector, and we will likely lose more. If there were something that I could do to prevent that from happening, believe me, I would have done it.

But overall, we are ahead by 450,000 net new jobs in the course of the past four and a half years. The member opposite says we have the highest taxes in North America, and that's just not true. Our corporate taxes are lower than all US states.

My colleague may want to pay attention to a recent report put out the Brookings Institute in Washington, DC, which says that the most important regional economy in North America is the Great Lakes state economy. There are two provinces and 12 states, and together we constitute the second-largest economy in the world. First there's the US, then there's that Great Lakes economy, then there's Japan, then there's China and then there's India. That is why we've been so careful to ensure that our corporate taxes are in fact lower than our real competitors which are south of the border, and they are.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The Premier says "some jobs." Premier, I remind you: 200,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs have fled the province of Ontario in the last few years alone thanks to your tax-and-spend policies.

Let me illustrate what Dalton McGuinty's have-not Ontario looks like. For families in Listowel, Ontario, a small community of several thousand people, they learned this week that Campbell Soup is letting go of 500 workers, the number one employer in that community. In Leamington, Ontario, Plastech is laying off some 150, one of the top employers in that community. And remember that last week, Dell laid off some 1,100 in your

former hometown of Ottawa. I ask the Premier: How many more Dells, how many more Campbell Soups and how many more Plastechs are there going to be before you wake up and reverse course and try to stimulate job creation in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** There are in fact 455,000 more jobs today than there were in 2003. One third of all national job growth has come from Ontario in the last four years. Our unemployment rate is at 6.4%, and when we first formed the government it was at 7%.

One of the challenges we have is that there are actually 100,000 jobs available today in Ontario, and many of those demand a high level of skill. We addressed that very specifically in our recent budget. There's a \$1.5-billion investment in the skills and education of our people, including 20,000 new, first of their kind, long-term training opportunities to give people who have lost their jobs up to two years' training. We can cover up to \$28,000 or more in costs so the people can get back on their feet and not just take the first available job but rather the job that they've been looking to get.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, the problem is, the people the Premier talks about are going to get trained and take up jobs in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, or now we hear Danny Williams's Newfoundland.

Premier, let me tell you what is happening in the province of Ontario. We're last in growth in all of Canada. The only growth area seems to be jobs in your office where you now have 72 Liberal staffers working for you, while families in Listowel, in Oshawa and in Ottawa are seeing layoffs.

**1440**

Premier, I ask you to speak to the families in Niagara who worked in CanGro, the families in Etobicoke who worked at Quebecor, the families in Listowel who worked at Campbell Soup, the families in Leamington who worked at Plastech, in Oshawa at GM, in Ottawa at Dell—all in crisis. They want to know how they're going to survive, how they're going to feed their families, how they're going to pay their mortgages when they are seeing more and more job losses in Dalton McGuinty's have-not Ontario.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We are eager to work with any community that has been affected by our economic downturn, to work with any worker who's lost his or her job, and do what we can to help any family that's struggling in the face of a personal economic challenge.

But we shouldn't lose sight of the big picture. The economy continues to grow. There are 455,000 net new jobs created since October 2003. In January, February and March of this year, we are ahead: net gains of 57,300 more jobs in the first three months. The private sector created 97% of those jobs. This economy continues to grow.

#### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** To the Premier: Yesterday's TD Economics report confirmed that Ontario's economy

is in serious decline, with the loss of over 200,000 good manufacturing jobs, and that relative to the rest of Canada, Ontario is becoming a have-not province. The Premier immediately blamed Ottawa, the other provinces, and the equalization formula for Ontario's economic decline.

My question is this: How in heaven's name does the equalization formula have anything to do with the loss of 200,000 good manufacturing jobs in Ontario and Ontario's economic decline under the McGuinty government?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** The point that I made yesterday and will continue to make for quite some time is that there are a number of issues over which we have little control—I know the member opposite understands this—and that is the price of oil, the value of the loonie, and the state of the US economy. But there is another area over which I refuse to relinquish complete control, and that is how much money we turn over to the federal government. The first three act as a brake on our economic growth, but we can't tolerate the fourth.

What I'm saying is, we could do more to accelerate growth in this economy, we could move faster when it comes to investing in infrastructure, investing in our people and providing supports for our vulnerable so that they grow stronger, we could even consider the possibility of additional tax cuts for our businesses, but we can't do that if we continue to turn \$20 billion over to the federal government. That's the point I'm making, and I think Ontarians agree with me on that score.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Premier, the fact is that the McGuinty government doesn't turn over one red cent to Ottawa. Ottawa simply has the same tax rate in Ontario that it has in Manitoba and Nova Scotia.

Just a year ago you were quite happy with the equalization formula. Dalton McGuinty on March 20, 2007:

"We have made three important steps forward with yesterday's federal budget. First ... we are actually going to receive, as Ontarians, the same amount of money for our education and social services as Canadians do in the other provinces and territories. Secondly ... the Canada-Ontario agreement, will now be well and truly honoured by Prime Minister Harper. Finally, the equalization formula has now been amended to provide that no receiving province can have a fiscal capacity greater than ours. That is only fair."

Premier, how could the equalization formula be something you were boasting about a year ago, and now suddenly it's to blame for Ontario's economic decline?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** You know, I would refer my colleague to a website which we've had up for some time now on behalf of Ontarians, fairness.ca. It contains a number of our responses to the ongoing, never-ending changes made to equalization. One of them reads as follows, and it's there today:

"Ontario continues to believe that the equalization program has grown too large, is not contributing to Canada's long-term prosperity, and that the formulas used to

calculate payments are not fair to Canadians living in Ontario."

We've made our case clear for a long time. When these most recent changes were being contemplated, I went to, I think, pretty well every other provincial capital. I met with my counterparts and I tried to do editorial board meetings with all the major dailies in those capitals to put forward the Ontario position. We remain unhappy with the results of that, and now those chickens are coming home to roost.

We need to engage, together, in an important conversation with the federal government. They're taking too much money from us.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I think the truth is something rather like this: A year ago, Dalton McGuinty was boasting about the equalization formula, saying that all was fair and that great strides forward had been made. But now that Ontario is in economic decline, now that 200,000 good manufacturing jobs are going out the door—and more are going out the door every day—the McGuinty government is looking for someone to blame.

I say again, the federal government doesn't have control over industrial hydro rates in Ontario. The federal government can't implement a manufacturing investment tax credit to keep manufacturing in Ontario. The federal government can't put in place a 50% Buy Ontario strategy for Ontario. So, Premier, why do you continue to blame someone else for the McGuinty government's failure to take the appropriate action to retain good jobs in Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Just a couple of specific examples of unfairness: One is employment insurance. It turns out that if you lose your job in Ontario, you stand to get about \$4,000 less by way of employment insurance premium payments here than you would in any other province. We think that's unfair. Beyond that, we receive about \$800 million less per annum when it comes to our health care payments that come from the federal government. Again, that is substantially less on a per capita basis than you would receive in any other province. We've got a problem with that.

We can and should debate the best way to address the issues inside the province. But I think it's important for us to come together in terms of this issue as to whether or not we can afford, especially at this point in our history, to send \$20 billion to the federal government. I submit we can't afford that.

#### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** To the Premier: In fact, Premier, your government doesn't send any money to the federal government. That is a neat little story you've cooked up. Again, Premier, it was you who a year ago said, "For the first time in a long time, we are actually going to receive, as Ontarians, the same amount of money for our education and social services as Canadians do in the other provinces and territories" from the federal government.

How could the Premier say last year that everything's fair and wonderful, that we're getting the right amount of money for health care and education from the federal government, and now that Ontario is in economic decline, suddenly up pops the Premier saying, "Oh, overnight it became unfair." How could you boast about it being fair last year, Premier, but now that there's bad news to take the blame for, suddenly it's unfair once again?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think this is a really important issue. The leader of the NDP does not seem to understand something which is really important to Ontarians. I'll just quote from the TD report:

"Ontario's projected move into equalization-recipient—at least temporarily—would suggest to many Canadians that the province is no longer a net contributor to federal coffers. However, this is not the case." In 2005, "Ontario residents contributed a hefty \$21 billion more to federal coffers than what was returned to the province in federal spending."

It's really important for all Ontarians, but I would argue especially for the leader of the New Democratic Party, to understand that our province, through our citizens, sends \$21 billion more to the federal government than we get back in return. That's important. It matters. It interferes with our capacity to make the kinds of investments that we might debate in this House, the kinds of investments that will help—

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

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** It never ceases to amaze me that a year ago, when the economy was doing well, the Premier was happy with equalization and he was happy with the federal budget. Now that things aren't so rosy, what does he do? He reaches in the cupboard again and says, "Oh, it's all the fault of someone else."

Premier, here is the reality: Manufacturing jobs are leaving Ontario faster than you can say, "Jim Flaherty." That's what's really happening: 1,000 jobs in Oshawa, 500 jobs in Listowel yesterday, and now 320 working families out of work in the west end of Toronto as a result of Quebecor's announcement.

I say again, Premier, what do the other provinces and the federal government have to do with the fact that your government hasn't acted to sustain and retain good manufacturing jobs in Ontario?

1450

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, this is a very important debate because I think Ontarians are in fact coming together on this issue. There may be a few stragglers, a few laggards, a few who aren't prepared to embrace this debate in an effective way. We are doing everything we can, as a province and as a government, to help grow this economy, given the circumstances that we find ourselves in.

But there is an additional brake that is being applied to our progress, and that comes from the fact that, on an annual basis, Ontarians send over \$20 billion to the federal government. I think that's a real issue. I believe

that for Ontarians it's a real issue. I think we need to find a way to sit down with the federal government and find some way for us to retain more of that money so we can make the kinds of investments that we all want to make to further enhance our competitiveness and productivity.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** What a revelation: People in Newfoundland pay taxes to the federal government; people in the Northwest Territories pay taxes to the federal government. Your brother, sitting in Ottawa as a member of Parliament, then sits down and decides how that money gets spent. Yes, when they buy frigates for the navy, it won't be money spent in Ontario. When they buy tanks for the army, it won't be money spent in Ontario. But the fact of the matter is, we're talking about the disappearance of good jobs; we're talking about the loss of economic opportunity in communities across Ontario. There is nothing that British Columbia can do for Ontario in that respect. That responsibility rests with the McGuinty government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Question?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** When are we going to see a strategy that helps to sustain and retain jobs in Ontario, rather than looking for someone else—

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

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to remind my honourable colleague of our five-point plan. We are cutting business taxes, we are investing heavily in innovation, we're investing heavily in infrastructure, we are investing heavily in strategic partnerships with business, and we are investing heavily in the skills and education of our people. I think that's a very solid five-point plan, but we could move even further, we could go even faster, if we could retain just a little bit more of the wealth that we generate here in the province of Ontario. I think that's an important issue, and I call upon my colleagues in both parties opposite to join our government and the people of Ontario as we turn to the federal government and say we'd like to hang on to a bit more of our own wealth. We could especially use it at this point in time to make the kinds of investments that enhance our competitiveness, enhance our productivity and help us emerge from this economic period of challenge even stronger than ever.

## ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My question is for the Minister of Research and Innovation, who defines his responsibilities on his website as a "commitment to innovation as the driver of growth across all sectors of the economy ... better jobs for more people." I know the people of Listowel, and I know that they need the minister's help to support innovation and better jobs for more people in their community.

I'll ask the minister the same question he declined to answer yesterday. What will the Minister of Research and Innovation now do to help the 500 people losing their jobs in Listowel?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I'm glad for the question from my friend from the other half of Wellington county. Yesterday's question had to do with skills training, and I referred that, appropriately, to the minister. Your question today is more one of economics, and I want to share—

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** It's the same question.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** It was a different question, I say with all due respect to my heckler.

I would say to the member, though, that we have in our Next Generation of Jobs Fund some \$1.15 billion. That would be the fund that you voted against, but what we did on our side of the House was agree that we, as a government, can be a catalyst for economic growth.

I do want to say to all of my constituents in North Perth, and particular in Listowel, that I know how difficult this is. But they expect help and they expect hope and they expect a brighter future from their member. In working together with the Mayor Ed Hollinger and all the good councillors in North Perth on their economic development, we have had discussions about the fact that our government has the Next Generation of Jobs Fund, and when we add that to the skills training available through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities—

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

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I'm pleased that the minister saw fit to answer the very same question I asked him yesterday.

We should all understand the devastating impact of 500 good jobs disappearing in Listowel, a community of 6,500 souls. The problem with the minister's assurances is that you cannot train for jobs that don't exist or jobs that are going to other jurisdictions with lower tax rates on new investment.

Will the minister acknowledge that Roger Martin, of the Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity, is right that the government should lower corporate income tax rates to stimulate business investment and create jobs in Listowel and across the province of Ontario?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I say to Roger Martin, who is from Wallenstein, in Wellington county, as my friend knows, that the most important thing we have to say is that Listowel, North Perth and all our communities have to find their way in the 21st century. We are not a government that believes that somehow we should be embracing the 20th century. What people expect from their government is solutions that have to do with the future of their children and grandchildren.

What company can locate to Listowel, where we have a tremendously gifted workforce, hard-working people in the heart of rural Ontario? What companies can we attract to Listowel and North Perth to ensure there will be another two generations of economic prosperity? That is my focus as Minister of Research and Innovation, not only for North Perth, in my riding, but all the ridings, including your own riding, sir, and for all the members. What our ridings and our constituents want is the ability for us to translate the opportunities of the 21st century

and create wealth here in this province, just like they did in Listowel 48 years ago and like they will do yet again.

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Minister of Education, the government has quietly put out for bidding a research contract to collect ethnic and racial data on two million school-aged children. Quite frankly, I'm getting a little tired of this ministry and its tendency to test and grade the performance of students instead of actually doing something to solve problems. More data further stigmatizes diverse communities and does nothing to help struggling students now. When will you stop studying and actually do something?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I thank the member opposite for the question. The request for proposals that the Hamilton Spectator reported on today is part of a commitment to the Ontario Human Rights Commission that was made last year. It was part of a settlement that we reached—a memorandum of understanding. As part of that, we agreed to hire an independent researcher to look at how statistics are gathered in other jurisdictions, in order to support boards that are engaged in figuring out where the kids are and who the kids are that are struggling in their boards.

The Ministry of Education does not collect race-based statistics, but we did commit to the OHRC that we would work with them to provide some research on how best to frame that kind of statistical analysis.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** When it comes to the gaps in student achievement in Ontario, this is just another example of the McGuinty government's love affair with research and statistics. The problem is not out there; the problem is here. The problem will not be solved by studying more, but by doing more. Why is it that the minister always finds money to study racialized communities but never finds money to actually help them?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It's true that we believe in evidence. That is true—absolutely.

The fact is that over the last four and a half years, we have put \$4 billion into education in this province. Remember, that is in the face of declining enrolment, by next year, of 90,000 students fewer than in 2003. The point is that we have student success teachers in our secondary schools, we have lower primary class sizes and we have kids who have literacy supports. Specifically, we are the government that has put funding into aboriginal education; the first government to actually put in place a funding line for aboriginal education. So we brook absolutely no criticism of our approach to helping kids at risk in this province.

1500

## RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** To the Minister of Research and Innovation: Minister, earlier this week you launched the Ontario innovation agenda to a packed crowd at the Uni-

versity of Ottawa. The Ontario innovation agenda provides a roadmap to ensure that our province has a winning economy in the 21st century. The agenda calls for better use of our existing strengths, identifies key opportunities for Ontario and outlines the kind of environment Ontario must create to drive innovation.

We are already seeing the effects of innovation efforts in Ottawa. The National Post reported this week that after years of challenge in Ottawa's technology sector, the community has now reached a record 82,000 employees. That record has prompted the Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation to launch a celebratory campaign called 82000reasons.com and tout its status as a leading centre for small business in the capital.

Can the minister please outline the Ontario innovation agenda and how it will create the next generation of jobs for Ontario?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to say to the member from Ottawa Centre and to all the members from the Ottawa area: Ottawa is back, bigger and stronger than ever before, and we applaud them for all of their efforts. Ottawa is one of those amazing communities where we have a tremendous wealth of talent.

I was particularly delighted to go to the University of Ottawa to launch Ontario's—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank particularly the University of Ottawa for being such a wonderful host for the launch of the Ontario innovation agenda. What I say to the people in Ottawa is that our strategy right now is helping to create wonderful jobs. We understand that with the tremendous research strength we have, we can extract that value and turn it into the jobs of the 21st century, into the new-economy jobs. We believe, particularly in Ottawa with its strength in ICT and environmental technologies, that they're in alignment with our agenda. I look forward to further announcements in Ottawa.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** We can all see Ontario's innovation agenda at work, whether it be at Plasco in Ottawa, where the Ministry of Research and Innovation invested \$4 million to build an innovation demonstration facility aimed at turning waste into energy, or at Verdant Power in Cornwall, where the government invested \$2.2 million to build an innovation demonstration facility aimed at generating electricity through underwater windmills. Our government recognizes that we can create Ontario's next generation of jobs by developing and inventing local solutions to global challenges.

I was dismayed to read in the Ottawa Citizen this morning that the member for Nepean–Carleton doesn't support the Ontario innovation agenda. This is the same Conservative Party that's calling for tax cuts in one breath and voting against a complete income exemption for new, emerging and innovative companies in the next. The member for Nepean–Carleton says the innovation agenda is “empty rhetoric” and that it doesn't do enough to preserve jobs in Ontario. Is this true?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I was actually quite surprised to read that as well from the member for Nepean–Carleton. I know that when we announced in the first place the Next Generation of Jobs Fund, which is important, Mr. Tory—the chap who actually doesn't have a seat here—said that this was a “flawed approach.”

Then I see my critic here, who sits in front of you in the House, and she said, when we made the announcement of Sanofi Pasteur's \$100-million global R&D centre in this province:

“I ... want to thank the representatives from Sanofi for investing in Ontario and being in the Legislature today. There's no question that not only do we agree it is vital that we be part of research and innovation technologies, but also that our motivated and talented people deserve a lot of credit from the province of Ontario. We're glad they are being recognized....”

But then I saw the member for Nepean–Carleton's “empty rhetoric that doesn't do enough to create jobs.” On this side of the House, we're quite consistent. We have a leader—

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

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING PRACTICES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Premier: Premier, we've raised concerns about Bill 35 and the voodoo accounting techniques that your finance minister wants to use to create a new Liberal slush fund. As you may know, the Auditor General recently wrote to the finance committee and said the following:

“We believe that adherence to standards established by the CICA, the accounting profession's independent standard-setting body, provide both governments and auditors respectively with an objective and appropriate basis for the preparation and audit of financial statements and encourage comparability in financial reporting between jurisdictions.” He goes on to say that the two sections of Bill 35 “could be interpreted as setting accounting standards through legislation as opposed to following generally accepted” accounting principles.

Premier, why did your Liberal members vote down any opportunity for the Auditor General to make his case at the finance committee this morning?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** What we're talking about is an effort on the part of our government to provide some additional support to our municipal partners, and we think this is the best way to do it.

There is an argument, as I understand it—I'm hardly an expert on this score, in the absence of the Minister of Finance—over whether we're in breach of certain accounting principles. I want Ontarians to understand that our intention here is to give effect to a stronger partnership with our municipalities. What we're saying is that we've found a way to do that. We will continue to listen to the auditor and carefully consider his advice, but what we're talking about is finding a way to give more money to our municipal partners. That will end up



relieving tax pressures on municipal ratepayers. We think that's a good idea.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, the auditor, an independent officer of this Legislature, took the time to write to members of the finance committee, expressing his strong concerns with this legislation. He specifically asked for two sections of Bill 35 to be deleted. The auditor even offered to come before the committee to explain his concerns and answer our questions. Despite that, your Liberal members voted down any opportunity to hear from the Auditor General. In fact, your Liberal members of the committee voted against putting the words "municipality" and "infrastructure" in the bill.

Premier, given the Auditor General's concerns, and given the fact that the words "municipality" and "infrastructure" aren't even in the bill, why should we believe that this is anything except what my colleague from Beaches–East York said: the slush fund protection act?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. Jim Watson:** This party is not even in government, and yet they continue to attack the municipal sector, something they did for eight years when they were in government.

Let me quote Doug Reycraft, the president of AMO, on March 12, 2008: The proposed Investing in Ontario Act is "another significant step in the province's commitment to partnering with municipalities to help ease the infrastructure challenges they are facing."

This is yet another example of the McGuinty government's quest to improve relationships with the municipal sector and provide them with the necessary resources to ensure that the infrastructure on the ground is working and helping to build a stronger economy for the province of Ontario. The municipal sector is very appreciative of this. I wish the honourable member's party would get on board and stop attacking cities—

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

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Minister of Labour. In December, when I inquired about the Lori Dupont inquest jury recommendations and the need for legislation in Ontario to address the epidemic of workplace violence and harassment, the minister said that the recommends were "worth having a look at," and he would definitely review these recommendations and give them a good, thorough study. Now, five months later, my question is, what has been the outcome of the McGuinty government's review, and what are the timelines for introducing workplace violence legislation here in Ontario?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Let me begin by thanking the honourable member, not only for the question but for her good work in this area. Indeed, she has put forward a private member's bill as well, which we're obviously taking a look at to see what it offers.

I have had the opportunity to meet with the Ontario Nurses Association, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario and a number of other labour stakeholders across the province on this issue. We're continuing our discussions. This is a very complex issue, and there are a number of areas we are looking at. I thank her for her interest, and I thank her for her involvement to date. We take this matter very, very seriously.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This minister would know that every labour organization in the province also knows that the McGuinty Liberals are stalling and have no intention of outlawing harassment and violence in the workplace despite the deaths, despite the injuries, despite discussions with the ONA, SEIU, labour councils, OPSEU, CEP, the OFL—every single union in this province.

Seven provinces in Canada have actually already got health and safety legislation similar to Bill 95, which I introduced a year ago. Why does the McGuinty government continue to oppose having a law that ensures health care workers and others—indeed all workers—have the right to safe workplaces here in the province of Ontario?

**1510**

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** This government believes very, very strongly in doing all that we can to create safe and healthy workplaces across this province. That's why we've hired 200 additional occupational health and safety inspectors across this province. That's almost double the amount that we had when we came into office. These health and safety inspectors are going out—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

These health and safety inspectors are out and around the province, doing all that they can to try to make this province healthier and safer, and workplaces across this province healthier and safer.

Violence in the workplace is something this government does not tolerate. There's no place in this province for those kind of activities. We take it seriously. We continue to work with our stakeholders towards solutions that will help address this problem.

I thank the member for her question, and I thank her for her work in this area.

#### CORPORATE TAX

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** My question is for the Minister of Revenue. I meet regularly with business leaders in my riding, and many have told me that they would like to see a reduction in the amount of paperwork and costs associated with filing their taxes. They have made the point clearly that red tape costs them time and money—money that could be put to greater use building their businesses and creating jobs.

Minister, can you tell me what the McGuinty government is doing to make it easier for Ontario businesses to file their taxes?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I want to thank the member for Richmond Hill for his question. It's a timely question, as we are in tax season.

I'm pleased to advise all of our colleagues in the House that our government has been listening to Ontario businesses, and we're acting on their advice. The Ministry of Revenue is making it easier for Ontario businesses to file their taxes. Our government wants to help businesses do what they do best: create jobs and foster a strong economy. That's why the McGuinty government is working with the federal government and has recently implemented the corporate tax administration redesign initiative, or CTAR. This is a program that will have a tremendous impact on businesses of all sizes in the province.

With this initiative in place, Ontario businesses will have one authority to deal with in the administration of their corporate taxes. As of April 3 of this year, Ontario businesses now only have to deal with one auditor, one objection and appeal system and one single tax advisory framework for pre-2009 taxation years. This initial step will be followed by the implementation—

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

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Minister, I can appreciate that this program has been a huge undertaking within both your ministry and the CRA. What have you done to ensure that Ontario businesses are aware of the changes to filing their corporation tax? Also, what have you done to ensure that the transition to the CRA is a smooth one?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** As I was saying, this was an initial step that we took on April 3 of this year, and it will be followed by the implementation of a single integrated corporate tax return beginning next year. Beginning in January of 2009, Ontario businesses will benefit from the following: one single tax form, one single tax collector and a single set of income tax rules.

The harmonization of corporate tax administration with the CRA means that province's businesses will not only save time and effort; they will also save up to \$100 million in compliance costs. These changes will help businesses of all sizes free up resources that can be reinvested into growing their businesses and the Ontario economy.

Ontario businesses will further save \$90 million annually in reduced Ontario corporate income tax as the provincial corporate tax base becomes harmonized with the federal corporate tax base. We estimate that this streamlining will save Ontario businesses \$100 million to \$200 million each year—

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

#### NATIVE LAND DISPUTES

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services: On April 25, OPP Commissioner Fantino was clear in a news release concerning problems at Tyendinaga and Deseronto: "This violent criminal activity occurred outside of any legitimate protest and will not be tolerated." It was not tolerated because people were arrested. Back in

Caledonia, criminal activity was allowed to occur all weekend—not over a land claim, but in support of Tyendinaga. To my knowledge, no arrests were made on the weekend in Caledonia.

Minister, why does the OPP crack down at Deseronto but will not crack down at Caledonia?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of Community Safety.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** This gives me a great opportunity to congratulate Commissioner Fantino, the incident commanders, senior officers and front-line officers for the remarkable job they're doing.

We appreciate that the OPP is handling these situations in a very, very professional manner, understanding that, at the end of the day, public safety is paramount. Congratulations to Commissioner Fantino. Congratulations to the OPP.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** They did a good job at Deseronto.

Minister, on December 4 last year, I questioned you in the House and you said, "If the member is suggesting that the Solicitor General or any other minister or member should interfere with the operation of the OPP, he's wrong."

In this week's Dunnville Chronicle, there's an article written by Karen Best—she's a reporter known for her accuracy and thoroughness—and I quote the article, in part:

"Over the weekend, Six Nations band chief Bill Montour told Aboriginal Affairs Minister Michael Bryant that the blockade was not a criminal activity," and, further, "He gave credit to Bryant for talking to the Solicitor General, who reportedly told the OPP to stand down."

Speaker, we have a report before this House referring to the Solicitor General, who reportedly told the OPP to stand down. Minister, given your previous statements, are you prepared to resign?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** That allegation is ridiculous, and, no, I will not resign because I won't interfere with policing operations. We've learned from past history that you don't interfere as government with policing operations.

But what we can do, what we should do, what I'm asking him to do and that side to do, is to ensure that we ask the federal government to come to the table with our First Nations communities to settle these land claims. The OPP is doing a remarkable job at ensuring that public safety is the top priority, but there are two other partners here that have to come to the table. The federal government has a responsibility to come to the table to settle these land claims so that everyone can get along the way we want to get along in Ontario—

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

#### SCHOOL POOLS

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** My question is to the Minister of Health Promotion. At a time when we are desperately looking for ways to engage our youth and our

communities in physical activity, it is irrational to be closing pools. They were built and have already been paid for. To close them down is to mismanage, to waste, a public investment that took decades to build.

Will the minister tell the hundreds of young people, their parents and their grandparents who are at Queen's Park at this very moment that she will not allow their pools to close?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** To the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I have answered this question many times and I'm happy to answer it again. The answer is that we have been working with boards of education in this province since we came into office in 2003. There are 78 swimming pools in schools in the Toronto District School Board. Across the province there are a few more, for a total of about 106, but the fact is that the bulk of pools in schools in the province are in the city of Toronto. They are in the Toronto District School Board.

The reality is that pools in other parts of the province are the responsibility of municipalities. What we have done is we have actually provided money to schools, a program enhancement grant, \$5.4 million that the school board could apply to the pools, but the reality is that the board needs to have that conversation with the municipality. That has been my position since I was a trustee on this board.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I say to this minister: Your answer is irrational. Cities are broke. Boards of education are broke. The Toronto board has a deficit, a \$42-million deficit, for which they're looking at ways to cut programs. Your answer is irrational.

These pools have been paid for by the city of Toronto and they've been built. These pools are important community resources, bought and paid for by Torontonians. Will you step up and do your job, as you smile at this problem? Help to keep these pools open.

1520

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The Toronto District School Board has 31,000 fewer students than it did when we came into office. We have put \$360 million in new dollars into the Toronto District School Board every year, in spite of that kind of decline in enrolment.

The Toronto District School Board has 99 properties that are surplus, that are not being used as schools, that could be leveraged to receive capital dollars. There are many, many options. I have met with the board a number of times. I have said to the board that I will meet with David Crombie, because I think he wants to talk to everyone; I have not been called by him yet. I will meet with him, and I have invited the leadership of the folks who are going to be on the lawn this afternoon to come in and speak with me. I understand that this is a serious issue for the community. It's an issue that I have been aware of since I was a school trustee, but I got into provincial politics so that we could put resources back into the boards of education and restore publicly funded education in this province—

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

#### ROAD SAFETY

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** My question today is for the Minister of Transportation. Obviously we've got spring upon us now, with warmer weather and longer daylight hours, but it seems like, especially on weekends, there are more and more people driving out and about on our roads, whether it's a drive to the cottage, to the local park or just heading out to do some shopping. It looks like, for some Ontarians, though, driving speeds are up. All of us in this House are rightfully concerned about the safety of our friends, our families and loved ones on our roads. I'm sure all Ontarians share that feeling.

I'm hoping that the Minister of Transportation can please explain to this House and to all Ontarians why it is of the utmost importance to always be very cautious of the roads while driving, not only in poor weather but at all times.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** A very good question, and road safety of course is a priority for this government.

Specifically, Ontario has the toughest penalties in Canada for those who speed while driving, as well as those who are caught street racing, engaging in contests and engaging in stunt driving on our roads. Police can now suspend the licence and impound the vehicle of any individual caught stunt driving or driving 50 kilometres per hour over the speed limit. This means immediate safety for all road users.

We've also made changes which will allow for higher fines upon conviction. Now, instead of \$200, \$2,000 is the minimum; instead of \$1,000, \$10,000 is the maximum; and if caught again, the driver could end up with a 10-year licence suspension. Drivers need to understand the significant risks involved with speeding. I thank the member for raising this important issue as a reminder to all of us when we're on our highways to—

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

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I have a question for the same minister. I understand that the legislation and the supporting regulation which allowed for the enforcement of the higher fines and impoundment of vehicles took effect on September 30 last year. Almost daily, I see stories in the newspapers, hear about them on the radio and see them on TV, about another street racer being charged. I know that this government has worked hard to get the word out, but I'm hoping that the Minister of Transportation can please tell the House today how we have worked to inform the Ontario public of these new rules and how we continue to work to enforce safety on our roads for all our loved ones in Ontario.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Public awareness is always a key consideration when implementing any legislation. This government worked very hard along with the member for Newmarket–Aurora, who had a very great

interest in this issue. We continue to work hard to make sure the public is aware of the changes that are made.

Ways we have done this include installing new excessive speeding signs in key speeding hot spots throughout the province, running suspension and vehicle seizure messages on the changeable compass highway signs and distributing new public education cards and posters, because as pointed out by the member, there's been extensive media coverage.

While we're working very hard to get the message out to keep our roads safe, there's always more than can be done, which is why we continue to work with our safety partners and our police partners across Ontario to curb aggressive driving. Since September, there have been over 4,000 roadside licence suspensions and vehicle impoundments.

#### VEHICLE SAFETY

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Two weeks ago, 12 school buses were pulled off the road for safety reasons; they couldn't meet safety standards. Today, York Regional Police announced that in a two-day blitz this week, of 472 commercial vehicles they inspected, 137 were pulled off the road because they could not meet safety standards. That's one in three trucks on our highways today that represent a serious safety threat.

Could the minister tell us how it is that Ontario's roads and highways, which about five years ago were considered among the safest in North America, now have one in three commercial vehicles travelling them that are serious safety risk?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I want to say to the former minister that my note says the same his did five years ago: "Ontario's roads are among the safest in America," and indeed they are.

Coincidentally—and the former minister would have done this as well—I was at Downsview today, where the Ministry of Transportation has a very significant presence, and they were pulling trucks off the 401 and doing inspections. The inspections are extremely thorough. We have top-notch ministry officials who do that through the enforcement branch. They look at any and all problems that could possibly be encountered in these trucks. The member would agree with me, because I remember he had the same feeling when he was minister, that it is unacceptable for any commercial vehicle in this province to have defects that could place others, including the driver, in some real difficulties.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I want to commend the Ministry of Transportation personnel who do those inspections, as well as our front-line police officers.

Here's the problem: Today we have a situation, based on those inspections, which tells us that one out of every three commercial vehicles does not deserve to be on the road; they are a serious threat. My question to the minister is, knowing that information, what specific plans does he have to send a message to the industry that this is

unacceptable, whether it be vehicles that don't meet safety standards or whether it's unqualified drivers? What is he specifically going to do?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I want to tell the member, first of all, that fines for operating an unsafe commercial vehicle can be as much as \$20,000, which is four times greater than any other Canadian jurisdiction. For some offences, the fines can be as high as \$50,000. We're the only North American jurisdiction to impound trucks and trailers with critical defects.

Each year, we conduct approximately 140,000 commercial driver and vehicle inspections, and 12 province-wide and 250 regional truck safety blitzes. Despite growing traffic in Ontario, there has been a decrease in fatal collisions involving large trucks over the last 15 years. I could give other statistics, but I think it is important, and I think the member's question is important: Through this question and all the publicity we can generate, people out there had better know that Ministry of Transportation officials are on a vigilant watch and will prosecute those who violate our laws.

#### ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines: Today marks the 45th day of imprisonment for the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug leadership. On Monday, the minister said he would write to Platinex Inc. next week, asking them to consult with First Nations, after the McGuinty government recorded another 72,000 acres of new mining claims by Platinex.

The Supreme Court of Canada has been very clear: It is the responsibility of governments to consult with and accommodate First Nations. The Supreme Court of Canada has been clear on something else: This responsibility cannot be delegated to third parties.

Why does the McGuinty government continue to believe it does not have a responsibility and a duty to consult with and accommodate First Nations and can pass that off to private companies?

1530

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** The leader of the third party knows full well that we take our duty to consult extremely seriously, and we're meeting that duty to consult on a daily basis. We recognize that it's not just a one-off process; it's continual. That's our number one priority; there's no question about that.

But also, in terms of our relationship with First Nations and the companies that are moving forward on mineral development, indeed we think it's extremely important to encourage them to make sure that they are going, at the earliest stage possible, to meet with First Nations in terms of the consultation process. In terms of Platinex, with the claim that they have put in place recently, we are asking them to move forward with that. We've asked them to do that with the Matawa tribal council. Indeed, I'm going to write them with the same request. That's something we consider extremely important, but by no means does it make a difference in

terms of how we recognize our duty to consult in a very, very serious way.

## PETITIONS

### LORD'S PRAYER

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I want to thank Father Tadeusz Walczyk at St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church in Alliston for sending me this petition.

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty has called on the Ontario Legislature to consider removing the Lord's Prayer from its daily proceedings; and

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer has been an integral part of our parliamentary heritage that was first established in 1793 under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe; and

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer is today a significant part of the religious heritage of millions of Ontarians of culturally diverse backgrounds;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to continue its long-standing practice of using the Lord's Prayer as part of its daily proceedings."

I agree with this petition and I've signed it.

### SCHOOL POOLS

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I have close to 2,000 signatures for this petition. It reads:

"Whereas the Toronto District School Board is looking at closing school pools, which will affect many physical education and co-curricular sports programs across the city. This will also affect communities who use the pools when they are not being used by TDSB students;

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

"To act now to save our school pools."

I'm going to sign this petition because I support it very strongly.

### DAVID DUNLAP OBSERVATORY

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the" land of the "David Dunlap Observatory in Richmond Hill is of historical and heritage significance" as it "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 great 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 occupies 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" from being used as commercial development.

I present to you today about 1,100 signatures, which were presented to me during the rally held at Queen's Park on January 16.

### LORD'S PRAYER

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have here a petition signed by a great many of my constituents and presented to me by Roelie Veldhuizen from Burgessville. It is 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 thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to present this petition.

### HOME CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have a petition from the Service Employees International Union and the people of Toronto.

"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;....”

They ask the Ontario government “(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 will affix my name to it and send it with Matthew.

#### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I just got another petition dealing with “Stop Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles—Bill 56.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas innocent people are being victimized by the growing number of unlawful firearms in our communities; and

“Whereas police officers, military personnel and lawfully licensed persons are the only people allowed to possess firearms; and

“Whereas a growing number of unlawful firearms are transported, smuggled and found in motor vehicles; and

“Whereas impounding motor vehicles and suspending driver’s licences of persons possessing unlawful firearms in motor vehicles would aid the police in their efforts to make our streets safer;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law, so that we can reduce the number of crimes involving firearms in our communities.”

I agree with this petition. I will affix my signature to it and give it to page Rafaël.

#### LORD’S PRAYER

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for Nepean–Carleton

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Jackpot. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That’s why I think you’re the best Speaker I’ve ever experienced in my time here.

From 1,629 people, a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from Nepean–Carleton:

“Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty has called on the Ontario Legislature to consider removing the Lord’s Prayer from its daily proceedings; and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer has been an integral part of our parliamentary heritage that was established in 1793 under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe; and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer is today a significant part of the religious heritage of millions of Ontarians of culturally diverse backgrounds;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to continue its long-standing practice of using the Lord’s Prayer as part of its daily proceedings.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, and I’ll pass it on to Bilaal. He’s our page.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Central East local health integration network ... board of directors has approved the Rouge Valley Health System’s deficit elimination plan, subject to public meetings; and

“Whereas it is important to ensure that the new birthing unit at Centenary hospital, a \$20-million expansion that will see 16 new labour, delivery, recovery and postpartum ... birthing rooms and an additional 21 postpartum rooms added by October 2008, will not cause any decline in the pediatric services currently provided at the Ajax-Pickering hospital; and

“Whereas, with the significant expansion of the Ajax-Pickering hospital, the largest in its 53-year history, a project that could reach \$100 million (of which 90% is funded by the Ontario government), it is important to continue to have a complete maternity unit at the Ajax hospital; and

“Whereas it is also imperative for the Rouge Valley Health System to balance its budget, eliminate its deficit and debt and realize the benefits of additional Ontario government funding; and

“Whereas the parents of Ajax and Pickering deserve the right to have their children born in their own community, where they have chosen to live and work;

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

“That the Rouge Valley Health System continue to provide the current level of service; and

“That our Ajax-Pickering hospital now serves the fast-growing communities of west Durham; and

“That the Ajax-Pickering hospital retain its full maternity unit.”

I will affix my signature and pass it to Jasdeep.

#### POPE JOHN PAUL II

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Mr. James Castronovo, the department head of Canadian world studies at Sacred Heart High School, signed this, along with other teachers and students, which proclaims Pope John Paul II day. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to grant speedy passage into law of the private member’s Bill 25 by Oak Ridges MPP Frank Klees entitled An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day.”

I’m pleased to affix my personal signature to this, as a proponent of this bill, and pass the petitions on to page Jack.

1540

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I’d like to read it and thank Dr. Mario Palermo, a pediatric dentist practising from the Credit Valley Medical Arts centre for having sent it to me. 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.”

I thank the people for having signed the petition. I’m pleased to sign and to support it, and to send it down with page Cali.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas we, the undersigned, believe that Ajax-Pickering hospital should have full funding for mental health, including beds;

“Whereas this would affect the mental health programs and mental health beds at the Ajax-Pickering hospital;

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

“Fully fund the mental health beds and programs at Ajax-Pickering hospital.”

I’m happy to sign in support of this petition and to pass it to page Sheilagh.

#### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, on behalf of the people of Eglinton–Lawrence. It reads:

“Whereas innocent people are being victimized by the growing number of unlawful firearms in our communities; and

“Whereas police officers, military personnel and lawfully licensed persons are the only people allowed to possess firearms; and

“Whereas a growing number of unlawful firearms are transported, smuggled and found in motor vehicles; and

“Whereas impounding motor vehicles and suspending driver’s licences of persons possessing unlawful firearms in motor vehicles would aid the police in their efforts to make our streets safer;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law, so that we can reduce the number of crimes involving firearms in our communities.”

I support this petition and affix my signature.

#### LORD’S PRAYER

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** “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 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 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.”

As I’m in agreement, I have affixed my signature and given it to page Dario.

## HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Kuldip Kular:** I have a petition from Dr. Nguyen and his friends to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

“Western Mississauga ambulatory surgery centre:

“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.”

I agree with the petitioners, so I put my signature on the petition and ask Peter to take it to the table.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## LEGISLATIVE REFORM

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 28, 2008, on the amendment to the motion by Mr. Bryant to amend the standing orders.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 30, I am now required to put the question.

Mrs. Witmer has moved an amendment to Mr. Bryant’s motion for amendments to the standing orders. Is it the pleasure of the House that the amendment carry?

All those in favour will 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 1547 to 1552.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

## Ayes

|                    |                 |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Bailey, Robert     | Hardeman, Ernie | Munro, Julia    |
| Barrett, Toby      | Horwath, Andrea | Prue, Michael   |
| DiNovo, Cheri      | Jones, Sylvia   | Savoline, Joyce |
| Elliott, Christine | Klees, Frank    | Scott, Laurie   |
| Gélinas, France    | Kormos, Peter   | Shurman, Peter  |
| Hampton, Howard    | MacLeod, Lisa   | Wilson, Jim     |

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** All those opposed will please rise.

## Nays

|                      |                     |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Aggelonitis, Sophia  | Delaney, Bob        | Moridi, Reza        |
| Albanese, Laura      | Dickson, Joe        | Naqvi, Yasir        |
| Arthurs, Wayne       | Dombrowsky, Leona   | Pendergast, Leeanna |
| Balkissoon, Bas      | Duguid, Brad        | Phillips, Gerry     |
| Bartolucci, Rick     | Flynn, Kevin Daniel | Qaadri, Shafiq      |
| Bentley, Christopher | Fonseca, Peter      | Rinaldi, Lou        |
| Best, Margaret       | Gravelle, Michael   | Ruprecht, Tony      |
| Bradley, James J.    | Jaczek, Helena      | Sandals, Liz        |
| Broten, Laurel C.    | Kular, Kuldip       | Sergio, Mario       |
| Bryant, Michael      | Kwinter, Monte      | Smith, Monique      |
| Cansfield, Donna H.  | Leal, Jeff          | Sousa, Charles      |
| Caplan, David        | Levac, Dave         | Takhar, Harinder S. |
| Carroll, Aileen      | Mangat, Amrit       | Van Bommel, Maria   |
| Chan, Michael        | Matthews, Deborah   | Wilkinson, John     |
| Colle, Mike          | McGuinty, Dalton    | Wynne, Kathleen O.  |
| Craitor, Kim         | Milloy, John        | Zimmer, David       |

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 18; the nays are 48.

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

The question is now on the main motion by Mr. Bryant for amendments to the standing orders. Is it the pleasure of the House that that motion carry?

All those in favour will 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 1555 to 1600.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members take their seats, please. Some of us have a long ride home. I heard what the Minister of Transportation said about speeding and I have to be conscious of that.

We’re now voting on the main motion by Mr. Bryant for amendments to the standing orders. All those in favour will rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

## Ayes

|                      |                     |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Aggelonitis, Sophia  | Dickson, Joe        | Naqvi, Yasir        |
| Albanese, Laura      | Dombrowsky, Leona   | Pendergast, Leeanna |
| Arthurs, Wayne       | Duguid, Brad        | Phillips, Gerry     |
| Balkissoon, Bas      | Flynn, Kevin Daniel | Qaadri, Shafiq      |
| Bartolucci, Rick     | Fonseca, Peter      | Rinaldi, Lou        |
| Bentley, Christopher | Gerretsen, John     | Ruprecht, Tony      |
| Best, Margaret       | Gravelle, Michael   | Sandals, Liz        |
| Bradley, James J.    | Jaczek, Helena      | Sergio, Mario       |
| Broten, Laurel C.    | Kular, Kuldip       | Smith, Monique      |
| Bryant, Michael      | Kwinter, Monte      | Sousa, Charles      |
| Cansfield, Donna H.  | Leal, Jeff          | Takhar, Harinder S. |
| Caplan, David        | Levac, Dave         | Van Bommel, Maria   |
| Carroll, Aileen      | Mangat, Amrit       | Wilkinson, John     |
| Chan, Michael        | Matthews, Deborah   | Wynne, Kathleen O.  |
| Colle, Mike          | McGuinty, Dalton    | Zimmer, David       |
| Craitor, Kim         | Milloy, John        |                     |
| Delaney, Bob         | Moridi, Reza        |                     |

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** All those opposed?

## Nays

|                    |                   |                 |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Bailey, Robert     | Jones, Sylvia     | Savoline, Joyce |
| DiNovo, Cheri      | Klees, Frank      | Scott, Laurie   |
| Elliott, Christine | Kormos, Peter     | Shurman, Peter  |
| Gélinas, France    | MacLeod, Lisa     | Tabuns, Peter   |
| Hampton, Howard    | Marchese, Rosario | Wilson, Jim     |
| Hardeman, Ernie    | Munro, Julia      |                 |
| Horwath, Andrea    | Prue, Michael     |                 |

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 49; the nays are 19.



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

*Agreed to.*

PAYDAY LOANS ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 CONCERNANT  
LES PRÊTS SUR SALAIRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 24, 2008, on the motion for second reading of Bill 48, An Act to regulate payday loans and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I rise in the House today to speak to Bill 48, An Act to regulate payday loans. My caucus colleagues and I believe it is high time that this McGuinty government addressed the issue of payday loans. As with all private members' bills, this government turns a blind eye and acts only when the elephant that is sitting in the living room is simply too big to ignore. When the McGuinty government finally decides to act, they have the audacity to turn into government legislation the same private members' bills that they themselves shot down months or years earlier.

I thought I was having déjà vu, as it was only last week that I spoke to a piece of private member's legislation that was being introduced for the fourth time. Unfortunately, this is yet another piece of legislation that must be thrust under the government's nose a fourth time in the hopes that this latest effort will make it through the gauntlet of the Premier's office.

The member for Welland, the former member for Barrie and the member for Parkdale–High Park have all recognized the need for regulation in the payday loan industry.

This government's thinly veiled concern for our most vulnerable citizens is nothing more than a photo op. I was absolutely shocked when I read that some payday loan companies are charging 1,000% interest—1,000 % interest is absolutely insane. I would have thought that this was an illegal amount to charge in the first place.

The interest charge demonstrates that this particular industry is unable to govern itself accordingly, and that a cap on the rate of interest, as was done by the province of Quebec, is desperately needed here in Ontario. Quebec capped interest rates at 35%, and I understand that this number has also been proposed for Ontario.

Currently, there are financial institutions charging 37.5% in our province. My concern and the concern of our stakeholders is that capping interest at the rate of 35% would cause unnecessary delays in implementing regulations, as payday loan companies would undoubtedly challenge this capped rate. The payday loan companies themselves have made it clear that anything less than—get this—400% interest would cause them to close their doors. Obviously, they are already experiencing a significant default rate if they require 400% interest to remain viable. Capping the interest rates anywhere from

35% to 50% may, in fact, weed out those companies that are preying on the disenfranchised.

The regulation of payday loans should involve more than the Ministry of Government Services. I believe that there's a huge interest here on the part of the Minister of Community and Social Services in the research on this issue, because it points to a much greater problem in Ontario than simply stop-gap loans.

The primary consumers of this product are younger than the general population, and they are making between \$35,000 and \$41,000 a year. Technically, this income bracket is above the poverty level, but not by much in terms of the money that is left in their pockets after the government takes its share. I believe that this income bracket deserves an official title. They should be referred to as the McGuinty working poor—sad, but true, as they are taxed within an inch of their life.

It is this group of young earners who are being forced to go to the payday loan establishments. The reason is that the McGuinty government has heaped tax upon tax, fee upon fee on their most modest incomes. The Premier will never admit to these taxes, as he has coached his cabinet and caucus to refer to them as user fees.

The McGuinty working poor are being crushed under the weight of these fees and health taxes. Instead of eliminating the root causes of McGuinty's new class of working poor, this government has the audacity to sit idly by, defeating bill after bill, while members on the opposition benches try valiantly to at least offer these struggling young people a life raft and a modicum of protection.

Perhaps it is time for the McGuinty government to develop a long-term plan; some strategic plan. I realize this is faint hope, but I feel the need to make the plea regardless. Why on earth would these young people continue to stay in such an oppressive climate, when they could travel to almost any other province and have more disposable income and a higher quality of life? As my caucus colleagues have quite astutely pointed out in the past, the only thing the McGuinty government is teaching our young people is how to read a road map, and it says, "Go west, young citizen."

My colleagues have been predicting that the policies of this McGuinty government will transform Ontario into a have-not province. Sure enough, we have become a have-not province in record time. According to Statistics Canada, Ontario's standard of living has been below the national average for two years in a row and the gap is growing.

The McGuinty government's decision to continue their tax-and-spend ways while overlooking real solutions to the problems facing our young people and the working poor will reap dire consequences for all of us. On one hand, the McGuinty government says that they want to stop the brain drain and keep our young professionals here in Ontario. On the other hand, they are taxing the very same people they profess to want to keep here. They are taxing them within an inch of their life.

Unfortunately, consistency is not, and has never been, a goal or reality of this McGuinty administration. Payday

loan businesses need to have clear and consistent guidelines for the protection of consumers. In North America, payday loan businesses are a fairly recent phenomenon and have experienced exponential growth in the short time that they have been here. Without any regulations to protect some of our most vulnerable citizens, these companies will continue to expand unchecked in our communities.

**1610**

There are reasons why we do not see these businesses in the affluent sections of town and why they're a dime a dozen in the poorer sections—simply, supply and demand.

If the Bank of Canada regulates interest rates for established lending institutions, why is it taking this government so long to recognize and establish interest rate caps on payday loan companies?

The sudden appearance of these businesses speaks to the desperation of the individuals involved. When all the fees are added, whether they are the set-up fees, the broker fees or the verification fees, on top of the interest rate charged, it far exceeds any maximum rate that's permitted by the law. I think that this is a very unequal and unfair playing field for those people who find themselves in the challenging predicament of having to take a payday loan.

I think it's necessary to have the full public consultation, a process that all of our bills deserve to have. I would stress that the cooling-off period suggested is the right thing to do. A person should have the right to cancel the loan within one business day of applying or receiving the initial advance. There is also the ability of the government to set a cap on the interest rate. I think those are very important elements that need to be included.

If these individuals are forced to pay exorbitant interest rates of up to 1,000%, then there is something seriously wrong. Clearly, this is a disenfranchised group of individuals who are in this circumstance for a variety of reasons. We, as legislators, need to know why so many young people are in this bind and unable to access more traditional lines of credit or financing through established lending institutions.

Stakeholders have speculated that it is their high debt ratio that has brought our young people to this position in the first place. They've graduated from college or university with anywhere from \$25,000 to \$100,000 in debt. In addition to student loan debt, they have credit card debt and are now compounding the problem with multiple payday loans. Perhaps the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities should pay close attention to the impact that student loans are having on the financial future of our young people. These young graduates are caught between a rock and a hard place. They have graduated with a tremendous debt load and, given the number of jobs fleeing Ontario under the McGuinty government, their economic prospects will be and are fairly bleak. Couple that with the collection agencies who are hounding them like the devil to repay this loan, and, do you know what, we have a recipe for disaster. These

students will be robbing Peter to pay Paul, going from payday loan office to collection agency and back again.

Many of the members here today know that student loans is one of the most frequent issues that our constituency offices receive calls on.

The unfortunate circumstances that our students find themselves in after completing their schooling is beyond the pale and will only continue to degenerate as our economy slows to a crawl under this administration. As opposition critic for education, I recognize an area of opportunity within our schools and our curriculum that may prevent some of these problems.

When a student enters a post-secondary institution in Ontario, they are bombarded with credit card applications during frosh week. By graduation, their credit card rating is shot, and to add to their burden, they have to begin repaying these student loans. Our young people are emerging from their education on a poor financial footing.

My caucus colleague the member from Nepean—Carleton coined the phrase “fiscal literacy.” I think it is high time that we begin teaching fiscal literacy in our schools. Teaching our children life skills helps to prepare them for the ups and downs that life throws their way. It is not a random occurrence if there is a significant number of young adults making between \$35,000 and \$41,000 relying on payday loans to get by. Banking, bookkeeping and the investment world are far more complex now than they were in my parents' generation. Understanding the complexities of the financial sector impresses upon students the cause and effect of poor credit and the importance of maintaining good credit. Fiscal literacy is as important to the success of an individual as many other aspects of a well-rounded curriculum.

I return to my earlier point, which is that this government should investigate the reasons for the explosion of this industry into the marketplace. It is entirely possible that education could be a part of the solution to the problem. For that reason, I am very interested in exploring part VII of this legislation, which would establish an Ontario payday lending education fund. But it is not clear whether Minister McMeekin would utilize this education fund to promote the policies and safeguards of the legislation, or whether the funding would be directed to preventive, proactive and educational initiatives. This is the only bright spot in the legislation. If we, as legislators, add a proactive element to our bills, we may be able to achieve positive changes in the lives of our fellow Ontarians. The opportunity exists to create policies similar to those governing casinos in the province of Ontario, where a portion of the revenue is directed to gambling addiction awareness. The public consultation process will be extremely telling.

Laurie Campbell, the executive director of Credit Canada, agrees that education is key to solving the root problems for at least our young people caught in this loan cycle. Until we correct those root problems, we must protect our citizens who rely on this stopgap financing to make it through the week or the month. The fee structure of a payday loan facility resembles a copy of the govern-

ment's user-fee checklist—it's a very complex thing and it's a very long thing. If we are to regulate this industry, I suggest we carefully review the list of fees that an individual is expected to pay. Simply capping the interest rates will only serve to increase the broker fee or the loan insurance.

I don't understand how you can even charge insurance for a loan of this nature. The clients are already high-risk, and I would argue that the massive ballooning interest rates would be all the insurance one would need.

While I have discussed the vulnerability of our young citizens in respect to this unregulated payday loan company, there are many more groups at risk here. Ms. Campbell from Credit Canada identified several groups who are being exploited by payday loan businesses across Ontario. A rapidly growing group is new Ontarians. The immigrant community, unfamiliar with established banking institutions or who perhaps do not yet possess the credentials required to access traditional finance companies, resort to payday loans. Families who have left their homeland in search of a better life and better opportunities become caught in a circle of payday loan dependence.

We should expand any educational initiative to include outreach to the new immigrant community. A pamphlet, perhaps, clearly outlining the pitfalls of payday loan places may assist them in making better choices and seeking out established financial institutions that offer services in their mother tongue.

Another vulnerable group that Ms. Campbell brought to my attention is our senior citizens. More and more seniors on fixed incomes are finding themselves in debt these days. It is a sad state of affairs when the people who worked so hard all of their lives, who built our communities and paid their taxes, now find themselves unable to make ends meet. It is unconscionable for an organization to charge 1,000% interest to a senior who will be back in a week to repay that interest and pay it again and again and again. For some reason or other, these seniors find themselves unable to use established lending facilities, and without capped interest rates and strong regulations, payday loan companies will continue to abuse our seniors.

I believe that, given Ontario's current economic climate under the McGuinty government, we need to act fast. If the Premier of the province refuses to let this bill go through on the fourth attempt, I shudder at the repercussions for our vulnerable citizens.

There's a common theme running through my speech today, and that is that the economy is simply not up to snuff. Perhaps the Premier and his government are waiting for our welfare cheques to roll in from the federal government, since we are now a have-not province, before they take action. There are not enough good-paying jobs to help the working poor and those who are struggling under the oppressive taxes of the McGuinty government improve their lot in life.

**1620**

Companies are leaving Ontario in droves because our tax rates are prohibitive to future growth and investment.

The previous Conservative government left this province on solid ground, and when we were government this province was the economic engine that drove this country. Now, five short years later, Ontario is dead last in job creation, we have lost 200,000 manufacturing jobs and the welfare rolls are up 11%. That's thanks to the tax-and-spend policies of the McGuinty government.

I am not sure how many more examples of the dire consequences of this government's complete lack of fiscal mismanagement we can share before they take action. The evidence exists. We here on the opposition benches have done our due diligence in ringing the warning bells about the state of our economy. Our impassioned pleas have fallen on deaf ears. Once again, the Premier-knows-best routine is going to send our vulnerable citizens further into despair and to the payday loan establishments.

The time to act is now. If the McGuinty government continues down the same path, we are going to experience even more job losses. The only ones who will benefit from this dire situation are the payday loan companies. They will be cashing in as laid-off workers are forced to take minimum-wage jobs, use borrowed money to put food on the table and to keep their family home. This is the fourth time this bill has come forward, and it is time that the Premier finally tunes in to what's going on here in the province.

Remember the days when your neighbours used to side half of their house one season and the other half the next? Well, that's because that's all they could afford to do. Those days are long gone. Everything must be immediate, and our children and our grandchildren are burying themselves in debt. Once again, let me restate my support for the regulated payday loan industry. It is my hope that this government will wake up from their slumber and finally steer Ontario's economy in the right direction.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments? Seeing none—the honourable member from Richmond Hill.

*Interjection.*

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

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I'm not going to be lengthy this afternoon because it's time this bill got into committee, and New Democrats are eager to see it there.

I do want to acknowledge and thank Peter, the page who's bringing me fresh water. Thank you, Peter. I do want to acknowledge and thank ACORN. You'll recall that they have been active as advocates for just plain folks; they've been active as advocates for those folks in provoking payday regulation legislation.

We in the NDP are especially proud of our member from Parkdale–High Park, Ms. DiNovo, who of course has sponsored payday legislation in this House and will be the lead for the NDP on this bill as it proceeds through committee. I was proud because some time ago now, but it was with the assistance of ACORN and the NDP research office here at Queen's that I was able to present,

we had second reading on the first payday loan regulation legislation.

The Liberals at the time said it wasn't within the jurisdiction of the province. The Liberals said, "Oh, what are you doing? The province doesn't have the legal authority to regulate payday lenders." They blamed the feds. Well, Lord love a duck if all of a sudden now we don't have the Liberals doing a complete about-face and coming forward with legislation.

The issue has been with us for far too long. Folks are getting gouged, getting ripped off, getting burned, getting scammed by payday lenders with interest rates that are compounding, but hidden away—not just hundreds of percentages, but thousands. I quite frankly, at the end of the day, would rather not regulate payday lenders; I would rather abolish them, because there shouldn't be room in our society for these types of rip-off artists. But the reality is that unless we have an increase in the minimum wage, unless we stop the hemorrhaging of jobs that we're losing, unless we have fair housing policies that let people live in affordable housing and unless we have daycare that is provided to all children at a fair and reasonable rate so it's affordable for all families, there are going to be people who prey on the poorest people in our community.

It was noted the other day—it was Ms. DiNovo who said it—that it's remarkable that if you've got money, you don't have to pay very much to borrow money. Heck, I get 1.9% interest promotions in the mail. How come people who most need the break, when it comes to interest rates, don't get 1.9% interest promotions? They are desperate, and payday lenders prey on that desperation.

It is incredibly important, when this goes to committee, that there be wide-ranging, broad-based consultations, not just here in Toronto, but access to that committee should be made available to everybody across the province because, let me tell you, the reality for people in Toronto is not the reality for people in smaller-town Ontario, and the reality for people in smaller-town Ontario is not the reality for people in the far north, when it comes to having to stretch an insufficient or inadequate paycheque, or no paycheque at all. At the end of the day, I'd rather borrow money from Tony Soprano than from a payday lender. He treated his clients much more fairly and with more generosity.

I brought a Bible here today and, as I put it on my desk, it happened to fall open to Nehemiah, chapter 5, verses 10 and 11: "But let the exacting of usury stop. Give back to them immediately their fields, vineyards, olive groves and houses and also the usury you are charging them." It just happened to fall open to that chapter of Nehemiah; it did.

This government fails the poorest people in our province by not having a regulated interest rate as part and parcel of the legislation. It means that it can respond to whatever pressures are put on it over the course of the coming months to set whatever interest rate it approves by way of regulation. That means that regulation can be changed anytime a government wants to, at its whim.

As I say, the debate should be about poverty in this province and this government's failure to address it, not in any meaningful way but in any way, shape or form whatsoever. The government talks about it; there's a lot of yakking going on about poverty. You don't solve poverty by striking committees, giving more money to the United Way or having a food bank campaign once a year, whether you're here in Toronto or in towns like where I come from. You solve poverty by giving people the means to escape from it, like the right to join a trade union, among other things, like the right to card-based certification, like a minimum wage that's a real living wage—that is, a minimum wage that's \$10 an hour now and \$11 an hour by 2011—and like affordable housing. This government hasn't just dropped the ball when it comes to those things; it never picked up the ball in the first place. I'm sure there are biblical quotes that could be referenced with respect to that failure as well, but we'll leave that for another time.

Folks should know that this bill will pass today, and it's going to pass because opposition members want it to go to committee. Opposition members will force it to committee. I encourage people to participate fully in those committee hearings. They have a right to come here to Queen's Park, or wherever that committee may choose to sit, to tell their stories and to call upon this government to not just regulate payday lenders but eliminate the demand for their so-called services.

#### 1630

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments? Seeing none, further debate?

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to join the debate and support Bill 48, An Act to regulate payday loans and to make consequential amendments to other Acts. The reason I'm so pleased to stand and speak to this bill is because this is an issue of critical importance in my community of Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

As the United Way report *Losing Ground: The Persistent Growth of Family Poverty in Canada's Largest City* points out, the lure of quick-fix money solutions is one that challenges communities and families right across the city of Toronto. Certainly, we've seen the proliferation in my community of payday loan institutions, of access to that very expensive but quick capital. According to the United Way report that was released in November 2007, we've seen an eightfold increase in the number of payday loans and cheque-cashing outlets in the city of Toronto—up to 317 outlets in 2007, from 39 not many years before.

According to Ernst and Young, it is estimated that first-time borrowers ultimately take out an average of 15 loans. The industry claims that the majority of profits come from repeat borrowers who are unable to pay off the loan on time and who then incur additional fees and interest rates and get themselves into a continuous cycle of dependence upon these very high interest rate loans.

According to ACORN, the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada and Statistics Canada, payday loan users tend to have little cash in their bank accounts, are behind in bill or loan payments, and have no credit card

or almost no one to turn to in the face of their financial difficulties.

I'm very proud that this bill speaks to the very issues raised by the United Way in its call to see the regulation of the payday lending sector. As you will note, in the fall of 2006, the federal government introduced a provision that allowed provinces to regulate the payday lending industry. We are taking the opportunity presented to us by the actions taken by the federal government to meet the needs of citizens in our province and to regulate this proliferating industry.

The province of Ontario was called upon by the United Way to develop rigorous new regulatory measures to protect consumers from usurious rates of interest, set interest rate caps and limits on fees and charges, and prohibit rollovers and other practices that trap consumers in a debt cycle.

I am very proud that Bill 48 speaks directly to those calls for action. It puts in place consumer protection features, including a cooling-off period which allows the borrower two business days to cancel the payday loan agreement without penalty—the borrower need give no reason for the cancellation of the agreement—and it operates to cancel the payday loan agreement as if it never existed.

We also put forward in the Payday Loans Act, should it pass, prohibition with respect to conventionally termed language of rollovers, back-to-back loans where the borrower pays off the first loan but must immediately borrow again to meet financial needs until the next payday. Those are prohibited practices. Concurrent loans are prohibited. Default charges and collection charges are prohibited. Discounting loan principal is prohibited, which is a practice that is used by lenders to hide fees rather than include them in the cost of borrowing. For example, a borrower borrows \$300 but receives \$280 because 20 of those dollars go toward document administration. If the loan is for \$300, the individual should receive \$300.

Under the proposed legislation, we will set a maximum total-cost-of-borrowing cap to limit the amount payday lenders can charge, and we'll work with an independent expert advisory board to recommend what that maximum total cost of borrowing should be.

We're also going to require lenders and brokers to be licensed, and we're going to impose serious penalties for lenders who break the law.

It's also important and imperative, as set out by the United Way, to do some work with respect to educating the public about what they may be considering when they seek to take out a payday loan. So we'll be establishing an education fund where we'll educate the public, providing consumers with information that they need to protect themselves and to make those informed choices.

Our government takes tackling the issue of poverty very seriously. As set out by the United Way in their recent report, this is one element that needs to be tackled head-on to make sure that our communities have the information and the protections they need to prevent a continued proliferation of usurious interest rates, of high interest rates, where families have no other options.

We know how hard people are struggling when it comes to making ends meet and we are doing our best to support them and provide the protections they need to also protect themselves. That's what this act is all about, and I'm very pleased to lend my support to it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. Questions and comments? Seeing none, further debate?

Seeing none, Mr. Duguid has moved second reading of Bill 48, An Act to regulate payday loans and to make consequential amendments to other Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**Hon. David Caplan:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it agreed that the bill be referred to the committee? Agreed.

**Hon. David Caplan:** I move adjournment of the House.

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

I would just remind members that this House stands adjourned. We begin at 9 a.m. next Monday under the new standing orders, with question period at 10:45 a.m. We're adjourned until Monday, May 5, at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1637.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
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Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

| Member and Party /<br>Député(e) et parti      | Constituency /<br>Circonscription                         | Other responsibilities /<br>Autres responsabilités   |
|---|---|--|
| Aggelonitis, Sophia (L)                       | Hamilton Mountain   |  |
| Albanese, Laura (L)                           | York South–Weston /<br>York-Sud–Weston                    |  |
| <b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>                       | Wellington–Halton Hills                                   | First Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Premier<br>Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative              |
| Arthurs, Wayne (L)                            | Pickering–Scarborough East /<br>Pickering–Scarborough-Est |  |
| Bailey, Robert (PC)                           | Sarnia–Lambton  |  |
| Balkissoon, Bas (L)                           | Scarborough–Rouge River                                   |  |
| Barrett, Toby (PC)                            | Haldimand–Norfolk   |  |
| <b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)</b>     | Sudbury   | Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre<br>de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels             |
| <b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L)</b> | London West / London-Ouest                                | Attorney General / procureur general   |
| Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)                     | Scarborough Southwest /<br>Scarborough-Sud-Ouest          |  |
| <b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (L)</b>    | Scarborough–Guildwood                                     | Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion<br>de la santé   |
| Bisson, Gilles (ND)                           | Timmins–James Bay /<br>Timmins–Baie James                 |  |
| <b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)</b>    | St. Catharines  | Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports   |
| Brotten, Laurel C. (L)                        | Etobicoke–Lakeshore                                       |  |
| Brown, Michael A. (L)                         | Algoma–Manitoulin   |  |
| Brownell, Jim (L)                             | Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry                           |  |
| <b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)</b>      | St. Paul's  | Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, government House leader / ministre<br>des Affaires autochtones, leader parlementaire du gouvernement         |
| <b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L)</b>  | Etobicoke Centre /<br>Etobicoke-Centre                    | Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles  |
| <b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b>        | Don Valley East /<br>Don Valley-Est                       | Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal / ministre du<br>Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique                                       |
| <b>Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (L)</b>   | Barrie  | Minister of Culture, minister responsible for seniors / ministre de la<br>Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées        |
| <b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)</b>        | Markham–Unionville  | Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires<br>civiques et de l'Immigration  |
| Chudleigh, Ted (PC)                           | Halton  |  |
| Colle, Mike (L)                               | Eglinton–Lawrence   |  |
| Craitor, Kim (L)                              | Niagara Falls   |  |
| <b>Crozier, Bruce (L)</b>                     | Essex   | Deputy Speaker, Chair of the committee of the whole House / Vice-<br>Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative       |
| Delaney, Bob (L)                              | Mississauga–Streetsville                                  |  |
| Dhillon, Vic (L)                              | Brampton West /<br>Brampton-Ouest                         |  |
| Dickson, Joe (L)                              | Ajax–Pickering  |  |
| DiNovo, Cheri (ND)                            | Parkdale–High Park  |  |
| <b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)</b>    | Prince Edward–Hastings                                    | Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre<br>de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales                    |
| <b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (L)</b>         | Scarborough Centre /<br>Scarborough-Centre                | Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail   |
| <b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)</b>       | Windsor–Tecumseh  | Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet /<br>ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du<br>gouvernement |
| Dunlop, Garfield (PC)                         | Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord                                |  |
| Elliott, Christine (PC)                       | Whitby–Oshawa   |  |

| <b>Member and Party /<br/>Député(e) et parti</b>   | <b>Constituency /<br/>Circonscription</b>   | <b>Other responsibilities /<br/>Autres responsabilités</b>   |
|--|---|--|
| Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)<br><b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter</b> (L)   | Oakville<br>Mississauga East–Cookville /<br>Mississauga-Est–Cookville   | Minister of Tourism / ministre du Tourisme   |
| Gélinas, France (ND)<br><b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John</b> (L)   | Nickel Belt<br>Kingston and the Islands /<br>Kingston et les Îles   | Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement  |
| <b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael</b> (L)   | Thunder Bay–Superior North /<br>Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord   | Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du<br>Développement du Nord et des Mines   |
| Hampton, Howard (ND)   | Kenora–Rainy River  | Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti<br>démocratique   |
| Hardeman, Ernie (PC)<br>Hillier, Randy (PC)<br><b>Horwath, Andrea</b> (ND)   | Oxford<br>Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox<br>and Addington<br>Hamilton Centre /<br>Hamilton-Centre  | Third Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Troisième<br>Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative   |
| Hoy, Pat (L)<br>Hudak, Tim (PC)  | Chatham–Kent–Essex<br>Niagara West–Glanbrook /<br>Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook   |  |
| Jaczek, Helena (L)<br>Jeffrey, Linda (L)<br>Jones, Sylvia (PC)<br>Klees, Frank (PC)<br>Kormos, Peter (ND)  | Oak Ridges–Markham<br>Brampton–Springdale<br>Dufferin–Caledon<br>Newmarket–Aurora<br>Welland  | New Democratic Party House leader / leader parlementaire<br>du Nouveau Parti démocratique  |
| Kular, Kuldip (L)<br>Kwinter, Monte (L)<br>Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)<br>Leal, Jeff (L)<br>Levac, Dave (L)<br>MacLeod, Lisa (PC)<br>Mangat, Amrit (L)    | Bramalea–Gore–Malton<br>York Centre / York-Centre<br>Glengarry–Prescott–Russell<br>Peterborough<br>Brant<br>Nepean–Carleton<br>Mississauga–Brampton South /<br>Mississauga–Brampton-Sud |  |
| Marchese, Rosario (ND)<br>Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)<br><b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah</b> (L)  | Trinity–Spadina<br>Cambridge<br>London North Centre /<br>London-Centre-Nord   | Minister of Children and Youth Services, minister responsible for<br>women's issues / ministre des Services<br>à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre déléguée<br>à la Condition féminine    |
| Mauro, Bill (L)<br><b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton</b> (L)   | Thunder Bay–Atikokan<br>Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud   | Premier and President of the Council, Minister of Intergovernmental<br>Affairs / premier ministre et président<br>du Conseil, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales                    |
| <b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted</b> (L)   | Ancaster–Dundas–<br>Flamborough–Westdale  | Minister of Government and Consumer Services /<br>ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des<br>Services aux consommateurs   |
| McNeely, Phil (L)<br><b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine</b> (L)  | Ottawa–Orléans<br>Ottawa–Vanier   | Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for<br>francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et<br>communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones |
| Miller, Norm (PC)<br>Miller, Paul (ND)<br><b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John</b> (L)  | Parry Sound–Muskoka<br>Hamilton East–Stoney Creek /<br>Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek<br>Kitchener Centre /<br>Kitchener-Centre  | Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la<br>Formation et des Collèges et Universités   |
| Mitchell, Carol (L)<br>Moridi, Reza (L)<br>Munro, Julia (PC)<br>Murdoch, Bill (PC)<br>Naqvi, Yasir (L)<br>O'Toole, John (PC)<br>Oraziotti, David (L) | Huron–Bruce<br>Richmond Hill<br>York–Simcoe<br>Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound<br>Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre<br>Durham<br>Sault Ste. Marie   |  |

| <b>Member and Party /<br/>Député(e) et parti</b> | <b>Constituency /<br/>Circonscription</b>   | <b>Other responsibilities /<br/>Autres responsabilités</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)                         | Oshawa                                      |   |
| Pendergast, Leeanna (L)                          | Kitchener–Conestoga                         |   |
| <b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)</b>           | Elgin–Middlesex–London                      | Speaker / Président   |
| <b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)</b>         | Scarborough–Agincourt                       | Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie  |
| Prue, Michael (ND)                               | Beaches–East York                           |   |
| <b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)</b>       | Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest                | Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce                                  |
| Qaadri, Shafiq (L)                               | Etobicoke North /<br>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 / Chef de l'opposition officielle   |
| 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                                   |   |
| <b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (L)</b>       | Nipissing                                   | Minister of Revenue / ministre du Revenu  |
| <b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)</b>      | Toronto Centre /<br>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 /<br>Mississauga-Sud      |   |
| Sterling, Norman W. (PC)                         | Carleton–Mississippi Mills                  |   |
| Tabuns, Peter (ND)                               | Toronto–Danforth                            |   |
| <b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)</b>     | Mississauga–Erindale                        | Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship /<br>ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat                     |
| Van Bommel, Maria (L)                            | Lambton–Kent–Middlesex                      |   |
| <b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)</b>             | Ottawa West–Nepean /<br>Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean | Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement                                      |
| <b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)</b>         | Perth–Wellington                            | Minister of Research and Innovation / ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation   |
| <b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>                          | Simcoe–Grey                                 | Second Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House /<br>Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)                           | Kitchener–Waterloo                          | Opposition House leader / leader parlementaire de l'opposition  |
| <b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (L)</b>      | Don Valley West /<br>Don Valley-Ouest       | Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation   |
| Yakabuski, John (PC)                             | Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke                  |   |
| Zimmer, David (L)                                | Willowdale                                  |   |



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Finances et affaires économiques**

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**Justice Policy / Justice**

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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

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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

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jerry Ouellette  
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Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel, David Zimmer  
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vic Dhillon  
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Helena Jaczek, Dave Levac, Shafiq Qaadri,  
Khalil Ramal, Laurie Scott, Peter Shurman  
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